

Nigerians Will Support The Party With Proven Capacity To Deliver Good Governance – In 2027 – Amao



Abuja@50: Wike, Remember Institutions, Legacy

RHI: Assessing Oluremi Tinubu's Social Intervention Programme Three Years After



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Police officers on parade ground in preparation for Osun State gubernatorial election at Police Headquarters in Osogbo.

Sensitive and non-sensitive election materials at the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) office in Osogbo... on Friday

Buses on the queue to carry sensitive and non-sensitive election materials at the INEC office in Osogbo... on Friday. PHOTOS: AYODELE ADENIRAN



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Tinubu Woos Diaspora Capital, Says Nigeria Now Ready For Investment

From Terhemba Daka, Abuja

PRESIDENT Bola Tinubu has launched a fresh appeal for Nigerians in the Diaspora to turn their financial support for families at home into long-term investments capable of creating jobs, expanding businesses and strengthening Nigeria's economic base.

Tinubu, who spoke at the inaugural Nigeria Diaspora Economic Conference (NIDEC) 2026 in Toronto, Canada, said the time had come for Nigerians abroad to move from simply sending money home to taking strategic stakes in the Nigerian economy.

Represented by his Chief of Staff, Femi Gbajabiamila, the President said the country's Diaspora community possessed the capital, expertise and international networks needed to play a far greater role in Nigeria's economic transformation.

The three-day conference, organised by the Nigerians in Diaspora Commission (NiDCOM) under the theme, 'Thrive Abroad, Invest in Nigeria,' brought together government officials, investors, business leaders and Nigerians living abroad to explore new channels for Diaspora investment.

"Nigeria sees you. Nigeria values you. Nigeria needs you," Tinubu told participants at the Apollo Convention Centre.

The President said remittances remained critical to millions of Nigerian households, helping families meet obligations such as school fees, medical expenses and small-business needs.

He, however, said that, "remittances must now become the floor of Diaspora engagement rather than its ceiling."

He urged Nigerians abroad to invest in sectors with strong potential for job creation and economic expansion, including agro-processing, healthcare, technology, energy, housing, logistics, mining, education, creative industries and export manufacturing.

Tinubu also challenged the Diaspora to embrace collective investment models rather than scattered, personality-driven transactions.

He called for the establishment of professionally managed investment clubs, sector funds, co-investment vehicles and venture networks through which Nigerians abroad could pool resources, demand audited accounts, enforce corporate governance and conduct proper due diligence.

According to him, the Federal Government recognises that Diaspora capital will only flow at scale where investors have confidence in the regulatory and financial environment.

He said government was therefore working to provide predictable rules, transparent project pipelines, efficient consular services and

Urges Nigerians Abroad To Turn Remittances Into Productive Investments

stronger safeguards against fraud.

Tinubu highlighted the Non-Resident Nigerian Ordinary Account, Non-Resident Nigerian Investment Account and Non-Resident Bank Verification Number as measures designed to make participation in Nigeria's financial system easier for Nigerians living abroad.

Seeking to strengthen the investment case for Nigeria, the President revealed recent economic indicators, saying the economy grew by 3.89 per cent in real terms in the first quarter of 2026, while manufacturing expanded by 3.29 per cent. He also said inflation had eased to 15.91 per cent, while Nigeria's foreign reserves closed 2025 at \$45.4 billion.

The International Monetary Fund, he added, had projected Nigeria's economy to grow by 4.1 per cent in 2026.

Tinubu said the figures reflected the impact of reforms implemented by his administration over the past three years, which he said had improved macroeconomic stability and strengthened the resilience of the economy.

He also cited the World Bank's assessment that Nigeria had made progress in restoring macroeconomic stability, improving its external and fiscal position and sustaining economic growth.

The President said the new tax architecture was designed to simplify compliance and reduce pressure on low-income earners and small busi-

nesses, while the Bank of Industry recorded its highest annual financing volume in 2025, disbursing N636 billion to businesses.

He said government was simultaneously investing in critical infrastructure, including roads, rail, ports, power, digital connectivity, healthcare, housing and agricultural value chains to create an environment capable of attracting greater private investment.

Tinubu further linked economic participation to political influence, saying the growing economic strength of the Diaspora could give Nigerians abroad greater leverage in national conversations, including the long-standing debate over Diaspora voting.

He, however, urged Nigerians to protect national cohesion ahead of the 2027 general election, stressing that political competition must not be allowed to threaten Nigeria's stability.

Earlier, NiDCOM Chairman/Chief Executive Officer, Abike Dabiri-Erewa, said the conference was designed to move Diaspora engagement beyond dialogue and harness the community's expertise, networks and financial resources for accelerated national development.

She urged Nigerians abroad to see Nigeria not only as home but also as an investment destination.

The Minister of Industry, Trade and Investment, Jumoke Oduwole, similarly called for a decisive shift from investment conversations

to actual capital deployment.

"The best time for investment is now," she said, urging stakeholders to translate discussions at the conference into concrete investments.

Anambra State Governor, Charles Soludo, commended the Tinubu administration's economic reforms, saying they offered Nigeria an opportunity to attract global capital and compete more effectively in the international investment market.

Zamfara State Governor, Dauda Lawal, said the conference would help his administration position the state to attract new investment and take advantage of emerging economic opportunities.

The conference featured high-level panels, fire-side chats and investment pitching sessions involving government officials, business leaders, investors and members of the Nigerian Diaspora.

Participants included the Minister of Interior, Olubunmi Tunji-Ojo; Minister of Foreign Affairs, Yusuf Tuggar; Executive Chairman of the Nigeria Revenue Service, Zacch Adedeji; Executive Secretary/Chief Executive Officer of the Nigeria Investment Promotion Commission, Aisha Rimi; Director-General of the Nigeria Export Promotion Council, Nonye Aveni; Director-General of SMEDAN, Charles Odii; and Director-General of the National Orientation Agency, Lanre Issa-Onilu.

The Canadian delegation was led by Ontario Minister of Citizenship and Multiculturalism, Graham McGregor.



Delta State Governor, Sheriff Oborevwori (left), dancing with the Chairman, All Progressives Congress (APC), Delta State, Chief Solomon Arenyeka, during the funeral service of the late Mrs. Felicia Arenyeka, mother of the APC State Chairman, at First Baptist Church, Warri... on Friday. PHOTO: BRIPIN ENARUSAI.

Nigeria, U.S. Conclude Talks To Deepen Counter-terrorism Cooperation

From Johnson Eyiango, Abuja

NIGERIA and the United States of America have concluded high-level bilateral engagements in Washington D.C., aimed at deepening military-to-military relations and fortifying counter-terrorism cooperation between both nations.

The Minister of Defence, Gen. Christopher Musa, led a high-powered Nigeria delegation to the talks. The delegation included the Minister of Finance and Coordinating Minister of the Economy, Mr. Taiwo Oyedele; Chief of Defence Staff, Gen. Olufemi Oluyede; Chief of Defence Intelligence, Lt-Gen. Parker Udiandeye and other senior officers from the Armed Forces of Nigeria.

A statement released by the Ministry of Defence on Friday said the delegation held robust discussions with senior cabinet officials of the U.S. Department of War led by the Acting Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of War for International Security Affairs, Julia Sokol.

According to the statement, the en-

gagement served as a direct continuation of the U.S.-Nigeria Joint Working Group Defence Bilateral Talks, focusing on shared security architecture, intelligence collaboration and operational synergies.

It also said a diplomatic mission, led by the National Security Adviser (NSA), Mallam Nuhu Ribadu, and senior government officials, was in the U.S. for the second meeting of the U.S.-Nigeria Joint Working Group, which was held from August 12 to 13, 2026.

"Co-chaired by Mallam Nuhu Ribadu and Allison Hooker, the U.S. Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, the meeting reviewed actionable progress and strategic frameworks following Nigeria's designation as a Country of Particular Concern (CPC)," the statement said.

It added that both sides reaffirmed their commitment to sustained dialogue, mutual respect and strategic alliance in combating global and regional threats.

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

FG Charges Salaries Commission To Balance Fair Wages With Fiscal Sustainability

From Terhemba Daka, Abuja

THE Federal Government has charged the newly inaugurated Board of the National Salaries, Incomes and Wages Commission (NSIWC) to develop a remuneration framework that promotes decent wages, higher productivity and industrial harmony without undermining the nation's fiscal sustainability.

The Secretary to the Government of the Federation (SGF), Senator George Akume, gave the charge on Friday in Abuja while inaugurating the new NSIWC board, describing its mandate as critical to the success of the Federal Government's ongoing economic reforms.

Akume said the administration of President Bola Tinubu was implementing far-reaching reforms aimed at restoring macroeconomic stability, improving productivity, strengthening workers' welfare and laying the foundation for sustainable and inclusive economic growth.

He said the NSIWC had a particular-

ly strategic role to play because its responsibilities covered salary structures, productivity, job evaluation and compensation issues with direct implications for workers' welfare, industrial relations and government finances.

"The role of the National Salaries, Incomes and Wages Commission is particularly strategic at this time. The Commission is entrusted with responsibilities relating to salary structures, productivity, job evaluation and compensation matters that have direct implications for workers' remuneration, productivity, industrial harmony and the sustainability of government finances," the SGF said.

Akume urged the new board to strike a delicate balance between fair and decent remuneration, improved productivity, affordability and the broader economic realities confronting the country.

He noted that the inauguration came against the backdrop of the implementation of the new National Minimum Wage framework, which

had raised expectations among workers while imposing additional responsibilities on governments and employers.

According to him, recommendations by the commission must be evidence-based, transparent, timely and equitable, while remaining fiscally responsible and supported by credible data on wages, productivity, purchasing power and economic growth.

He further tasked the board to promote a remuneration system that rewards skills, responsibility, innovation and productivity, while strengthening efficiency and accountability across the public service.

The SGF reaffirmed the Federal Government's commitment to strengthening institutions that advance the objectives of the Renewed Hope Agenda, stressing that the NSIWC must help ensure that the gains of economic reforms translate into improved livelihoods for workers and a more stable industrial environment.

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

Private Capital, Policy Reforms Key To Achieving Nigeria's \$1tr Economy Target – Experts

By Shakirah Adunola

INDUSTRY leaders and economists have said Nigeria's plan to hit a \$1 trillion economy by 2030 will succeed only if private sector capital leads the drive. They warned that government alone cannot fund the transition.

Speaking at the NEPAD Business Group Nigeria, NBGN Q2 Quarterly Webinar in Lagos, Chief Strategist at ECOWAS Commission, Prof. Ken Ife, said Nigeria needs \$1.74 trillion in cumulative investment to reach the target. Of this, 81 per cent or \$1.41 trillion must come from the private sector, while government provides \$330 billion.

According to Ife, "the public treasury cannot fund this transition. The government's role must shift from running businesses to creating market-enabling policies and structural de-risking."

On his part, Prof. Gafar Tunde Ijaiya of University of Ilorin and Dr. Ibilola Amao of Lonadek Global Services urged federal and state governments to dismantle regulatory and bureaucratic bottlenecks frustrating private investments.

In its communiqué, NBGN said states must stop functioning only as administrative centres. "They should build integrated Special Purpose Vehicles around transit, energy and agriculture to drive regional industrialization," the group noted.

The group called for a phased ban on export of unprocessed

raw materials, noting that instead, Nigeria should set up domestic processing hubs for minerals and agricultural produce to capture full value-chain earnings.

The group also canvassed a circular bioeconomy where agricultural and municipal waste would be converted to biofuels and fertilizers.

It further recommended a "Triple Helix" model linking government, industry and universities to commercialise local patents.

The forum urged banks and fintechs to collaborate on low-interest, digitised credit for micro-enterprises, which form the backbone of Nigeria's informal economy.

Chairman of the group, Bashorun JK Randle, said the group will engage the Nigeria Governors' Forum and the Federal Ministry of Industry, Trade and Investment to implement the resolutions. "This is not just another talk shop," he said, adding that an Academic-Industry Commercialisation Desk will also

be set up to help SMEs scale local inventions.

The webinar, themed, 'Global Challenges: Survival Strategies, Building Resilience and Driving Sustainable Prosperity' drew over 200 participants from the Organised Private Sector, public institutions, academia and civil society.

Customs Seizes 6,035 Parcels Of Ghana Loud, 2,339 Bags Of Rice In Ogun

From Azeez Olorunlomu, Abeokuta

THE Ogun I Area Command of the Nigeria Customs Service (NCS) has intercepted 6,035 parcels of suspected cannabis, including consignments described as Ghana Loud, as well as 2,339 bags of foreign parboiled rice and other prohibited items with a combined duty-paid value of N3.57 billion.

The seizures, made in operations conducted from June 24 to August 13, 2026, were disclosed on Friday by the Acting Customs Area Controller, Ogun I Command, Deputy Comptroller O. O. Afeni, during a press briefing at the command's headquarters in Idiroko, Ogun State.

Afeni said the seizures formed part of the command's intensified campaign against smuggling and cross-border trafficking, adding that the operation was being strengthened through intelligence gathering, technology and collaboration with sister security agencies.

According to him, the items seized included 70 cartons of basmati rice, 30 bags of foreign sugar, 11,450 litres of Premium Motor Spirit (PMS) in kegs, 1,750 litres of PMS in drums, 30 kegs of diesel, 100 bags of fertiliser, 67 bales of second-hand clothing and 2,674 pieces of new shorts and trousers.

UNDP, Yobe Govt Partner On Waste Management Towards Jobs, Wealth Creation

From Njadvare Musa, Maiduguri

THE United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has partnered with the Yobe State government on waste management with the aim of creating more job opportunities and wealth across the state.

Launching the wealth creation initiative on Friday in Damaturu, at a Consultative Stakeholders' Workshop (COSW) on enhancing waste management capacities in the state, the Secretary to the State Government, Dr. Mohammed Goje, emphasised the importance of effective waste management in promoting public health, environmental sanitation and the well-being of residents.

According to the Director of Information, Yobe State Ministry of Information, Culture and Home Affairs, Ali Musa Yawale, the workshop brought together government officials, development partners, waste management stakeholders, traditional and religious leaders, and other relevant actors.



President Bola Ahmed Tinubu (right); Minister of Education, Dr. Olaturunji Alausa; Speaker of the House of Representatives, Tajudeen Abbas and National Security Adviser, Nuhu Ribadu after the Ju'imat prayer at the Presidential Villa, Abuja... on Friday.

PHOTO: STATE HOUSE

Foundation Moves To Enhance Students' Knowledge Of Nigeria's History

By Moyosore Salami

• Holds Herbert Macaulay Essay Competition

THE Macaulay Heritage Foundation has used an essay competition to encourage secondary school students to learn about Nigeria's history and the legacy of nationalist Herbert Macaulay.

The competition, organised in collaboration with the Lagos State Ministry of Education, at CMS Grammar School, Bariga, Lagos, attracted 80 students who were required to research and write essays on Macaulay, his contributions to Nigeria and the values associated with his life and work.

Chairman of the Foundation, Olufemi Gladstone Macaulay, said the initiative was conceived to address

gaps in the teaching and understanding of Nigerian history among young people.

Speaking at the presentation of prizes to the 10 finalists in Lagos, Macaulay said the competition went beyond the students who emerged as finalists, as all 80 participants had to study the history of Herbert Macaulay before writing their essays.

He said the initiative was inspired by his discovery of gaps in young people's knowledge of Nigeria's history after returning from England, adding that the Foundation was established to use what he described as edutainment to make learning more engaging for children.

dren.

According to him, the Foundation plans to use music, theatre, arts, sports and other activities to encourage young people to learn about issues they may have missed in formal education.

Macaulay said Herbert Macaulay was chosen as the starting point because of his contributions to nationalism, education and the development of Lagos and Nigeria.

He said the Foundation could not leave the responsibility of addressing gaps in education to government alone, noting that the large population of school-age children made it necessary for organisations and other stakeholders to contribute to their education and development.

Macaulay said the foundation would continue to seek partnerships to expand its programmes, adding that the work required to improve education and engage young people was vast.

A family member, Femi Oladeinde, said the legacy of Herbert Macaulay remained relevant to young Nigerians, particularly his values, integrity, commitment to education and determination to challenge injustice.

Oladeinde urged young people to emulate Macaulay's commitment to learning and hard work, saying continuous learning remained important in navigating life.

Sokoto, UNICEF Unveil 10-Year Climate-resilient Education Plan

From Tunde Omolehin, Sokoto

THE Sokoto State Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and other development partners have unveiled a 10-year gender-responsive and climate-resilient education plan for the state.

The project is aimed at transforming learning and ensuring inclusive access to quality education for children across the state.

Speaking at the event, the Commissioner for Basic and Secondary Education, Prof. Ahmed Ladan Ala, commended the initiative, describing the plan as an important framework for addressing challenges confronting education in the state.

He urged those who devel-

oped the document to accept constructive criticism, saying stakeholder input would help strengthen the plan and make it more responsive to the needs of the people.

Ala also endorsed the document for use in the state, calling for its effective implementation to ensure tangible improvements in education delivery.

The UNICEF Sokoto Field Office Chief, Dr. Michael Juma, said the plan provides an opportunity to address major barriers preventing children from accessing and completing quality education in the state.

Juma identified poverty, insecurity, displacement, socio-cultural barriers and limited learning opportunities as factors undermining enrolment, retention, transition

and educational outcomes, particularly in northern Nigeria.

He said the plan must move beyond policy document and be translated into practical interventions that would ensure every child in Sokoto has access to quality education, feels safe in school and acquires the knowledge and skills needed to thrive.

He identified three priorities for successful implementation: urgent implementation, sustainable financing and accountability, and ensuring that no child is left behind.

"The plan must be reflected in government budgets, work plans and partner-supported programmes. We must also ensure timely allocation of resources, efficient utilisation of funds and transparent tracking of expenditure.

"We must take deliberate measures to reach children in hard-to-reach communities and remove the barriers confronting girls, children with disabilities, Almajiri learners, nomadic children and children affected by insecurity, poverty and displacement," Juma added.

He assured that UNICEF would continue to support Sokoto State in strengthening its education system.

Also speaking, the Director-General/Chief Executive of the National Institute for Educational Planning and Administration (NIEPA), Dr A.D. Shofoye, said the plan was part of a wider NIEPA-UNICEF collaboration to strengthen education planning and administration in five states of Lagos, Jigawa, Enugu, Sokoto and Adamawa.

Stakeholders Urge Wider Screening, Vaccination To Curb Nigeria's Hepatitis B Burden

By Glory Sunday

AN estimated 18.2 million Nigerians are living with chronic hepatitis B, prompting health stakeholders to call for wider screening, vaccination and sustained public education to curb the burden of the viral infection.

The call was made during a free medical screening and health education programme organised by Cerba Lancet in partnership with Mushin Local Council, Lagos State, as part of activities to commemorate the World Hepatitis Day, observed on July 28.

The Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of Cerba Lancet, Dr. Olayemi Dawodu, an anatomic and molecular pathologist, disclosed that the estimated prevalence of hepatitis B in Nigeria was about eight to nine per cent of the population.

Dawodu, who spoke during the exercise, also said about 325,000 new hepatitis infections, predominantly hepatitis B virus (HBV), were estimated in 2022, citing the World Health Organisation (WHO) Regional Office for Africa.

Against the backdrop of the disease burden, she said the community-based initiative was aimed at helping residents know their hepatitis status, access appropriate referrals and receive support where necessary.

Held at the council's multipurpose hall, the programme attracted 247 participants with combined activities, including hepatitis screening, health education, blood pressure and weight checks as well as random blood sugar testing.

Interview

Mr. Joseph Babatunde Akeju launched his memoir titled, Whistleblower as Victim, in Lagos on Friday, August 7. He spoke with ONYEDIKA AGBEDO on his motivation for writing the book. An academician and consultant, Akeju also spoke on how Nigeria can strengthen accountability in governance, submitting that “the power to enthrone good governance in Nigeria is in the hands of Nigerians.”

Briefly tell us about your trajectory in the Nigerian public service?

I graduated from the University of Lagos with a B.Sc. in Accounting. I did my youth service in Cross River State. I was later employed at the Federal College of Education (FCE), Akoko, initially as a teacher. While there, I registered with my co-partners in accounting where I was getting my audit experience from private organisations. After working for some years at FCE, Akoko, I crossed to Yaba College of Technology as a lecturer. In my second year at YABATECH, I was made the Head of the Department of Accounting. Later, I was invited to be the bursar. I rejected it because I wanted to be a professor in Accounting. After some time, they said I could combine both the office of Head of the Department of Accounting and Bursar but I knew it was going to be too much for me. So, left the headship of the Accounting Department and reluctantly became the bursar of the college. While I was serving, I was seconded to the Federal Airports Authority of Nigeria (FAAN) as the Director of Finance. I worked there briefly and did my best. I left the place because I wasn't ready to do all the nonsense some people were trying to do. I came back to YABATECH after one and a half years or so. It was when I came back that I discovered the rot that led to the problem we were having that almost took away my life but for God's sake.

When I discovered the fraud that existed in the Bursary Department, I called the attention of my boss, who is now late, to it and he was very hostile about it. But I told him that there was no need for hostility. I wasn't ready to expose the issue but I was out to clear my name. So, the intention was not to put anybody into trouble but while clearing my name some people were definitely affected. Before I knew it, they started chasing me up and down so I had to run for my life. During the period of this struggle, I lost my junior wife and it created a lot of tension. They were chasing me from pillar to post to the point that when I went to bury my wife, they withheld my salary. They made so many bad decisions against me. At the end of the day they dismissed me twice and reinstated me twice. I retired in 2018 and I have been on my own since then, working as a consultant and as a teacher in an accounting school.

Why did you decide to unveil your memoir at this point in your life?

Well, the whole thing was concluded in 2016 but I didn't have the resources to publish it; I suffered a lot of financial stress. Things are not rosy up till now but I had to seek financial assistance to be able to put things together.

The book is mainly about my experience in the public service as an administrator, not as a teacher this time around, because throughout my life I have been a teacher. But I branched out to do some practical work on accounting. As the bursar of the college for almost nine years – first in acting capacity but later in substantive capacity – I had to put down what I experienced to encourage upcoming ones who may fall into a similar situation to know that if they depend on God, He will vindicate and exonerate them. So, I wrote the book to give a good account of what I have done so far.

Why didn't you delay the memoir until you are very old as some people do?

Well, as of now I am still a student. I am studying for my PhD. Someone asked me, 'At the age

Nigerians Must Begin To Hold Leaders Accountable To Curb Corruption In Public Service – Akeju

of 73, why are you just doing this?' It's for self actualisation of course though I'm still lecturing and will continue lecturing until I can no longer stand up. So, I just put it down for the upcoming ones to know that you have to struggle in life to achieve whatever you are looking for. You can't just give up; when you meet difficulty you have to endure because everything in life depends on endurance and perseverance. So, I wrote the book to encourage the upcoming ones and my colleagues to know that God is there for you at any time.

How would you sum up your experience in the public service?

It was interesting and I don't regret anything. If I live my life again I will do exactly what I have done. But I will be more careful because I actually suffered and put everyone in my family into difficulty. My family suffered so much because of me.

Things don't work the way we expect it to in the public service. Two plus two will not give you four. It will give you five, 10 or even 20. The accounting system in the public service needs to be revitalised and I recommend what I call a stewardship accounting system. That will make everybody know that you cannot eat more than your stomach. All the money you are amassing, what do you use it for? So, we need to be speaking to the conscience of people in the public service to allow this country to move forward.

Are you saying that there is corruption in the Nigerian public service system?

It is not that I am saying it; it is there and everybody knows. It is too much and that is why people are struggling to be there – to go and get their own portion.

How did corruption manifest in the system during your time in the public service?

There are several ways corruption can be facilitated in the public service. One is to supply goods and go and take them back. You recycle the same item so many times. They were doing it dur-

Citizens should make the leaders accountable and credible people should be encouraged to go into politics. Our destiny is in our hands as Nigerians; it is not in the hands of anybody.

ing my time. When I went on leave of absence, I left a large sum of money on the ground as the bursar then. By the time I came back, the treasury was empty and I started asking questions. It was then I knew that many things were done in my absence to fritter the savings such that the college, which was buoyant before, began to incur a lot of liabilities. Corruption can also occur in the form of open sharing of money, empty supplies, which is paying for something that you didn't buy at all; inflated contracts and direct labour. The objective of direct labour is to save cost but here it will be so inflated that you will be asking why it's direct labour.

How can the problem of corruption in the Nigerian public service be addressed?

By speaking to conscience; we have to speak to the conscience of Nigerians. That is why I recommend stewardship accounting, which is what I am writing my PhD thesis on. It requires a lot of reorientation of people and resetting of their minds to make them know that they will account to God Almighty, not human beings. If Nigerian public servants can be thinking along that line, it will solve a lot of problems.

Will talking alone do the job?

Where does law enforcement come in because there are legal safeguards against corruption?

Talking alone cannot do the job; there must be a kind of whistleblowing. Whistleblowing is one of the recommendations I made towards rebuilding the system. We have to make use of the law enforcement agents, but you know that they too are human beings working in the pub-

lic service.

Given your experience in fighting corruption, what advice do you have for anyone who may want to toe your path?

I will tell the person not to follow my footstep so that his/her life will not be cut short because it is only by miracle that I am alive today. So, I will tell them to take it easy. I am lucky because I have followers; many of my ex-students supported me in several ways. But the experience impacted my family negatively; however, we were able to survive it. So, I wouldn't want anybody to suffer what I suffered but they must not accept to be corrupted. Also, you cannot fight corruption if you can't survive independently. You can't fight corruption if you are greedy. And if you live a flamboyant life, you will be corrupted; there is no way you won't be corrupt.

Corruption turns the system upside down. The countries that are doing well in the world are not corrupt. Those who are causing corruption in this country are mainly the pastors. People are using religion to cause problems in Nigeria. **Why do you say so? What's the relationship between religion and corruption?**

You can see what is happening in this country today. People are against President Tinubu, mainly Christians. I am a Christian but I assess his government constructively. This man is not against anyone's religion; he is not forcing any religion on anybody; he is a Muslim with a liberal heart. But you see some pastors abusing him and calling him all sorts of names. I read in a newspaper where a pastor was accusing Tinubu of plotting to Islamise Nigeria because of the FRSC Bill before the National Assembly seeking to ban preaching in public buses. What is the relationship between that one and banning preaching in buses? Do Muslims not preach in buses? Are you not causing a nuisance when you preach in a bus?

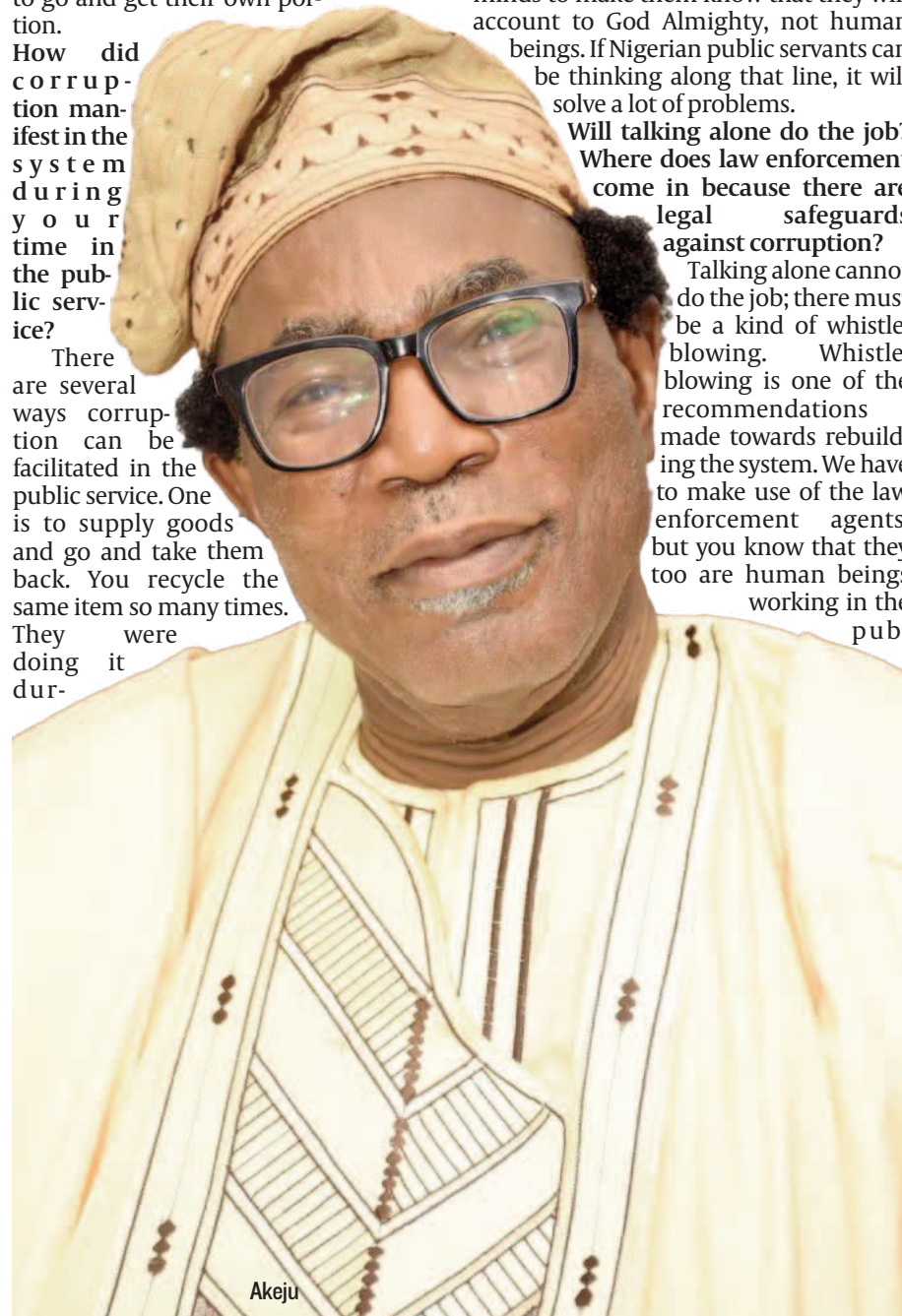
So, many pastors are misleading people. If you want to go into politics, abandon your church and go into politics. Let God fight for Himself.

Some people even say that Tinubu has not done anything good. Why now? Is that how to do it? That is a very bad way of criticising people. So, we should be able to identify those areas he has done well and praise him and where he needs to do better we let him know. But it is wrong to say that he hasn't done anything good.

Now, when people are hungry, they call Tinubu's name. Is Tinubu your state governor? What of the money the state governors are receiving every month and the ones they generate internally? They are getting more than enough now. If they invested a good part of the money in agriculture, won't we be having surplus food? What of the local councils? Why are they not utilising the money they are getting well? And the pastors will be encouraging them. I won't answer anybody who preaches nonsense to me.

How can Nigeria strengthen accountability in governance?

Nigerians have to be talking; we have to educate ourselves; we have to make our leaders accountable. Let the states and local councils publish their accounts; let them make everything public. They should make whatever they are doing open. So, people should hold them responsible. Let them be accountable; let them give account of what they have been using the money to do on a regular basis and allow the people to ask questions. When we ask questions and they turn us to their enemies we vote against them in the next election. If they give you money, collect it and vote against them because that money doesn't belong to them; they stole it. So, the power to enthrone good governance in Nigeria is in the hands of Nigerians. Citizens should make the leaders accountable and credible people should be encouraged to go into politics. Our destiny is in our hands as Nigerians; it is not in the hands of anybody.



Businesses, Motorists Seek Govt's Intervention Over Container Trucks Obstruction In Amuwo Odofin

By David Emokpae

BUSINESSES operating in the Amuwo Odofin Industrial Estate, Lagos, and motorists using the major road linking the estate to Ilesha are appealing for an urgent intervention by the Lagos State government to decongest the roads, improve accessibility to the industrial estate and prevent further disruption to commercial activities.

They lamented that they are facing hardship as trailers laden with containers have taken over the roads and adjoining streets, making it increasingly difficult for business owners, workers, customers and motorists to access their offices or reach their destinations.

The situation has compounded the already deplorable condition of the roads in the area, which businesses have described as almost impassable. Some portions of the roads are riddled with deep potholes, craters and gullies, yet companies and workers continue to operate in the area despite the difficult conditions.

Findings by *The Guardian* revealed that the latest crisis is largely linked to the limited capacity of Unity Bonded Terminal, which serves as a holding bay for Maersk containers in the area. With the terminal unable to accommodate all the containers coming in, trucks are reportedly forced to park on the major roads and adjoining streets while waiting to gain access to the terminal.

Some truck drivers interviewed by *The Guardian* said they often spend several days on the road waiting to either load or offload their containers.

One of the drivers, who identified himself as Olumide, said he had spent three days on the road waiting to offload his container because there was no space inside the terminal. Another driver, Abubakar, said empty trucks waiting to return containers to the port also contributed to the congestion, as they sometimes remained on the road longer than expected.

A light truck driver, Chidi, who moves goods from Festac Town to Ilesha through the industrial estate, said he now takes a longer route and hardly makes more than two trips a day instead of the initial four.

The development has also become a major source of frustration for business owners in the estate.

The Chief Executive Officer of Seemap Company, Chief Oge Obi, said the situation had made it almost impossible for him and

other business owners to access their offices.

According to Obi, the problem could be resolved if Maersk appointed additional bonded terminals to serve as holding bays for its containers.

He said: "Within this area, it is only Unity Bonded Terminal that serves as their holding bay and the terminal cannot accommodate all their containers. Once the place is full, trailers carrying containers block the major road in the estate and the adjoining streets.

"For over two months now, I have hardly been able to go to my office. The same applies to other people who have businesses here. You can set out for the office and, on getting close, you will be told that there is no road and that the best thing is to turn back home.

"We are paying taxes; we are paying ground rent and we are paying salaries. Is this how we are expected to continue doing business in this difficult economy? It is frustrating, and everybody is tired of this chaos.

"If you go around the area, most of the containers you see belong to Maersk. You hardly see containers belonging to other shipping companies."

Obi said business owners had repeatedly suggested that Maersk should appoint another bonded terminal so that containers could be distributed between different holding bays.

He, however, alleged that the shipping company might not have been aware of the prob-



lem their containers are causing in the estate.

According to him, the situation had already begun to affect businesses financially, with some companies unable to operate effectively because of the lack of access.

"We are now calling for a meeting of all the companies in the area to find a lasting solution to the problem. The owner of Sims Company hardly goes to his warehouse anymore because there is no accessibility to the place. The same thing is happening to several

other businesses.

"In two months, I have only been to my office about five times. Even yesterday, as I was coming to the office, I received a call that I should turn back because there was no access to my premises.

"I had an appointment with someone in my office for a business transaction, but the person could not come because of the road. He later told me that he had given the business to someone else because there was no access to my premises.

Group Tasks Journalists On Spotighting Health Risks Associated With Heat In Lagos

By Gbenga Salau

HOTSTEPPERS Project Communications Lead, Abimbola Badejo, has tasked journalists to help spotlight health risks associated with heat exposure in Lagos State.

Speaking at a media training, Badejo sought collaboration with journalists in drawing attention to the health implications of heat which is often overlooked.

According to her, as part of its project and programmes to address health risks associated with heat exposure in Lagos State, 11 transport corridors in Lagos State have been identified that are prone to heat exposure in the first phase of its mobility mapping project.

She disclosed that Hotsteppers is a three-year climate and health

Identifies 11 Transport Corridors Prone To Heat Exposure

research project which hopes to identify and address the health risks associated with heat exposure among people who walk, cycle, and use public transport in Lagos State.

Badejo noted that extreme heat remains one of the least reported consequences of climate change despite its growing impact on residents.

"When people hear climate change, they immediately think about flooding or pollution. But heat is one of the invisible crises we must begin to report because its impacts on health are real and increasing," she said.

She noted that prolonged exposure to high temperatures can lead to dehydration, heat exhaustion, cardiovascular dis-

eases, worsening respiratory conditions, mental fatigue, reduced physical activity and declining productivity.

Badejo listed the 11 priority areas selected to include the Lekki-Epe/Green Line corridor, Idimu-Ikotun-Egbeda/Alimosho QBC corridor, Surulere BRT Barracks, Doyin/Odunade Corridor, Yaba-WAEC-Fadeyi Corridor, Ojota / New Garage axis, Berger/Grammar School Axis, Mile 2, Ikorodu Garage/Ikorodu Axis, Oshodi Interchange, and the Enu Owa/Oroyinyin/Marina-CMS axis.

She stated that the sites were picked based on high pedestrian activity, major transport interchanges, significant heat exposure, and opportunities for future

heat-resilient interventions.

According to her, the locations will also serve as the foundation for understanding how heat affects everyday mobility and where future interventions can deliver the greatest impact.

She was optimistic that the project will build on existing transport, climate resilience, and urban development initiatives across the state rather than duplicate previous efforts.

"One of the project's core aims is to generate evidence to support healthier, cooler, and more climate-resilient transport systems while elevating heat as a priority in urban planning and public health."

Providing insight to the data collection, she said that a satellite image may show a bus stop.



Damaged Roads Provoke Ikotun Residents

By Ruth Ononye

RESIDENTS of Aarida Road in Ikotun, Alimosho Local Council of Lagos State, have decried the deplorable condition of their road, saying it has continued to inflict pains on commuters and motorists, leading to constant vehicle damage.

The road, which serves residents, traders and commuters, is riddled with different sizes of potholes and uneven surfaces that make movement difficult for pedestrians, particularly during the rainy season. According to residents, the road has remained in poor condition for several years and continues to deteriorate despite its importance to the community.

Residents also said the poor condition of Aarida Road has affected adjoining routes, including PAP Junction and Alake Road. They noted that Alake Road has been severely affected by erosion and lacks a functional drainage system, resulting

in frequent flooding during the rainy season.

Mrs. Veronica Ononye, a resident of Aarida Road, described the condition of the road as discouraging, saying walking from her home to the junction has become difficult. She urged the relevant authorities to rehabilitate the road to make movement easier for residents.

Also, Mrs. Caroline Anwulika, who operates a business along Aarida Road, said the poor condition of the road has affected her business and poses a safety risk. According to her, commercial motorcyclists attempting to avoid potholes sometimes crash into the front of her shop, disrupting business activities and endangering both her and her customers.

Samad Umar, a commercial motorcyclist, said the numerous potholes have resulted in frequent accidents, motorcycle breakdowns and tyre damage. He described the road as a daily challenge for riders who depend on it for their livelihood.



Benue State Governor, Hyacinth Alia (second left); Senior Special Assistant to the President on Media and Publicity, Temitope Ajayi (left); Special Adviser to the President on Information and Strategy, Bayo Onanuga; Senior Special Assistant to the President on Media and Special Duties, Tunde Rahman; Senior Special Assistant to the President on Digital Engagement, Strategy, and New Media, O'tega Ogra; during a recent Presidential Media Tour of Projects in Benue and Nasarawa states.



Permanent Secretary Ministry of Economic Planning and Budget Lagos State, Modupe Ojo (left); Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Commerce, Cooperatives, Trade and Investment, Babatunde Onigbanjo; Special Adviser to the Governor on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Dr. Oreoluwa Finnih; Permanent Secretary Office of the SDGs, Mrs. Kaphayah Sarumi, and Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Physical Planning and Urban Development, Wasiu Olayinka during the dissemination and Launch of Lagos State Second Voluntary Local Review held in Lagos.



Ogun State Governor, Prince Dapo Abiodun (second left); Deputy Governor, Noimot Salako-Oyedele; Baale Adesan, Tajudeen Adesanolu; Commissioner for Works and Infrastructure, Ade Akinsanya and Speaker, Ogun State House of Assembly, Oludaisi Elemide, during the commissioning of the Adesan Road in Obafemi Owode Local Council of the state .



Federal Capital Territory (FCT) Commandant, Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC), Dr Olusola Odumosu (middle) with other dignitaries and security men from the private security companies, during a training by NSCDC, FCT Command in Abuja ...on Friday

PHOTO: NAN

Metronotes

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All-female Tazkiyah University Opens 2026/2027 Admission

TAZKIYAH University, Zaria, the first all-female university in Nigeria, has opened applications for admission into its 2026/2027 academic session. Based in Kaduna State, the university is inviting qualified female candidates to apply through Unified Tertiary Matriculation Examination (UTME), Direct Entry and transfer admission routes for programmes across Allied Health Sciences, Management and Social Sciences, and Computing. A statement from the Office of the Registrar said available programmes include Nursing Sciences, Medical Laboratory Sciences, Human Nutrition and Dietetics, Public Health, Accounting, Economics, Business Administration, Taxation, Computer Science, Cyber Security, Software Engineering and Information Technology. Operating under the philosophy of “Blending Knowledge with Noble Character,” the university says it is committed to providing quality education alongside character development. Students will have access to modern facilities and dedicated faculty, while scholarship and financial aid opportunities are also available for eligible students, including orphans.

Ogun Customs Intercepts 32,412 Parcels, 92 Sacks Of Cannabis In 8 Months

By Kehinde Olatunji

THE Nigeria Customs Service (NCS), Ogun I Area Command, has declared a renewed war against the smuggling of cannabis and other illicit drugs, saying it has handed over 32,412 parcels of hard drugs and 92 sacks of raw cannabis sativa to the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency

(NDLEA) from January to August 13, 2026. The Acting Customs Area Controller of Ogun I Command, Deputy Comptroller Oladapo Afeni, disclosed this while briefing journalists at the command's headquarters in Idiroko, Ogun State, where the command also handed over seized narcotics to the NDLEA

Idiroko Special Command for further investigation. Afeni said the fight against drug smuggling required sustained inter-agency collaboration, stressing that no single security agency could secure the country alone. He said, “The fight against drug smuggling is a collective responsibility. The Ogun I

Command, under my leadership remains resolute in its commitment to securing our borders and safeguarding our nation's future. From January to date, Ogun I command under my watch has handed over 32,412 parcels of hard drugs and 92 Sacks of raw cannabis sativa to NDLEA Idiroko special command.”

By Sunday Aikulola

THE Convener of the Bola Ahmed Tinubu Ideological Group (BAT-IG), Bamidele Atoyebi, has urged Nigerian youths to transform their passions into meaningful careers by actively contributing to society, instead of remaining

Atoyebi Tasks Youths On Turning Passion Into Careers

critics of government and national challenges. In an intervention entitled, “Turn your passion into your job,” the commentator argued that many young Nigerians possess the talent, ambition

and dedication required to succeed but often fail to channel those qualities into productive ventures. He said unemployment extended beyond absence of jobs to include individuals

who are dissatisfied with their current economic conditions despite being employed, adding that lasting career satisfaction could only be achieved when people work in fields they are genuinely passionate about.

Noor Takaful, Noor Health Distribute N427.9m Surplus To Participants, Enrollees

NOOR Takaful Insurance Limited, the pioneer and leading composite Takaful insurance firm in Nigeria, and its subsidiary, Noor Health Ltd., have distributed N427,963,044.68) as surplus to participants and enrollees who did not make claims on

their insurance during the 2024 financial year. This was disclosed by the Board Chairman of Noor Takaful Insurance Ltd, Amb. Shuaibu Ahmed, during the 2024 Surplus Distribution and Claims Celebration Ceremony with the theme: “Promise

Kept: Celebrating Takaful's Commitment to Shared Reward,” held in Lagos on Tuesday. Ahmed said no fewer than 1,000 participants would receive various sums as surplus, while 22 participants received surplus payments

from Noor Takaful Insurance Ltd. Also, two enrollees received surplus payments from Noor Health. He described the event as a demonstration of gratitude, accountability, reflection, and celebration of promises made and kept.

Firm Launches Initiative To Provide Funds, Support Outstanding NGOs

By Sunday Aikulola

AS part of efforts aimed at creating social impact across the country, the NNPC Limited/FIRST Exploration and Petroleum Development Company Limited (FIRST E&P) Joint Venture (JV) has launched ‘Impact First: Heritage’, a new multi-year

grant programme designed to provide sustained funding and long-term partnership support to outstanding Nigerian non-governmental organisations (NGOs) that have demonstrated exceptional impact, accountability, and governance. Speaking at the inaugural

Impact First: Heritage grant presentation in Lagos, Executive Director, Corporate Services, FIRST E&P, Emmanuel Etomi said, “Today, we celebrate five exceptional organisations whose work continue to improve lives, strengthen communities, and create opportunities for some of

Nigeria's most vulnerable and underserved populations. By providing long-term support to organisations that have already demonstrated strong performance and measurable results, we help them scale their impact, strengthen their capacity, and create value for the communities they serve.”

E-Lawyer Nigeria, Varsity, Firm Partner To Host Career Fair Festival

By Suliyat Tella

E-LAWYER Nigeria is partnering with Miva Open University and Ascend Global to host its 2026 career fair festival. The event will hold on September 8 at Miva Open University, Yaba, Lagos. Launched two years ago, the festival was designed to address one of the most pressing challenges facing young professionals and graduates across Africa: the gap between talent and career opportunities. More than a traditional career fair, the festival will create a platform where students, graduates, young professionals, employers, recruiters, entrepreneurs and industry leaders can connect, learn, network and explore opportunities for career growth. The partnership with Miva Open University brings the education sector into the conversation around employability and the future of work. The organisers say there is a growing need to ensure that education and industry remain closely connected. The partnership will create opportunities for participants to explore the relationship between education, skills development and career readiness while encouraging young people to think more intentionally about the skills and experiences required in today's economy.

UK-Nigerian Community Leader Pledges To Partner NiDcom On Meeting SDGs

By **Chris Irekamba**

As part of his vision to promote youth developments, the newly elected Chairman of the Nigerian Community Greater Manchester (NCGM), Dele Bashiru-Kaka, has promised to partner NiDcom, and other development agencies to establish operational routes where professionals in Manchester can actively channel investments, technological innovations, and human capital into critical development programmes.

Bashiru-Kaka, who took over from Abiola Kumoye also disclosed that his administration would introduce comprehensive reform agenda to drive continental advancement.

He said: "Our administration will be anchored on a united leadership rooted in qual-

ity, inclusivity, and a shared unity of purpose."

He explained that strict constitutional governance and absolute transparency will anchor these international institutional relationships. He added that the new NCGM development blueprint would focus on four core development areas such as global partnerships aimed at executing the chairman's core strategy plans and revitalising alignment with NiDcom, and other development agencies to implement sustainable demographic and structural projects.



Akinlo

Akinlo Selected Among 100 Most Impactful Educational Personalities In Africa

By **Gbenga Salau**

GLOBAL Skills Hub, United Kingdom has selected Professor Anthony Enisan Akinlo as one of The 100 Most Impactful Educational Personalities in Africa.

In a letter, announcing the selection, the Head of African Operations, Global Skills Hub, Dr Akhere Akran, stated that the nomination was a product of a rigorous and highly competitive selection process that evaluated outstanding educational leaders, policymakers, researchers, innovators, and practitioners from across the African continent.

"Your exceptional leadership, commitment to educa-

tional excellence, and sustained contributions to advancing education have distinguished you as one of Africa's most influential education personalities."

Akran said the award will be presented during the 5th Africa Education Summit and Conference at the University of Manchester, United Kingdom, on 22-23 March 2027.

"The summit, themed "Transforming Education in Africa: Innovation, Inclusion, and International Partnerships," will bring together leading educators, vice-chancellors, policymakers, government officials, development partners, school leaders, researchers, and international education stakeholders to explore innovative solutions and strengthen collaborations that will shape the future of education across Africa."

Rotary Club Of Minimah Estate Installs Farinu As New President

By **Daniel Anazia**

THE Rotary Club of Minimah Estate has installed Sir Adewole Farinu as its second President for the 2026-2027 Rotary Year.

Farinu, who took over from Charter President, Gen. Anthony Onibasa, in his acceptance speech,

pledged to build on the foundation laid by his predecessor.

"I am honoured to accept this responsibility. We will serve humanity; we will serve our community; we will uphold the ideals of Rotary," he said.

According to him, leadership in Rotary is not about position but about service. "It is placing the needs of others before our own and working together to make communities better than we found them. My administration will focus on service, unity and impact. We will run an inclusive club where every member has a role to play," Farinu added.

He stated that as humans, the greatest gift anyone gives his or her community is not merely financial assistance but hope, compassion, dignity and opportunities for people to improve their lives.

"This Rotary year, we embrace the vision of 'Create a Lasting Impact.' Creating a lasting impact means undertaking projects whose benefits will continue long after we have completed our terms of office. It means investing in people, building healthier communities, supporting education, promoting peace, protecting our environment

and empowering families," he explained.

Farinu said that under his watch, the club shall support maternal and child healthcare through partnership with LASUTH and fellow Rotary Clubs.

"We shall pursue our plan to establish a modern library for a public primary school, creating opportunities for children to discover the joy of reading and learning."

Also speaking, Onibasa described the past year as one of laying a solid structure for the club. He said the club received its Charter Certificate from Rotary International on June 20, 2025, and he became the Charter President on July 1, with 22 members, in the 'Unite for Good' Rotary Year 2025-2026.

"For me and other Charter members of the club, the year was a most impactful and exciting experience in passionate, focused and diverse service to humanity. Starting the year with 22 Charter members, the Club grew to 32 active Rotarians, and six prospective members who are set to join as full Rotarians in this impactful year.

The District Governor, Rotary District 9112, Layi Abidoye, who supervised the installation, urged the new president to keep the spirit of Rotary alive.

Centre Hosts Stakeholders, Seeks Ethical Leadership

By **Gbenga Salau**

THE Sage Centre for Leadership Excellence (CLE), a company dedicated to strengthening leadership and organisational excellence across Africa, held a cocktail reception recently to celebrate with its stakeholders.

In her welcome remarks, Co-Founder, Sage CLE, Mrs. Eka Sunmonu, underscoring the importance of ethical leadership, said it is the bedrock for societal building, communal building and organizational building. She added that the idea of the centre was part of the activities to mark the 70th birthday of Sunmonu, especially using a project that resonates with him.

"The evening will bring together a distinguished community of leaders for meaningful conversations, valuable connections and engaging discussions focused on strengthening leadership and organisational excellence across Africa," she stated.

Thereafter, a Board Member, Sage CLE, Mr. Femi Akintunde, gave detailed insight about the Sage Centre for Leadership Excellence, its activities since it commenced and how it is going about achieving its goals and objectives. He also talked about appointment of Sage Icon and Sage Vanguard who provide leadership insights and mentorship for its fellows.

Co-Founder of the centre, Dr Mutiu Sunmonu, said that the event is about bringing together people who have supported the centres vision.

He noted that though the centre is still young, but every time he thinks about how the centre came about, he found it really intriguing.



Foundation Launches Africa AI Upskilling Programme At UNILAG

By **David Emokpae**

THE FATE Foundation and African Institute for Mathematical Sciences (AIMS) have partnered with Google.org to launch the Africa AI Upskilling Programme. This initiative was launched at the African Centre of Excellence for Drug Research, Herbal Medicine Development and Regulatory Science (ACED-HARS), University of Lagos.

It aims to create a sustainable and scalable ecosystem for advanced AI education in Nigeria, Ghana, Kenya, and South Africa.

The initiative targets higher education institutions across Africa, lecturers and teaching assistants (AI Champions),

and penultimate and final-year STEM students by providing a comprehensive AI curriculum to train them and strengthen institutional capacity.

Speaking at the launch, Head, Digital Innovation, FATE Foundation, Oluchi Johnson-Achibiri, said that despite the role AI plays in reshaping work, economies and opportunities, several gaps continue to limit Africa's AI readiness.

She highlighted gaps such as curriculum gaps, faculty expertise gaps, weak industry-academia linkages, infrastructure limitations, and fragmented training efforts, adding that the objective of this initiative is to bridge these gaps using a Train-the-Trainer model.

Otubela To Chair Industry Newspaper's Top 50 Companies Of Impact

By **Suliyat Tella**

THE Industry Newspaper, Nigeria's premier publication on marketing, media, and the business economy, is pleased to announce Chief Yomi Otubela as Chairman of the 2026 edition of its flagship special project, "Top 50 Nigerian Companies of Impact."

The annual recognition celebrates Nigerian companies that are driving resilience, innovation, job creation, and national development across key sectors of the economy. The 2026 edition, themed "Building Resilience, Driving Growth: Nigerian Companies Shaping the Next Decade," will be unveiled at a special awards and net-

working luncheon on August 21, 2026 at the Lagos Oriental Hotel, Lagos.

Otubela brings decades of distinguished leadership as an entrepreneur and educationist of note. He is the President, National Association of Proprietors of Private Schools, (NAPPS), and the Founder/CEO of Lagooz Schools, one of Nigeria's leading educational institutions known for academic excellence, innovation in learning, and youth development.

Under his stewardship, Lagooz Schools has set benchmarks in curriculum delivery, technology integration, and talent grooming, impacting thousands of Nigerian students.

New Book On Maiduguri Flood Urges Rethink Of Wealth, Faith, Compassion

By **Balikis Ademuyiwa**

A NEW book chronicling the devastating Maiduguri flood of September 2024 is calling on readers to reassess their relationship with wealth, possessions and worldly attachments in the face of disaster.

Titled, 'When the Flood Waters Came', the account is told through the voices of survivors, volunteers and eyewitnesses who lived through one of Borno State's worst flooding incidents in recent years.

The book blends first-hand testimonies with reflections drawn from the Qur'an and Sunnah. It explores themes of faith, resilience, gratitude, compassion and the temporary nature of life in this world.

The author, Halima Damagun said the project is more than a record of destruction. "This book invites readers to pause and reflect on what truly matters. It challenges us to rethink our relationship with wealth, possessions, and worldly attachments," Damagun said.

She added that the stories aim to inspire greater trust in Allah, deeper gratitude, stronger empathy for those in hardship, and a renewed commitment to preparing for the hereafter.

"Through every story, readers are reminded that even the greatest trials can become pathways to hope, spiritual growth, and lasting reward," she said.

In a bid to support recovery efforts, Damagun announced that 50 percent of the proceeds from every copy sold will go toward assisting flood victims and other charitable initiatives.

The September 2024 flood displaced thousands of residents in Maiduguri and surrounding communities, destroying homes, businesses and farmlands, and prompting widespread relief operations across the state.

Politics

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Osun Governorship Poll: Tinubu Orders Maximum Security



Police officers on parade ground in preparation for Osun State gubernatorial election at Police headquarters in Osogbo on Friday

- Charges INEC To Ensure Credible Election
- HURIWA Demands Strict Neutrality From INEC, Security Agencies
- Odeyemi, Ajisafe Raise Alarm Over Alleged Missing Ballot Papers
- Olurode Predicts Peaceful Election

By Seye Olumide, Ige Olowole, Suliyat Tella (Osogbo), Terhemba Daka and Joel Oladele (Abuja)

As the electorate in Osun State decides who becomes their next governor on Saturday, August 15, President Bola Tinubu has charged the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) and security agencies to guarantee a peaceful, transparent and credible governorship election.

Also, the Human Rights Writers Association of Nigeria (HURIWA) has urged the INEC and security agencies to ensure that voters freely choose their leaders in the election.

The President's charge came on Friday via a statement by his Special Adviser on Information and Strategy, Bayo Onanuga, in which he also urged voters to turn out en masse and exercise their franchise without fear or intimidation.

Tinubu urged INEC to uphold the integrity of the electoral process and ensure that the election meets the required standards of transparency and fairness.

Fifteen candidates are vying for the Osun governorship, including incumbent Governor Ademola Adeleke of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), Munirudeen Bola Oyebamiji of the All Progressives Congress (APC) and Najeem Salaam of the African Democratic Congress (ADC).

"As the people of Osun State head to the polling units to elect who will govern them in the next four years, I call on the Independent National Electoral Commission to ensure orderly conduct of the election.

"The election must be transparent, free and fair. I urge INEC to ensure the integrity of the process," the President said.

He described the Osun governorship election as the last off-cycle governorship poll before the 2027 general election, urging INEC to use it to demonstrate its preparedness for the next nationwide electoral exercise.

"INEC must use this last off-cycle election as a test case to demonstrate to Nigerians their full preparedness for the 2027 polls," he added.

The President also directed the Inspector-General of Police and other security chiefs deployed for the election to provide maximum protection for voters and electoral personnel, warning troublemakers against attempting to disrupt the process.

"I have charged the Inspector-General of Police and other heads of security outfits taking part in the election to provide maximum security at polling units. No room should be allowed for troublemakers to disrupt the process," Tinubu said.

He stressed that electoral officials and voters must be able to perform their civic responsibilities without fear, intimidation or violence.

Tinubu, therefore, called on eligible voters across the state to come out in their numbers and exercise their franchise, assuring them that adequate security measures had been put in place to ensure peace before, during

and after the election.

"Voters should feel confident to go out in their numbers to vote for the candidate of their choice as all measures necessary to ensure a peaceful, free and fair election have been put in place," he said.

The President urged all stakeholders, particularly political parties and their supporters, to respect the democratic process and accept the outcome of the election.

"Our elections must be credible, and the outcome of the Osun governorship election must reflect the will of the people," Tinubu declared.

In a statement on Friday by its National Coordinator, Emmanuel Onwubiko, HURIWA demanded strict neutrality from INEC, the Nigeria Police Force and the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) before, during and after the poll.

The rights group warned against violence, vote-buying, intimidation and manipulation, saying the election must not become another test of Nigeria's ability to protect the integrity of its democratic process.

It called for zero tolerance for armed thuggery, ballot snatching, voter intimidation, harassment of opposition supporters and other forms of electoral criminality.

HURIWA said security agencies must demonstrate that they are institutions of the Federal Republic of Nigeria and not instruments for advancing the interests of any political party.

It particularly warned against selective arrests or harassment of opposition supporters while political actors aligned with those in power are allowed to operate with impunity.

The group also challenged INEC to demonstrate its independence and professionalism, describing the Osun election as an important test of public confidence in the commission ahead of the 2027 general election.

It urged the commission to ensure that eligible voters cast their ballots without fear and that the collation and declaration of results are conducted transparently and in accordance with the law.

"INEC must therefore demonstrate absolute independence, transparency, professionalism and impartiality throughout the process," HURIWA said.

The organisation also demanded maximum transparency in the electronic transmission and publication of polling-unit results, saying voters should be able to monitor the movement of results through the various stages of collation.

It warned that any opaque results-management system could fuel suspicion and undermine confidence in the outcome.

The rights group warned political parties and candidates against turning the state into a battleground for political competition, urging them to reject violence and financial inducement.

"Political power must come from the ballot



Sensitive and non-sensitive election materials at the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) office at Oshogbo Local Council Ilobu on Friday.



Bus on the queue to carry Sensitive and non-sensitive election materials at Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) office at Oshogbo Local Council Ilobu on Friday. PHOTOS: AYODELE ADENIRAN

box and not from the barrel of a gun, bags of money or the manipulation of electoral institutions," it said.

HURIWA said the election would have implications beyond Osun, arguing that its conduct would influence Nigerians' perception of the preparedness of INEC and security agencies for the 2027 general election.

The group, therefore, urged INEC to use the poll to demonstrate that Nigeria's electoral democracy was progressing rather than regressing.

The Guardian observed that, in line with the President's directive, armed personnel of the Nigerian Army, Police and Department of State Service (DSS) were on red alert on Friday, patrolling major towns and communities in the state.

Military personnel in armoured vehicles were spotted patrolling major highways and streets in Osogbo, Ikirun, Ilesha, Ede, Ile-Ife and other identified hot spots in the state.

Similarly, patrol vans mounted with General Multipurpose Machine Guns (GPMGs), manned by hooded military personnel were sighted around Olaiya, Gbongan-Ibadan expressway and major neighbourhoods in Osogbo, the state capital.

More than 15,000 policemen were deployed for the exercise. The Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC) had mobilised 10,000 personnel, while Federal Road Safety Corps (FRSC) had announced that 2,500 officials would be on ground with ambulances for emergencies.

The number of troops deployed by the Nigerian Army could not be ascertained. However, a top security source told *The Guardian* that contingents were drafted from 2 Division Mechanised Division, Odogbo Barracks, Ibadan.

Credible sources also disclosed that drones and helicopters would be used for aerial surveillance by security agencies.

Meanwhile, there were strong indications on Friday that the election could proceed peacefully, despite politically motivated killings, alleged cult-related activities and other violent incidents that had heightened concerns over the security of the poll.

However, former Deputy National Publicity Secretary of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), Diran Odeyemi, and the party's National Vice Chairman, South-West, Kamorudeen

Ajisafe, alleged that there were pockets of violence and irregularities in parts of the state as well as disappearance of thousands of ballot papers.

Their claims contrasted with the assessment of political scientist and former INEC Resident Electoral Commissioner, Prof. Layi Olurode, who expressed optimism that the election would be peaceful.

With about 1.9 million voters expected to participate, the extensive deployment of security personnel and other measures by the authorities appeared to have reduced the immediate risk of violence.

As of Friday, the atmosphere remained calm across Osogbo, as well as in Ede and Ilesha. In the Iwo and Ife axes, residents also went about their businesses peacefully and expressed readiness to vote in the election, provided the calm atmosphere persists.

In Iwo, residents discussed the election and its possible outcome, while security personnel maintained a visible presence at strategic locations ahead of the poll.

For Adeyemi Adeyinka, who travelled from Lagos to Iwo to observe the election, the security presence had eased his initial fears.

"I came from Lagos to Iwo for this election. Not to vote, of course; I vote in Lagos. But I have been following this election and campaign, and I am sure it will be an interesting one," he said.

Adeyinka said he had initially feared violence but became less apprehensive after arriving in Iwo.

"I was scared that there was going to be violence, but my brothers assured me that there are security men everywhere. And I can see it for myself too," he said.

Olurode described the contest as one of the most competitive in recent years, saying the political interests surrounding the election made its outcome difficult to predict.

"Personally, it looks like a very competitive election," Olurode said.

According to him, the Federal Government is also interested in the outcome because the APC controls the centre.

"Whether we like it or not, the Federal Government is also interested in this election. It is not just between Accord and APC. APC is the party at the centre; it is the party of power and the party of the President," he said.

By Festus Ahon

FOR decades, Delta State has been identified primarily by its vast oil and gas wealth. As one of Nigeria’s leading hydrocarbon-producing states, its economic fortunes have largely been tied to fluctuations in global crude oil prices and federal allocations. Today, however, the state is making a deliberate attempt to redefine its economic identity.

At the recently concluded Delta State Economic and Investment Summit 2026 in Asaba, government officials, global investors, captains of industry and development partners converged on a single message: Delta’s future lies beyond oil.

What distinguished the three-day summit was not merely the impressive roll call of participants including Vice President Kashim Shettima, Director-General, World Trade Organisation, Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala; business leader, Tony Elumelu; Anambra State Governor, Charles Soludo; renowned Pan-Africanist, Patrick Lumumba and investors from Brazil, Malaysia but the effort to present Delta as a diversified investment destination backed by concrete policy commitments.

Vice President Shettima set the tone by declaring Delta a “first-order investment destination,” arguing that Nigeria’s improving macroeconomic fundamentals had created the right environment for long-term investments. He pointed to recent improvements in the country’s global credit ratings and ongoing economic reforms as evidence that investor confidence in Nigeria was gradually returning.

For Delta, however, the opportunity extends far beyond favourable national policies. The state’s strategic coastline, rich natural gas reserves, ports, fertile agricultural land, solid mineral deposits and growing industrial infrastructure provide a combination of assets that few sub-national governments possess. Increasingly, policymakers believe those comparative advantages can become the foundation of a diversified economy capable of generating sustainable jobs and reducing dependence on oil revenues.

Governor Sheriff Oborevwori used the summit to unveil a US\$100 million Viability Gap Fund designed to de-risk strategic private sector investments. The fund is intended to

Beyond Oil: Dissecting Oborevwori’s Fresh Push To Position Delta As Nigeria’s Next Investment Frontier

bridge financing gaps in commercially viable projects, making them more attractive to investors while signalling government’s willingness to share investment risks.

The announcement reflects a shift from the traditional role of government as the primary driver of development towards becoming an enabler of private capital.

The state has complemented the initiative with tax incentives, waivers on selected levies, an Ease of Doing Business Council and policies aimed at simplifying investment procedures. More than 12,000 hectares of land have also

been earmarked for commercial agriculture, while ongoing infrastructure investments seek to improve connectivity and reduce the cost of doing business.

Underlying these initiatives is an acknowledgement by the state government that the era of relying almost exclusively on oil revenues is drawing to a close. “We can no longer depend on one source of revenue,” Oborevwori told participants during the summit’s closing session. “We must diversify our economy by attracting strategic investments into sectors where Delta State has a clear



Delta State Deputy Governor, Monday Onyeme (left); Malaysian High Commissioner to Nigeria, Aiyub Omar; Delta State Governor, Sheriff Oborevwori; Brazilian international business consultant, Roberto Fonseca and Floriano Pesaro during a post-Delta State Economic and Investment Summit courtesy visit at Government House, Asaba. PHOTO: BRIPIN ENARIUSAI.

comparative advantage.”

That conviction resonated throughout discussions on agriculture, mining, power generation, transport infrastructure, digital innovation and the blue economy.

Agriculture emerged as one of the strongest pillars of the diversification strategy. Brazilian agribusiness investors expressed interest in integrated cattle ranching, cassava processing and technology transfer, while Malaysia signalled plans to collaborate on large-scale oil palm development. The proposed partnerships go beyond primary production, focusing instead on processing, value addition and export-oriented agribusiness capable of creating employment across the value chain.

Delta’s vast coastline and inland waterways also featured prominently. Experts argued that improved regulation of fishing activities, investments in marine logistics and port infrastructure could unlock significant opportunities within the blue economy, positioning the state as a regional maritime hub.

Perhaps the most ambitious discussions centred on energy. Although Delta hosts nearly 3,000 megawatts of installed electricity generation capacity, much of that power remains underutilised because of transmission and distribution constraints. To address this, the state unveiled a roadmap that includes establishing a Delta State Electricity Regulatory Commission and a Rural Electrification Agency following the passage of its Electricity Sector Law.

Industry leaders responded enthusiastically. Tony Elumelu pledged that Heirs Holdings would partner with the state to improve electricity generation and distribution, describing reliable power as the single most important requirement for industrial growth. Executives from Transcorp Power, Manitoba Hydro and other energy firms similarly committed to supporting investments across the electricity value chain.

Private investors also outlined major projects already under consideration, including a 600-megawatt power plant in Obomkpa and expanded compressed natural gas infrastructure designed to serve industries and transportation. These initiatives suggest that Delta intends to leverage its abundant gas resources not merely for extraction but as a catalyst for industrialisation.

Deconstructing Wamakko’s Vote Of Confidence In Governor Aliyu

By Louis Achi

“IT is one thing to support a political son to become governor; it is another for him to justify that confidence through sterling performance. In Governor Ahmed Aliyu, I am deeply gratified. He has more than vindicated our faith in him through his purposeful leadership, humility, achievements and unwavering commitment to building a better Sokoto State.”

– Senator Aliyu Magatakarda Wamakko

It is against this backdrop that Senator Aliyu Wamakko’s recent vote of confidence in and declaration of support for Governor Ahmed Aliyu assumes profound significance. It is far more than an endorsement for a well-deserved second term; it is also the heartfelt satisfaction of a political father who has proudly watched his son justify every ounce of confidence reposed in him. In Governor Aliyu, Wamakko is clearly well pleased—not only because the governor continues to advance his political legacy, but because he has, in many respects, surpassed the expectations and fulfilled the dream of every mentor that his protégé should excel him. His commendation was, therefore, beyond an act of loyalty to an administration he helped bring to office. Rather, it was the genuine expression of a statesman delighted that the government has translated its electoral promises into transformative developmental outcomes.

In politics, endorsements by leaders of Wamakko’s stature are never incidental. They are deliberate interventions that reinforce public confidence, shape political perceptions and often help the undecided voters determine the political direction they should take. When such an endorsement comes from a leader whose influence has defined Sokoto State’s political trajectory since 2007, it warrants a closer examination because it represents a well considered assessment of performance.

That is precisely why Wamakko’s public vote of confidence in the administration of Governor Aliyu carries considerable weight. As a former two-term governor, the senator representing Sokoto North and the undisputed leader of the All Progressives Congress (APC) in Sokoto State, Wamakko, occupies a unique place in the state’s political history. His political judgment has shaped Sokoto’s electoral direction for well over a decade, making his assessment of the present administration one that should naturally command attention.

During a recent engagement with party supporters, Wamakko was unequivocal in reaffirming his unflinching support for Aliyu. His endorsement was not couched in any ambiguity; it was a vote of confidence grounded in performance. Speaking with unmistakable conviction, Wamakko commended the governor’s achievements and called on the people of Sokoto State

to sustain their support and return the governor to office to continue the good work he has begun. For a political leader of Wamakko’s standing, who understands the demands of governance and the expectations that come with it, the basis of his support is significant and Aliyu has given him results to point to.

Across the state, the evidence of Aliyu’s performance is visible—from the construction and rehabilitation of hundreds of kilometres of roads and other critical infrastructure to unprecedented investments in education through the construction, renovation and equipping of classrooms. In health, the administration has recruited hundreds of healthcare workers, procured modern medical equipment and upgraded health facilities, while agriculture has received renewed attention through several farmer-support programmes and expanded access to agricultural inputs. These interventions have been reinforced by sustained investments in security logistics and close collaboration with security agencies to strengthen the protection of lives and property. In Wamakko’s assessment, therefore, Aliyu’s case for a second term is not built on promises of what he intends to do, but on the solid record of what he has already accomplished and the confidence that he can do even more.

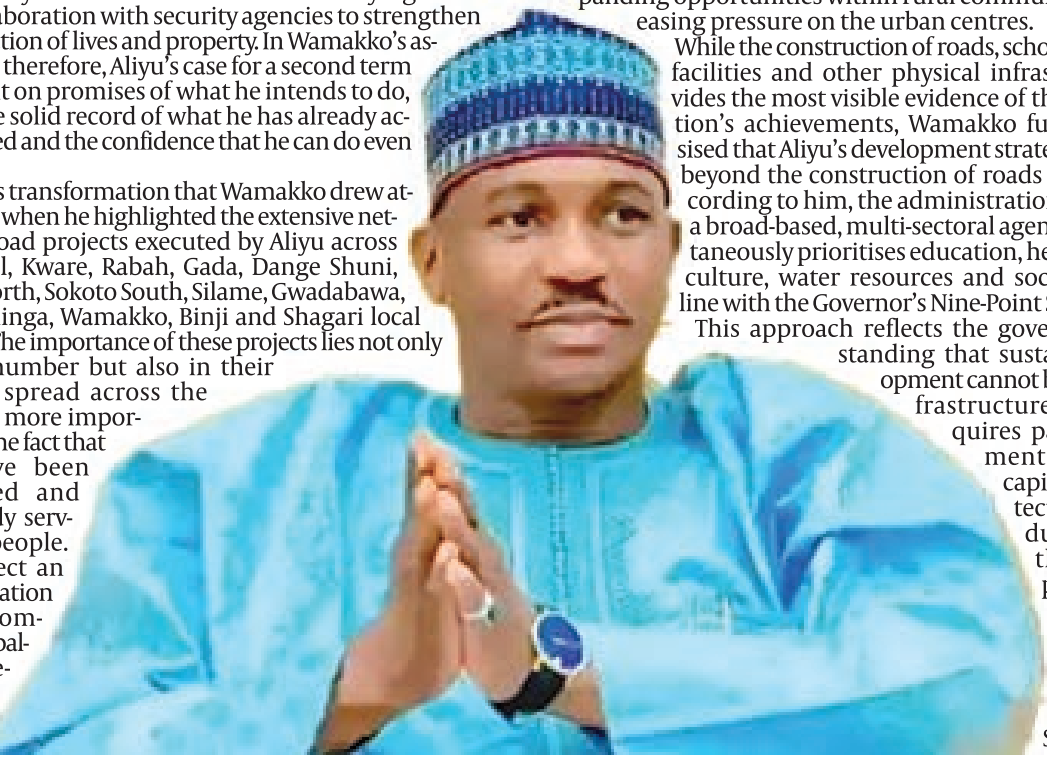
It was this transformation that Wamakko drew attention to when he highlighted the extensive network of road projects executed by Aliyu across Tambuwal, Kware, Rabah, Gada, Dange Shuni, Sokoto North, Sokoto South, Silame, Gwadabawa, Illela, Bodinga, Wamakko, Binji and Shagari local councils. The importance of these projects lies not only in their number but also in their strategic spread across the state and, more importantly, in the fact that they have been completed and are already serving the people. They reflect an administration that is committed to balanced development, ensuring

that the dividends of governance are not concentrated in a few urban centres but extended to communities across the length and breadth of Sokoto State.

For decades, one of the most persistent criticisms of state governments has been the disproportionate concentration of development within state capitals and the neglect of the rural communities. Aliyu’s approach represents a deliberate departure from that pattern. By extending critical infrastructure projects across numerous local councils, the Aliyu administration recognises that development is only meaningful when it is inclusive. It acknowledges that every community, regardless of its location, deserves the presence of government and equitable access to the other dividends of democracy. Beyond improving mobility and stimulating economic activity, this strategy also addresses one of the major drivers of rural-urban migration by creating better living conditions and expanding opportunities within rural communities, thereby easing pressure on the urban centres.

While the construction of roads, schools, healthcare facilities and other physical infrastructure provides the most visible evidence of the administration’s achievements, Wamakko further emphasised that Aliyu’s development strategy extends far beyond the construction of roads or houses. According to him, the administration has pursued a broad-based, multi-sectoral agenda that simultaneously prioritises education, healthcare, agriculture, water resources and social welfare in line with the Governor’s Nine-Point Smart Agenda.

This approach reflects the governor’s understanding that sustainable development cannot be driven by infrastructure alone. It requires parallel investments in human capital, social protection and productive sectors that will improve livelihoods and enhance the overall quality of life of the people of Sokoto State.



Nigerians Will Support The Party With Proven Capacity To Deliver Good Governance In 2027 – Amao

Otunba Isaac Olaseni Amao is a stalwart of All Progressives Congress (APC) and the founder of the Isaac Olaseni Amao Foundation, which is focused on sustainable philanthropic interventions. In this interview with SULIYAT TELLA, he spoke on the preparedness for 2027 elections, the G-15 Coalition in Kwara State and other national issues.

Can you introduce yourself to our readers?

My name is Chief (Dr.) Isaac Olaseni Amao, the Otunba Mayegun of Isin Kingdom. I am a Nigerian from Kwara State, a businessman, philanthropist and political strategist committed to nation-building. Throughout my career, I have dedicated myself to public service and community development, with particular emphasis on youth empowerment, security and good governance. My greatest passion is to see a Nigeria where every citizen enjoys opportunity, dignity and hope.

What is your vision and mission in politics?

My vision is to see a prosperous, united and secure Nigeria where leadership is driven by service rather than self-interest.

My mission is to promote people-centred politics that delivers meaningful results: creating jobs, improving access to quality education and affordable healthcare, strengthening security and providing critical infrastructure, particularly for young people and vulnerable citizens.

Politics has been described as a dirty game. Do you share this view?

No, I do not. Politics is inherently noble because it is about managing our collective resources for the common good. What gives politics a negative image are the actions of a few individuals driven by greed, godfatherism, oligarchic interests and a do-or-die mentality. We can restore confidence in our political system by en-

couraging men and women of integrity, competence and character to participate.

How would you rate the chances of the APC if the opposition parties present a single presidential candidate?

The APC remains Nigeria's most experienced and well-structured political party. A united opposition would certainly make the contest more competitive; democracy thrives on healthy competition. Ultimately, Nigerians will support the party with the strongest track record, nationwide structure and proven capacity to deliver good governance. I believe the APC will continue to enjoy public confidence if it remains committed to fulfilling its promises.

How would you assess President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's Renewed Hope Agenda in delivering the dividends of democracy?

Although the administration is still relatively young, I believe the Renewed Hope Agenda is moving in the right direction. The bold economic reforms, commitment to infrastructure development, renewed focus on security and support for local government autonomy are important foundations for sustainable national growth. Nigerians are already seeing progress through road projects, the student loan programme and various social intervention initiatives. However, government must continue to ensure accountability while accelerating the delivery of tangible benefits.

The 10th National Assembly has been described as a "rubber-stamp" legislature. Do you agree?

I do not share that opinion. Constructive cooperation between the executive and the legislature should not be mistaken for weakness. A rubber-stamp legislature simply approves every proposal without scrutiny. What we are witnessing is greater alignment on national priorities. Nevertheless, the National Assembly must continue to exercise its constitutional oversight responsibilities diligently and hold the Executive accountable on behalf of the Nigerian people.

Some people advocate making membership of the National Assembly a part-time responsibility. What is your position?

Legislation is a full-time responsibility because the challenges facing Nigeria require constant attention and thoughtful engagement. Rather than introducing part-time lawmakers, we should focus on reducing the cost of governance by reviewing the size of government, cutting unnecessary allowances and ensuring that legislators are adequately evaluated based on performance and productivity.

G-15 Coalition in Kwara State is made of governorship aspirants and federal legislators who lost during the APC primaries. Do you think the group is formidable enough to rock the party's boat in the 2027 elections?

I feel the pain of the G-15 deeply. These are men and women who invested time, resources and goodwill into the APC project. To lose at the primaries and still be asked to keep quiet is not easy. Are they strong enough? Politics is about people, not

The APC remains Nigeria's most experienced and well-structured political party. A united opposition would certainly make the contest more competitive; democracy thrives on healthy competition.

just titles. If their concerns are genuine and they engage with humility and in the interest of Kwara, then yes—any group of committed party men can influence direction. But "rocking the boat" should not be our goal; stabilising and improving the boat for the good of all Kwarians should be. My prayer is that dialogue replaces division so that no one is left behind. **Thirty-eight founding members of the 'Otoge' Movement have dissociated themselves from G-15, describing the group as fighting for their personal political interest. Do you share this view?**

With all sympathy, I must say this: 'Otoge' was beyond the 38 persons who signed a document. 'Otoge' was a people's movement. Every market woman in Mandate, every *okada* man in Zango, every student in UNILORIN, every civil servant and farmer – every Kwaran – fought for 'Otoge' freedom. So, it will be unfair and unkind for anyone to claim monopoly or to speak as if they are the sole "leaders" of 'Otoge'. No one person owns it. Whether G-15 is fighting for personal interest or collective interest, only God and time will judge the motive of the heart. But I plead: let us not use 'Otoge' to wound each other. The same spirit that united us to end one form of imposition should not be used to impose silence on others. **Do you think G-15 was formed to protect democratic values and ensure that Kwara politics is not reduced to vendetta?**

I want to believe so. Every political association arises from a perceived need. If the G-15 feels that internal democracy, fairness and respect for party members are being threatened, then raising their voice is democratic. 'Otoge' itself was a cry against imposition and godfatherism. And I believe the imposition of a candidate above another is also a form of godfatherism. If G-15 is pushing back against that, then they are aligning with the very spirit of 'Otoge.' We must however ensure it does not degenerate into vendetta. Politics without bitterness is possible.

How would you assess the current APC-led administration in Kwara State?

I assess with both gratitude and honest expectation. We must thank God that the era of "one-man rule" and godfatherism was broken. There is visible infrastructure, attention to education, health and welfare programmes that were long overdue.

But governance is a journey. There are still concerns about inclusiveness, youth employment and party unity that need urgent attention. My appeal to the government is: carry everyone along. The same people who gave you the mandate in 2019 are still watching and hoping.

What is your view on 'Otoge' six years after?

'Otoge' was divine. It was a revolution of dignity. Six years after, the evidence is clear: power now answers to the people. But the real test of 'Otoge' is not just who we removed, but what we have built in its place. If six years after the average Kwaran is better off—in jobs, infrastructure, freedom of choice—then 'Otoge' has succeeded. If not, then we must ask ourselves hard questions in love, not in anger.

How can Kwara politics move beyond godfatherism?

By entrenching internal democracy. First and foremost, let party primaries be free and fair. Secondly, let institutions, not individuals, determine who flies the party flag. Among others, let leaders desist from manipulation and allow the youth and women have real seats at the table, not just as posters. When no single person can determine winners and losers, godfatherism dies naturally.

In conclusion, my heart is with the G-15. I feel their frustration. But I also love our party and our state too much to see us divided. Let us talk; let us forgive and let us build Kwara together. **How would you rate INEC's performance in recent elections and what improvements would you recommend?**

INEC has made commendable progress, particularly with the introduction of technologies such as BVAS and the IReV portal, which have improved transparency and credibility. However, logistical challenges, especially the late arrival of election materials in some areas, remain significant concerns.

Read the remaining story on www.guardian.ng



Amao



PUBLIC NOTICE

Interim Forfeiture

IN THE FEDERAL HIGH COURT OF NIGERIA
IN THE ABUJA JUDICIAL DIVISION
HOLDEN AT ABUJA

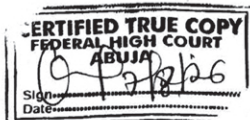
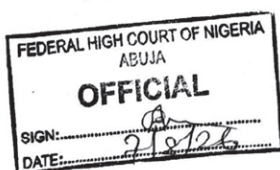
SUIT NO: FHC/ABJ/CS/1673/2026

IN THE MATTER OF AN APPLICATION BY THE EXECUTIVE CHAIRMAN OF THE
ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL CRIMES COMMISSION

IN THE MATTER OF ZIKLASIS NETWORKS LIMITED AND BANK ACCOUNT
NUMBER 0201000000000146338000 OPERATED BY PROVIDUS BANK



HON. JUSTICE E.U. AKPAN
PRESIDING JUDGE



HON. JUSTICE E.U. AKPAN
PRESIDING JUDGE

ORDER

UPON THIS EXPARTE ORIGINATING MOTION dated 28th July, 2026 and filed on the 29th day of July, 2026 praying this Honourable Court for the following reliefs;

1. An Order of interim attached/forfeiture of the sum of Twenty-Six Billion Four Hundred and Eight Million, Three Hundred and thirteen thousand, One Hundred and Twenty-Three Naira, Forty-Seven Kobo (N26,408,313,123.47) only held in the bank account set out in the schedule attached herein to the Federal Government of Nigeria.
2. AN ORDER of this Honourable Court directing the publication of a notice of the foregoing Order in (1) above in

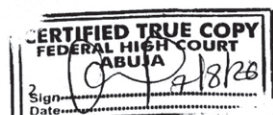
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any national daily newspaper inviting any person(s) or body who may have interest in the subject to show cause, within 14 days of such publication, why an Order of final forfeiture to the Federal Government of Nigeria of the said property should not be made.

S/N	Account unit	Account type	Bank name	Account number	balance
1.	General	Collateral for bonds	Providus Bank plc	020100000000001463800	N26,408,313,123.47

3. AND for such further or other orders as this Honourable Court may deem fit to make in the given circumstances

UPON READING the affidavit in support of the Ex-parte Originating Summons deposed to by **Raphael Ukwame**, male, Nigerian citizen, an investigator with the Economic and Financial Crime Commission, 5 Fomella Street, Off Adetokumbo Ademola Crescent Wuse II, Abuja and a Written Address filed in the Court's Registry.



HON. JUSTICE E.U. AKPAN
PRESIDING JUDGE

AND AFTER HEARING J. N. Dogonyaro Esq., Counsel for the Applicant move in terms of the motion paper.

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED AS FOLLOWS:

1. An Order is made granting interim attachment/forfeiture of the sum of Twenty-Six Billion Four Hundred and Eight Million, Three Hundred and thirteen thousand, One Hundred and Twenty-Three Naira, Forty-Seven Kobo (N26,408,313,123.47) only held in the bank account set out in the schedule attached herein to the Federal Government of Nigeria.
2. AN ORDER is made directing the publication of the notice of the interim order of forfeiture in (1) above in any national daily newspaper inviting any person(s) or body who may have interest in the subject to show cause, within 14 days of such publication, why an Order of final forfeiture to the Federal Government of Nigeria of the said property should not be made.



3

HON. JUSTICE E.U. AKPAN
PRESIDING JUDGE

3. Case is adjourned to 17th day of August, 2026 for hearing.

ISSUED AT ABUJA under the seal of the Court and the Hand of the Presiding Judge this 31st day of July 2026.

Samuel Ikpat
Registrar



Raphael Ukwame

Editorial

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Students' Hostel Crisis Demands More Than Declarations

THE declaration of a state of emergency on the deplorable condition of students' hostels by the National Association of Nigerian Students (NANS) has, once again, drawn national attention to one of the most neglected aspects of Nigeria's tertiary education system.

Across federal and state universities, polytechnics and colleges of education, thousands of students reside in hostels that have become symbols of institutional decay rather than centres of learning. Leaking roofs, overcrowded rooms, broken toilets, poor water supply, inadequate electricity, poor waste management and weak security have become the norm in many institutions. These conditions undermine students' health, safety, dignity and academic performance.

While NANS' alarm could not have come at a better time, declarations alone will not solve a problem that has accumulated over decades. What is required is sincere collaboration among all stakeholders, backed by accountability, transparency and sustained investment in maintenance. Nigeria cannot claim to be building a knowledge-driven economy while expecting students to learn and thrive in environments unfit for decent human habitation.

One of the greatest failures in the management of tertiary institutions is the poor maintenance culture. Many hostels that were structurally sound when built have deteriorated because routine maintenance was ignored until rehabilitation became

extremely expensive. Broken plumbing, damaged roofs, faulty electrical installations and blocked drainage systems are often left unattended for years. Rather than adopting preventive maintenance, authorities wait until facilities become completely unusable before seeking intervention funds. This cycle is both wasteful and irresponsible.

Equally disturbing is the racketeering associated with hostel allocation in many institutions. Students have repeatedly alleged that hostel spaces are often hijacked by unscrupulous officials, student leaders and middlemen who demand illegal payments before allocating rooms. In some institutions, deserving students are denied accommodation while rooms are reserved for those willing to pay unofficial fees. Such corruption not only undermines fairness but also forces many students into expensive and often unsafe off-campus accommodation.

The Federal Ministry of Education cannot remain a distant observer. Although universities enjoy a measure of autonomy, the ministry has a constitutional responsibility to formulate policies, monitor standards and ensure that public institutions provide a conducive learning environment.

The Minister of Education, Dr Tunji Alausa, should lead a nationwide audit of hostel infrastructure across federal tertiary institutions and work with state governments to encourage similar assessments in state-owned institutions. Such an audit should identify infrastructure gaps, establish maintenance priorities and provide a realistic

funding framework for rehabilitation.

The Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) has continued to support infrastructure development in higher institutions. However, more emphasis should be placed on maintenance and rehabilitation rather than the endless construction of new buildings while existing facilities collapse. Every institution should be required to establish a professionally managed maintenance unit with clear performance targets and dedicated funding.

The responsibility also rests squarely on university administrators. Vice-chancellors, rectors, provosts, governing councils and pro-chancellors must treat hostel conditions as a strategic governance issue rather than a routine administrative inconvenience. The quality of accommodation reflects the quality of institutional leadership. Governing councils should insist on annual reports on hostel maintenance, occupancy levels, safety standards and expenditure. Transparent procurement processes and periodic facility inspections should become mandatory.

Private sector participation through carefully structured public-private partnerships may also provide part of the solution. However, such arrangements must be properly regulated to prevent excessive accommodation charges that place additional financial burdens on students already struggling with rising tuition-related expenses and inflation.

The students' body NANS, too, has an important responsibility. It should remain an independent advocate for students' welfare rather than allowing itself to become a political platform or an extension of government or partisan interests. Its credibility depends on its willingness to speak truth to power irrespective of which administration is in office. Student leaders should focus on evidence-based advocacy, expose corruption wherever it exists including hostel allocation rackets and

work constructively with authorities to find lasting solutions.

The association must equally demonstrate honesty and integrity in its engagements. It cannot condemn corruption within university administrations while tolerating similar practices among student leaders. If NANS is to regain and sustain the confidence of Nigerian students, it must be transparent, accountable and committed solely to protecting students' interests.

Students also have responsibilities. Hostel facilities are public assets that should be used responsibly. Acts of vandalism, theft of electrical fittings, indiscriminate waste disposal and poor sanitation contribute significantly to the rapid deterioration of facilities. Institutions should strengthen student participation in hostel management and promote a culture of shared responsibility for maintaining public property.

Ultimately, improving hostel conditions is not merely about providing accommodation. It is about protecting lives, promoting academic excellence and preserving human dignity. Students who live in overcrowded, unhealthy and insecure environments cannot be expected to perform at their best. The quality of a nation's higher education system is measured not only by its lecture halls and laboratories but also by the conditions under which its students live.

The emergency declared by NANS should therefore serve as a catalyst for concrete action rather than another headline that fades with the news cycle. The Federal Ministry of Education, state governments, vice-chancellors, rectors, governing councils, pro-chancellors, TETFund, development partners and student leaders must collectively address this longstanding crisis. Nigeria's tertiary institutions should produce graduates prepared to compete globally, not survivors of neglect and institutional decay. A nation that invests in decent student accommodation invests in its future.

LETTER

Evaluating Nigeria - China Bilateral Relationship

SIR: The entire gamut of bilateral exchanges of two giant nations in their respective regions is currently hanging in the balance. Digging deep into China's diplomatic experiment may have been a wider topical dimension of this expository discourse. But I needed to particularize it to Africa continent, then Nigeria. Special attention may be drawn to the current China Ambassador to Nigeria His Excellency Yang Dunhai (resumed August 2024 and formerly China Ambassador to Malta 2020-2024) and the Lagos State based Consul General H.E Ms Yan Yuqing (whose locally adopted names are Ayo, Uche and Fatima). The rating here is necessarily so that both nations grow together in a mutual exchange of cultural, technological, socioeconomic dimensions. Respect to each other's dignity and national integrity is crucial.

Current China Ambassador H.E Yu Dunhai and other Nigeria dignitaries were at the event tagged "Nigeria China at 55 Dialogue" which held at the Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution (IPCR) headquarters in Abuja February 11, 2026. The sight and sound of the occasion is still reverberating indefinitely. The Director General of the Centre for China Studies Dr. Charles Onunaiju in conjunction with the Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution (IPCR) made the event possible. It was indeed an intellectual feasting event, to say the least.

No doubt, Nigeria and China share several similarities. Look at this index commonality of both remarkable nations...

- October 1 Independence date
- Regional largest population

- Ethnic diversity yet under unitary governance
- Young population manpower, etc.

Truly, amongst the comity of nations worldwide, Nigeria and China are richly endowed with great potential and prospects to galvanise for mutual rapid growth purposes. It remains so to be recognised and explored maximally.

Reading through the 4 series book The Governance of China (which hard copy was handed to me by H.E Ms Yan Yuqing six months after her duty resumption at their Idejo Street Embassy office) and most of his landmark speeches and other classics by President Xi Jinping, it is quite clear that China's Xi Jinping led Communist Party (C.C.P) discourages what I rather term the "supremist syndrome" or generally known as hegemonic stance. The predominant theme surrounding his writings is Major-Country Diplomacy With Chinese Characteristics. It trickles down to "people-to-people growth via Chinese Embassies and Consulates". Furthermore, it brandishes "core "Foreign Policy Principle: Community of Shared Future for Mankind," under which is a silent prohibition of imposition of ideology through a static hegemonic (supremist mentality) position.

Shockingly, a theme that is demonstratively being violated is "People-to-People Exchanges As A Pillar," which illustrate the need to support without questioning the exchange programs ranging from scholarship, reward trips for performing staff by multi-billion blue-chip companies,

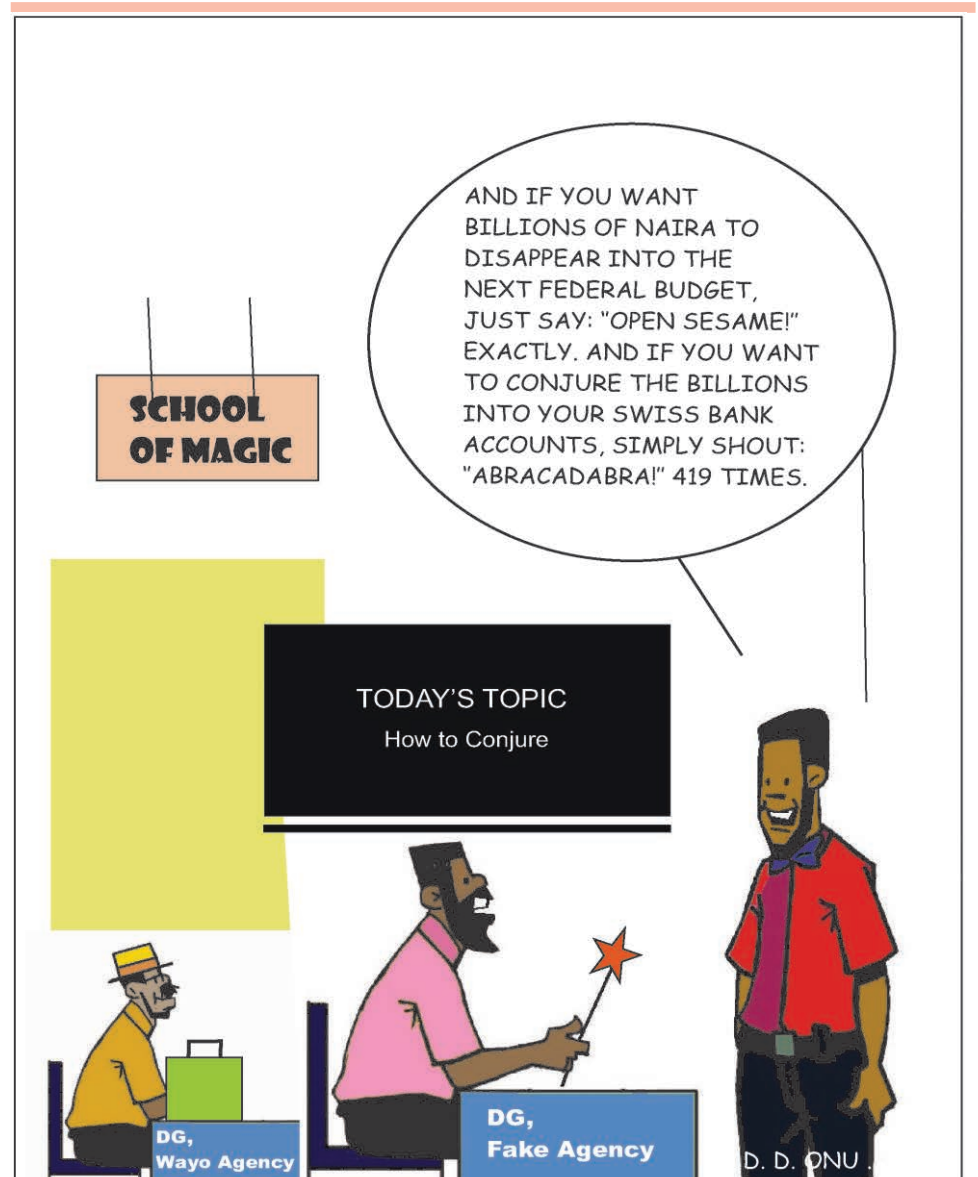
media training workshop, cultural and social services, etc.

Often I have sounded like a dutiful and eagle eyed watchman the great fiscal and economic support to Nigeria to take advantage of as generously provided by our concerned friendly nation China. Sitting with the immediate former Consul General of China H.E Chu Maoming in the year 2023, (just toward the end of his tenure) at the Lagos office, he visibly wondered why Nigeria citizens are worried about the necessary loans Nigeria obtains from China. Then it was about USD32Billion during late President Mohammadu Buhari administration. I took exception to his apparent misinformation on the subject. He got curious. I spoke convincingly and critically. He ate my rebuttal like it was his only available and healthy lunch. I said that Nigerians who are, in his words complaining about the continued borrowing, saying "he who goes borrowing goes sorrowing", are not crying wolf but are constructive and correct expressing their concerns for the integrity in the disbursements of the received loans. I emphasized that there is no visible or tangible evidence that the previously acquired macro loans were responsibly and judiciously disbursed. Rather it ended in private pockets. He shuddered. Then he said, "that's true."

• Steve Obum Orajiaku wrote via +2348087885533 (WhatsApp/SMS only)

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Opinion

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Jakande: Nigeria’s Response To People-oriented Leadership Via Credible Elections

By Nduka Uzuakpundu

It was in his name that the Nigerian Guild of Editors (NGE) gathered, recently in Lagos. The fourth in a series, so far, of public lectures, in honour of the first democratically elected governor of Lagos State – Alhaji Lateef Kayode Jakande – was an occasion on which Gbemiga Ogunleye, a lawyer and former provost of the Nigerian Institute of Journalism, Ogba, Lagos, and one other, made a case that Jakande was well deserving of an honour by the Lagos State and federal governments.

In agreement, Professor Sylvester Odion Akhaine, of Lagos State University, Ojo, emphasized a thought-provoking point that was more of a challenge to Nigerian journalists. His submission was freighted on the fact that Jakande, who’s, perhaps, the best governor and only seasoned journalist to have governed Lagos State, had reliable allies, in the NGE and Nigeria Union of Journalists, who’re well-positioned and armed with all that it’d take, especially the pen, to see that Jakande would be crowned, meritoriously, at state and national levels. Posthumously. And, in blowing the journalistic trumpet that Jakande should be honoured, any time hence, there should be less of modesty. It’s just human.

Jakande, who had been a journalist, as far back as the 1940s – well before about 98 percent of the audience were born – deserved to be honoured by the Lagos and federal governments for his many feats in exemplary leadership. All that were richly expressed in Jakande establishing the first state-owned university in the country, in the interest of the children of the poor; free education that, as an apostle of the late sage – Chief Obafemi Awolowo – he pressed, with an utmost vigour of an Olympic sprint champion and, amongst others, construction of affordable houses, in estates, in different parts of the state, for low income workers. Those feats, by selfless Jakande, have not been surpassed – indeed, it’s far from certain that they would, in the next seven decades – more than forty years, since he left office, on December 31, 1983.

In response to a call that the Lagos State University should be an eponymous Jakande institution, Akhaine said that the duty to that effect was that of the visitor to the university – in the person of Governor Babajide Sanwo-Olu, who was represented on the occasion by Gbenga Omotoso, an award-winning journalist and Commissioner for Information and Strategy. The tacit challenge thrown at the NGE, by Akhaine, who was the guest lecturer, was that the body should be about mounting unceasing pressure on the Sanwo-Olu administration to that effect.

While some may have contended that, as someone who lived a clearly spartanly life, and never travelled out of the country between 1979 and 1983, when he was in office, for whatever reason, and amongst others, never had a fleet of posh cars, Jakande was the only one who, therefore, could explain why he never named the university that he established after himself. LKJ, as he was admirably called by his swarming supporters, thought otherwise, this writer thinks, because of his belief in the Awoist philosophy of selfless service, as the first aspect of good leadership.

This was more so, as Akhaine said, repeatedly, especially when it concerned the individual and the public, in a voting political

process, that mirrors the “contestation of power.” It was that political process that produced Jakande as a decent, selfless governor under the banner of the Unity Party of Nigeria (U.P.N.). Still, the Jakande case of clearly of visible, unrivalled, people-oriented achievements, made it seem as though the opposition never existed. Selfless service and an open-door policy made it easy for Jakande to be the darling of the voters in Lagos State. It’s for that – and many more, besides – that Jakande’s is a cherished memory.

Where are the shameless, unclean politicians, of whom Nikita Khrushchev – the third president of the defunct Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (U. S. S. R.) – said were unrepentant liars, who’d promise to build a bridge where there’s no river? Where are they? Which one of them can erase the glowing good leadership record set by Jakande?

It, really, was for Jakande’s brilliant performance that Lagos State, now, rightly, has the slogan “Centre of Excellence.” For Jakande’s peerless achievements, it’s, hereby, decreed that future governors of Lagos State must be journalists. .if only to put an end to corruption and the flagitious misuse of public funds. With the Jakande’s spirit of purposive, good leadership, in all aspects of public life, Nigeria would rival such ex-Asian Tigers as Singapore, South Korea and Taiwan.

The Jakande phenomenon – in and out of office, and in death – remains a compelling reference point for researchers and commentators on progressive public administration – that was clearly defined by transparency and prudent use of public funds. If he were alive today, Jakande, would have long served, again, as governor – not, necessarily, because ‘one good term deserves another’, as some empty politicians are known to parrot, but for all his visible Olympian feats. Yes, for that, he would have had less need to spend, on the campaign trail, his own funds, but millions of Naira donated by his friends or faceless admirers – call it crowd funds, if you care. In that case, it’s almost certain that Jakande would have had no challenger. He would have been returned unopposed.

It’s on record that Jakande was a king-maker with a swarming population of followers in need of his blessing as they went into Lagos politics as debutants. Were Jakande a former governor, in the Fourth Republic, he would have rejected the utterly obscene post-governorship benefits as enshrined in the 1999 Constitution, in Section 124, which includes “a life pension matching 100 percent of an incumbent’s basic salary, furnished residential properties in their state and Abuja, regularly replaced luxury vehicles, free medical care and heavy security.” Again, because of his unblinking belief in the Awoist frugal life style, Jakande would have campaigned against it; that none of the democratically elected governors of Lagos State – if not all the governors in the South West geopolitical zone – should accept the extremely unjust offer.

All that would have sounded, appealing, like a peremptory commandment by Jakande. He, probably, would have lobbied the Lagos State House of Assembly, besides, to legislate to that effect. Yes, opposition, by those who prefer to live a life of unmerited luxury, at the expense of those who had, some years ago, voted him into office, would have come Jakande’s way, but bootless would it, for certain, have been. Akhaine submitted that

Jakande was a manifestation of a good choice, in an exercise of the contestation of power, by an enlightened class of voters, who were athirst of a free political space via a termination of a brutish strataocracy.

By extension, there’s a pressing need for the same class of enlightened voters to elect individuals – men and women, in municipal elections – as their deputies, at the three tiers government. Such men and women, Akhaine said, in his belief in Solon – the dour-looking lawgiver of Athens, in ancient Greece, the birthplace of democracy – should realize that power was never served a la carte. For its foremost profile, as a political elements, in an organized political space, it requires a persuasively independent body as an umpire – in a vivacious contestation for it by candidates of political parties. Independents, too.

Beyond mediation and voters participation, in such a contest, it was the submission of Akhaine – a political scientist and specialist in demilitarization and constitutionalism, in a post-military nation-state, that is preparing herself for multi-party democracy – that the skipper of the umpire body should be elected by the parliament; in Nigeria’s case the National Assembly, which comprises the House of Representatives and the Senate. Not, as he offered, the executive.

The role of parliament – especially in a liberal, free-enterprise democracy, as in the United States of America – is to ensure that, with a competent, neutral head, the umpire body of a voting exercise, which he’d supervise, turns out an approximation of a final result – with a finality that would make, less necessary, a post-poll contestation of the results, which, in the Nigerian milieu, could be extremely violent, as horribly demonstrated by Operation Weti e, in the early 1960s and the Ajasin-Omoboriowo vendetta in Ondo State, in the early 1980s.

As the 2027 elections draw near, it was the opinion of Akhaine – on an occasion that was graced by Jakande’s widow, Alhaja Sikirat Abimbola and members of her family, Lai Olurode, retired professor of sociology, University of Lagos, Akoka and former national electoral commissioner of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), Sam Amuka, veteran journalist and founder of Vanguard newspapers, and veteran journalist, Ray Ekpu, the only surviving member of the Dele Giwa-led quartet that founded Newswatch magazine – that INEC should distant itself from having an Ahmad or Lawan, declared by the courts as the winner of an election that they never participated in. Between INEC and the Supreme Court there ought, in the interest of democracy, to be some fixed peace – defined by the absence of election-related cases. It’s only a truly clean INEC and impartial court, as Akhaine put it, that can be generous enough to crown the Nigerian electoral process thus.

And, that, according to Eze Anaba, the seventeenth president of NGE and sixth editor of Vanguard newspaper, is an assuring exquisite prerequisite to hold, in a firm leash, rascally, bushy-haired Wole Soyinka from holding INEC in solitary confinement, so that it does not announce election results that would trigger off riots; sanguinary riots – a la Ajasin-Omoboriowo that would shatter the peace of the country! And, so, a costly invitation to the rifle – to the termination of the Fourth Republic, which Soyinka fought, valiantly, for in snowy Norway? Jakande to the rescue?

**Uzuakpundu is a Lagos-based journalist.*

By Victoria Ngozi Ikeano

HAPPY new month...Wish you and family the best of this new month of August, 2026... So rang out greetings across the length and breadth of our country as August arrived promptly, on Saturday, its first day. In this month we welcome special visitors. It is one that is packed with events, observances, commemorations, happenings that arrive only in August. Among them are, August (women’s) meeting, August (rainy season) break/peak in southern and northern Nigeria respectively, harvest season, New Yam festival, numerous United Nations International Days. August also heralds start of the adored European Football Leagues while primary and secondary school students settle down into their long vacation in August after end of school session around mid-July.

One visitor is making a debut entry. It is the first time it is arriving in August and would probably be the last. Its August coming is an emergency, necessitated by circumstances due to force majeure, specifically a change in the 2027 electoral time table to avoid a clash with the all-important Ramadan fasting period. Campaigns for the much awaited 2027 presidential elections commence in August, August 17. No other month in the Gregorian calendar equals August in terms of high profile events and occurrences that happen in August. You could say December rivals it. However, most events in December are linked to the Christmas festival. Long before advent of Christianity in Nigeria the New Yam

August Visitors Arrive In August

festival had always been celebrated. It is about the oldest festival in our land and comes during onset of harvest season in August. In August new, fresh crops from the soil appear in markets. And in southern Nigeria August break sets in. This is a break from the raining season which peaks in June/July, restarts in September and gradually peters out by end of October when the dry/hot season commences. Apparently because of climate change, time for the August break is no longer predictable but it does arrive anyway. For northern Nigeria the first set of crops that do not need much rain, mainly egusi, are harvested by August. August is peak of the raining season in the north when other crops that require much rain are planted, essentially grains.

Hitherto, the New Yam festival was associated with “pagans”, “traditional worshippers”. If in referring to them as pagans, we mean that they did not ‘believe’ in God, we are wrong. It is just that our forebears like other ancient peoples on earth had a ‘limited’ recognition of the Almighty Creator and sought to approach Him in the way they saw that which they considered as the highest at the time. In accordance with the law of development, our recognition of Him proceeded step by step. Beginning from our earth which is coarse matter, the broad outline of Creation upwards is: Ethereal matter – Substantiality – Spiritual Creation. Ancient peoples were permitted to ‘see’ up to

the realm of Substantiality where they perceived the lords of the elementals (lords of the nature beings), whereby the concept of gods and goddesses cropped up in them. They regarded these as supreme beings, being the furthest they could ‘see’ and perceive.

Yam was/is considered as the highest crop of the soil. And so, ancient peoples, our ancestors instituted a festival whereby they brought before the Nature beings, harvests from the soil (symbolically yam) to thank the gods and goddesses in charge of these Nature beings for a bountiful harvest and besiege them to bless the soil for more bountiful harvest in the next season. Thereafter permission is given to start eating newly harvested yams, followed by feasting and festivities. It may be compared to the way we give thanks to God and ask for his blessing before eating any food.

However, our forbears erred when they viewed lords of the elementals as gods and ‘worshipped’ them through (distorted) earthly representation of nature beings. By doing so, they contravened the supreme commandment of God, which is, “Thou shall have no other gods but me”. This simply stipulates that we should not accord divine honours, veneration to no other (being or thing) than the Almighty Creator who created everything from the highest in primordial spiritual realm through the spiritual realm (heaven) down to this earth plane of coarse matter. Besides, lords

of the elementals, nature beings are no more than little servants of God who make use of His Power for their works which is development of what we term Nature in their various elements which in turn make it possible for us to exist on earth. With extension of our spiritual knowledge, came the concept of One God. We now know that that there is only one God and one Power, primordial power that streams throughout the creations for all creatures therein, big and small. Additionally, gratitude belongs only to GOD, to no other.

Alas, times have changed. For where previously, the Church viewed the new yam festival as a pagan feast which Christians should not associate with, it has now come to the realisation that it is no more than a festival of thanksgiving to God for harvests of the soil while also praying to Him for his continued blessing on the land for future bumper harvests. They now participate in it officially. Christian women of the Catholic and Anglican faiths are about now, rounding off their yearly two-day August meeting during which talks are given on some important topics. It kicked off with church services. August has several United Nations international days. It starts with the Breastfeeding Week that runs from the first to the seventh day of August.

• Victoria Ngozi Ikeano wrote via victoriangozii@gmail.com 08033077519

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RIVERS STATE GOVERNMENT

HAPPY 78TH
Birthday

DR. PETER OTUNUYA ODILI, CON
KCSGG, GSSRS, KSJI

On behalf of the Government
and good people of Rivers State,
I heartily congratulate you, on the
occasion of your 78th birthday.

As Governor from 1999 to 2007,
your visionary leadership laid
the foundation for the modern
Rivers State.

On this milestone, I pray that
the Almighty God grants you
many more years in good health,
strength, and peace to keep
serving humanity.

Congratulations!



His Excellency
Sir Siminalayi Fubara, GSSRS
Governor, Rivers State



Odey's Journey Towards New African Dance Language

By Gregory Austin Nwakunor

THERE are moments in an artiste's career when silence is mistaken for absence. However, as Anthony McCyprians Odey confessed what happened in his case was, in reality, "a period of incubation."

His recent performance, *Meyeyubalami*, best revealed this. "If hibernation represents a period of artistic incubation and transformation, *Meyeyubalami*, meaning 'experience my journey' in Yala, moves even closer to autobiography," he quipped.

The premise resonates strongly with Odey's own journey and raises an important question: what does it mean for an artiste to discover a vocation in an environment where that vocation may not initially be understood or accepted?

With over three decades, this distinction is important. Odey is not returning to dance; he is returning to it with a different vocabulary. Through Danzodey Artz and the Body Language Klinik, he has trained and mentored more than 170 artists across beginner, intermediate and professional levels. His influence therefore cannot be measured solely through his own performances.

His artistic legacy is also visible in the artists he has helped develop. Among those associated with his mentorship are practitioners such as Justine Ezirim (Wao Factor), Michael Ejinkeonye (Ntoroso Odido), Wunmi Idowu (Woezo Africa) and Anthony Edet Offiong (Thew Foundation/Thintalltony Limited), whose subsequent professional journeys demonstrate the potential reach of his pedagogical practice.

He is not merely teaching people how to dance. He is transmitting knowledge about how an entire theatrical ecosystem functions. For him, teaching extends beyond choreography. He is concerned with theatre versatility: costume and set design, storytelling, traditional musical instruments, maintenance and repair, performance, and general theatre management. This is perhaps where his identity as a cultural custodian becomes most evident.

"My artistic journey has taken me across Nigeria and beyond, through dance, choreography, theatre, teaching, cultural festivals, international exchanges, and multidisciplinary performance. My movement from Western Nigeria to South-South Nigeria, Cross River State precisely, has become particularly significant in my hibernation. It is presented not simply as geographical migration but as an artistic search for 'more': more experience, more cultural knowledge, more possibilities, and perhaps, a deeper understanding of myself as an African artiste."

Meyeyubalami, therefore, becomes more than a dance production. It becomes a testimony to artistic courage. Its themes of resilience, self-discovery and determination are not abstract concepts. They emerge from the lived experience of an artist who has spent decades building a career within a demanding and evolving creative environment. Justapose this with his decision to study Dance and Choreography at university level. Can itself constitute an act of resistance, especially in societies where professional success is frequently measured through conventional career paths, choosing dance requires conviction. The young artist must overcome not only external expectations but also the internal fear of pursuing an uncertain path.

Perhaps the most significant evolution in Odey's career is the transition from being a young dancer searching for direction to becoming a mentor responsible for helping others find theirs. So, his *Danzodey's Hibernation* challenges the assumption that an artist who becomes less visible has necessarily become less active.

Odey presents hibernation as a period of intense artistic excavation—a time of looking inward, moving across cultures, questioning identity, and allowing new artistic possibilities to take form. "The hibernation refers to my 'disappearance' from Lagos 'the Entertainment and Creative mainstream/scene of Nigeria/Africa; a journey to rediscover self; deeper reflection of my creative surgeon spanning over three decades. In other words the hibernation is the chronicle of an era within the journey of my recent explorations that birthed *Meyeyubalami*."

For Odey, the movement from one Nigerian cultural environment to another appears to have created an opportunity to encounter differences from within his own country.

This is one of the most interesting dimensions of his work. Rather than treating Nigerian culture as a single, homogeneous entity, Odey's practice recognises the multiplicity of movement traditions, histories, rituals, aesthetics, and performance languages that exist within Nigeria," he says.

"My engagement with this vocabulary is, therefore, not simply aesthetic. It becomes a method of asking questions about the body and society. What happens when the dancer refuses the expected shape? What happens when movement becomes exaggerated? What happens when the familiar becomes strange? And what happens when cultural traditions are not frozen in the past but

transformed into contemporary artistic languages?" he asks.

He believes that one challenge a contemporary African choreographer confronts is "the relationship between indigenous movement traditions and contemporary dance."

He says: "There is a danger at both extremes: tradition can become museum-like if it is reproduced without questioning, while contemporary experimentation can become disconnected from the cultural knowledge that gives the work its identity." Odey's practice appears to occupy the space between these two positions.

His choreography draws from indigenous movement vocabularies while embracing contemporary dance, theatrical spectacle and experimentation. The result is not an attempt to choose between tradition and modernity but to allow both to speak to one another.

His experience in Eastern Nigeria, particularly his long association with the cultural environment of Cross River State and Carnival Calabar provided a new performance laboratory. Here, dance intersects with masquerade, ritual, spectacle, costume, music, communal celebration, theatrical exaggeration, and the transformation of the human body.

In this sense, "hibernation can be read as a record of artistic migration: the dancer leaves one environment, encounters another, and returns transformed."

His sustained involvement with Carnival Calabar from 2012 to 2025, including his work as Director of Dance and Choreography for Diamond Band, gave him extensive experience working within one of Africa's most prominent cultural festivals.

It also exposed him to the possibilities and contradictions of large-scale cultural performance: spectacle and substance, tradition and commercialisation, community and institution, heritage and contemporary entertainment.

"Carnival has traditionally provided a space where social conventions can be inverted. The ordinary becomes extraordinary. The marginal can become visible. The body can challenge authority, convention and expectation.

Odey's engagement with Carnival consequently provides him with a powerful artistic language for examining contemporary Nigeria," he notes.

Carnival occupies a particularly important place in Odey's artistic development. Rather than viewing Carnival merely as entertainment or spectacle, he appears to understand it as a sophisticated performance system in which the body can simultaneously become celebratory, grotesque, political, ritualistic, comic, and disruptive.

This explains his fascination with the grotesque. "The grotesque body refuses perfection. It exaggerates, distorts, expands, contracts and unsettles. It can be beautiful and disturbing at the same time. Within carnivalesque traditions, such physical distortion can challenge conventional ideas about order, status, beauty, identity and social behaviour."

For Odey, "cultural custodianship does not appear to mean preserving culture in a fixed or untouched form. It means understanding it deeply enough to carry it forward. That distinction is central to his artistic identity."

In *Danzodey Hibernation*, the body becomes more than an instrument for choreography. It becomes an archive, he reiterates. "It carries memory, migration, cultural inheritance, struggle, celebration and transformation. The dancer's body remembers places that the dancer has inhabited, people encountered, traditions learned, performances experienced and identities negotiated. This perspective gives the work a personal dimension."

Odey's choreography is informed by his experiences as a dancer, choreographer, teacher, costume and props designer, television presenter and compere. These apparently different creative identities converge in his performance practice. He understands that theatre is not produced by movement alone. Costume alters the body. Props alter the

body's relationship with space. Storytelling gives movement meaning. Music changes physical rhythm. Stage management determines how an audience experiences an



Odey

Book On Spirit, Soul & Body To Help Young Women Navigate Pressures Of Identity, Self-Worth

By Balikis Ademuyiwa

AS young women continue to navigate growing pressures around identity, self-worth, emotional well-being, relationships and purpose, a new initiative is seeking to provide practical guidance and sustained support during their formative years.

Founded by Chinemerem Blessing Wealth, the Spirit, Soul & Body (S.S.B.) Project is a transformational initiative designed to raise a generation of whole,

resilient and purpose-driven young women equipped to lead meaningful lives and positively influence their communities.

At the heart of the initiative is the *Spirit, Soul & Body* book, a practical,

faith-based resource created to help young women nurture every dimension of their lives while developing the confidence and clarity needed to make healthy decisions.

The official launch of the *Spirit, Soul & Body* book and the SSB Project holds August 22.

The book introduces foundational principles and provides participants with a resource they can revisit. Participants will take part in teaching sessions, reflective exercises, discussions and mentoring moments, while also having opportunities to ask questions in a supportive environment.

Part of the project is a three-hour SSB workshop, which is expected to provide an engaging and interactive experience, with sessions covering identity, emotional well-being, self-awareness, resilience, healthy relationships, personal values, purpose discovery and practical life skills hold.

The workshop, however, is intended to serve as a starting point. Young women who wish to continue their development will have access to a broader TCW Academy programme offering ongoing learning, mentoring and personal

development opportunities.

The goal, according to Wealth, is not simply to provide information but to create moments of reflection that encourage meaningful personal growth.

Over the next 18 months, the SSB Project aims to reach at least 1,000 girls across several Nigerian cities and the United Kingdom. To achieve this target, TCW Academy plans to build partnerships with schools, churches, youth organisations and community groups that can host workshops and support the distribution of the handbook.

The academy is also developing a network of trained mentors who will provide continued guidance to participants after each engagement.

While reaching 1,000 young women is an important milestone, Wealth said the project's ultimate measure of success will be the lasting transformation experienced by participants.

She described the initiative as more than a book launch, calling it an invitation to invest in the next generation with intentionality, compassion and practical action.

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



Wealth

Broadcast Content Across Borders

Compiled by Shaibu Hussein

TIFF Wraps Up Section Specific Announcements

THE Toronto International Film Festival, presented by Rogers, wraps up its section-specific announcements with another electric and eldritch edition of its 'Midnight Madness' programme. Spanning the full spectrum of midnight movie modes, from classic horror and wicked action to absurdist alt-comedy and the return of gonzo documentaries to the section courtesy of Canada's Matthew Rankin (*The Twentieth Century*, TIFF '19; *Universal Language*, TIFF '24), the 2026 'Midnight Madness' line-up includes six World Premieres across 10 countries of production. Further assembled within the slate are an awesome array of masked killers, medieval ghosts, drug-addled mobsters, denim-desiring yakuza, amnesiac detectives, martial artist vampires, interstellar infantrymen, competing Canadian politicians, Faustian bargains, existential ennui, and even an infamous talking pineapple. An audience favourite with an 'obsessed' following, 'Midnight Madness' delivers 10 late-night screenings at the (allegedly) haunted Royal Alexandra Theatre, each starting at 11:59 pm. Hosted by section curator Peter Kuplowsky, the programme invites the Festival's most devoted and raucous audience to close out each night by diving into the best of the bizarre in contemporary genre and underground cinema, from emerging and established provocateurs. And the 'Midnight Madness' mayhem expands this year, with a special screening of Na Hong-jin's sci-fi action thriller, *Hope*, starring Hwang Jung-min, Zo In-sung, and Jung Hyeon on Wednesday, September 9, the eve before Festival; and a "return to where it all started" screening of Focus Features and writer-director Curry Barker's breakout success *Obsession* on

Friday, September 11. As previously announced, TIFF: The Market will host an onstage moderated conversation with director Barker and star Inde Navarrette as part of the seven-day Summit at the John Bassett Theatre; accessible by pass holders and public ticket holders. The 2026 midnight madness programme will spotlight films such as *Anchors Aweigh* | Matt Barats | USA (International Premiere), *Arrested Memory* | SABU | Taiwan, Japan (North American Premiere), *HALF* | Samjad | India (World Premiere), *Kick On* | Nick Kozakis | Australia (World Premiere), *Ladies and Gentlemen*, *Brian Mulroney* | Matthew Rankin | Canada (World Premiere and *River* | Joshua Giuliano | USA (World Premiere and Midnight Madness Opening Night Film). Others are *Rogue Trooper* | Duncan Jones | United Kingdom (North American Premiere and Midnight Madness Closing Night Film), *The Face of Horror* | Anna Biller | United Kingdom (World Premiere), *The Spiral* | Paolo Strippoli | Italy, France, Belgium (International Premiere) and

Vintage Violence | Eugene Kotlyarenko | USA, Japan, which is having its World Premiere. The 51st edition of the Toronto International Film Festival, presented by Rogers, runs September 10 to 20, 2026

... Also Set Is TIFF 'In Conversation' IN the meantime, TIFF has announced this year's iconic *In Conversation* with... series, expanding the festival experience beyond the screen through in-depth onstage interviews with artists in front of a live audience. A Festival favourite, this year welcomes Lee Min-ho, Rachel Morrison, Chris Rock, Andrew Scott, and Hudson Williams to the stage for intimate conversations about their creative journeys, craft, and careers. "This year's *In Conversation* with... series brings together trailblazers and extraordinary storytellers for conversations that will offer audiences a deeper look at their craft and careers," said Chief Programming Officer, TIFF, Anita Lee. "From Lee Min-ho, who became an icon of Korean drama long before K-dramas captured global audiences, and Rachel

Morrison, the first woman nominated for an Academy Award for Best Cinematography, to multi-hyphenate Chris Rock, who has fearlessly redefined comedy, to Andrew Scott and Hudson Williams, whose groundbreaking performances have captivated audiences around the world."

NIFS Holds From August 25

THE Nigerian International Film and TV Summit (NIFS) Lagos 2026 holds from August 25 to August 27, 2026. The event brings together filmmakers, financiers, producers, and global distributors to build partnerships and discuss the business of African cinema. It also connects African filmmakers, producers, and creatives with global financiers, distributors, and industry leaders to drive business-to-business collaborations and discuss content monetisation. The focus of all NIFS events has been financing, global distribution, streaming, and market expansion for African cinema. For this year, the summit is free entry for general industry sessions while participants have to pay for the executive gold badge. The badge provides access to exclusive networking, workshops, screenings, and pitch sessions. To register or view detailed program schedules, visit <https://www.nifsummit.com>

Entries Open For AFRIFF 2026

ORGANISERS of the yearly Africa International Film Festival (AFRIFF) have announced that the 2026 edition will hold from November 1 to 7, 2026, at the Landmark Centre in Victoria Island, Lagos, Nigeria. The 2026 edition operates under the theme, *Frames of the Future: Africa's Creative Intelligence*, and will feature flagship programmes such as masterclasses, industry sessions, and the Globe Awards. Late submission entries run until August 26, 2026, with official selections announced on October 3, 2026. Details can be sourced at www.afriff.com



Janggu Festival 2026 Deepens Nigeria-Korea Ties

By David Emokpae

THE traditional sound of Korean Janggu drums will resonate across Lagos from August 20 to 22 as Janggu Festival 2026 brings together performers, cultural enthusiasts and music lovers in a celebration of artistic excellence and cultural exchange between Nigeria and the Republic of Korea. Organised by Drumsview Concept and sponsored by the Korean Cultural Centre Nigeria (KCCN), the three-day festival celebrates the over a decade of promoting Korean traditional drumming in Nigeria while strengthening cultural ties between both countries. The festival begins on August 20 with workshops, masterclasses and refresher sessions for Janggu players at the National Council for Arts and Culture (NCAC), Artists Village, National Theatre,

Iganmu, for participants from Surulere, Apapa and Ajegunle. Training will continue on August 21 at the Bariga Arts and Crafts Centre (BACC) for participants from Bariga, Akoka, the University of Lagos and Shomolu. Activities will climax on August 22 at the J. Randle Centre for Yoruba Culture and History with cultural performances, exhibitions and the Janggu Drumming Competition, regarded as the festival's major highlight. The competition will feature contestants in different categories, reflecting the growing popularity of Janggu performance in Nigeria. The Best Child Janggu Player will receive 100,000, while the Best Adult Male and Best Adult Female Janggu Players will each win 200,000. The winning group will receive 250,000, while the second and third-placed

teams will receive 150,000 and 100,000 respectively. The competition will be judged by Faith Eki Eboigbe, Kenneth Uphopho and Prof. Délé A. ónúbí. The grand finale will also feature performances by Sights and Sounds de l'Afrique, founded by renowned percussionist Isioma Williams; Footprints of David Academy with an all-female Duma drum ensemble; the Guild of Theatre Arts Drummers (GOTHAD) performing an Ekwe Ensemble; Odidere Art of Africa presenting a Sakara Ensemble; and Jojo Bodybeats. A Drum Circle involving performers and members of the audience will also hold. According to the organisers, the festival is the culmination of the #JangguWithPapa initiative led by Isioma Williams, popularly known as Papa. The initiative began after his training at Kyung Hee University and the National Theatre of Korea in Seoul in 2013 and has introduced hundreds of Nigerians to the techniques and performance traditions of the Korean Janggu through structured training, mentorship and public performances. Speaking ahead of the festival, KCCN Director, Mr. Jeon Juho, thanked participants, partners and supporters, expressing hope that the inaugural Janggu Festival will become the first of many cultural celebrations that would further strengthen relations between both countries.



A scene from Janggu performance

Dear Kaffy On Global Stage With London Run

By Maria Diamond

THERE is a growing demand for more Nigerian productions on the global stage and the United Kingdom tops the list where BAP Productions' distinctive storytelling narrative is making commendable impact. Only recently, *Dear Kaffy*, the diary of a single woman in Lagos, was staged in London. The success recorded by that London show reflected increasing international appetite for African stories and high-quality African stage productions. With full houses at every performance, which ran from August 7 to 9 at the Shaw Theatre, Euston Road, London, and positive reviews from audiences, critics, and theatre enthusiasts, the play introduced the energy, humour, and storytelling of Nigerian theatre to London audiences, resonating with both the

Nigerian diaspora and the wider theatre community. Across the run, audiences responded with consistent enthusiasm, marked by laughter, applause, and standing ovations. Critics and theatre observers praised the production's quality, performances, and storytelling, noting its ability to present a distinctly Nigerian narrative in a way that felt accessible and engaging to London audiences. Based on this, audience members and theatre stakeholders have called on BAP Productions to return to London every summer with a new production, effectively proposing a yearly BAP Productions theatre season in London. For BAP Productions, the London engagement reinforces its broader mission of bringing Nigerian stories, talent, and productions to global audiences.

The production was made possible with the sponsorship from Access Bank UK and with partners including Bank of America, Nigerian-British Chamber of Commerce, Bank of Industry, Channels TV, WimBiz, Lagos Mums, Beat FM, Molly Africa, Africa Movie Channel, Heavy wind media, university of Westminster, and Bridge Clinic, whose contributions helped bring the production to the international stage. In her remarks, the Director, Bolanle Austen-Peters, said: "We are deeply grateful to everyone who came out to see *Dear Kaffy*. The response has been extraordinary. To have a full house at every performance and to hear audiences asking us to return every summer is incredibly encouraging. It tells us that African stories have a home on the global stage, and we are excited about what this could mean for the future."



BAP Productions team, Dear Kaffy actors, stakeholders and associates on the London stage.

Arinze, Sonaya, Others Show In Endless Possibilities

By Eniola Daniel

TWELVE artists, led by Idowu Sonaya, recently showcased 59 artpieces at the Quintessence Gallery on Akin Olugbade, Victoria Island, Lagos.

Titled, *Endless Possibilities*, it was a show, which began with a simple premise – different mediums, different styles, but quickly revealed something more demanding-Attention. No single language dominated and no fixed reading held. What emerged instead was a quiet tension between structure and freedom, intention and accident, control and release.

The show revealed artists who resisted being confined to a single mode of expression, allowing material, process, and form to remain open.

‘Endless Possibilities’ represented absolute potential, boundless opportunity and the freedom to explore different directions without predefined limits or restrictions.

This title captured the creative prowess of the artists featured at this exhibition. Masters not limited by any medium, style or technique in their creative endeavours. These artists revealed a medley of different voices, but at the same time providing a pot pourri of interesting scenarios.

In terms of concepts, themes and media, the differences between them manifest. An artist like Sylvester Aigbogun, a 1998 alumnus of Yaba College of Technology, works consisted of mainly crowded scenes and built-up images in colourful kaleidoscopic resplendence.

Other artists in the show included Bashiru Bolaji Babatunde, Ato Arinze, Aina Felix and Adebimpe Adebambo.

Babatunde ignited the show with his near realistic depictions of people in traditional African costumes. He paid attention to details in this work, as seen in ‘Omo Oba’ (Prince), a charcoal piece. This is replicated in ‘Iba nla alase’ and ‘Amuludun’ respectively.

In contrast, Ankeli Christopher’s rugged and textured canvases as seen in ‘Becoming’, a portrait of a young lady presented with the use of a heavy dose of scumbled brush strokes and pallet knife inflections on an undulating picture plane. The same treatment applied to his ‘Choices, Chances and Changes’ a picture that juxtaposed three faces.

There were also ceramic wares on display by Ato Arinze such as the pair of unidentical candle, which the artist called ‘Echoes of Connections’ I and II.

Henry Unuigboje, on the other hand, displayed a work he called ‘Unleash Resurge’ a live size 3D sculpture with depiction of the head of a German Mastiff, which is a large dog breed, in bronze and mild metal. The image was quite impressive. Other works by Unuigboje include ‘Resurgence,’ a 3D depiction of the head of a cow.

More works in the show included paintings by Aina Felix, whose ‘Life on Water (Makoko)’, highlighted the tragedy of a community on stilts established in the 18th and 19th century that had been demolished overnight. Successive governments in Lagos State had considered the shanties an eyesore and unbefitting of a mega city status of Lagos.

Adebimpe Adebambo, the only female artist in this show, introduced floral patterns in her ‘Bursting Forth’ presented in splashes of yellows and reds. Other works by Adebambo include ‘Surf and Waves’, a depiction of the vociferous ocean waves seen during a storm and ‘The Towers’, a city skyline with shadows of blue interspersed with heavy cloud formations.

Kafaru Abiodun, on the other hand, showcased several crowded landscape scenes such as ‘Ladies at Night’, ‘Victims of Violence’ and ‘Reminiscences of Old Beach’, a throwback to the old Bar Beach, which used to be a favourite holiday spot, and is virtually nonexistent today.

Olumide Oladiran on his own brought in his penchant for introducing intricate patterns into works as seen in ‘Rhythm’ I and II and ‘African Beauty’.

Desmond Dubre on other hand focused more on landscapes and group compositions such as ‘Shanty and Skanty’, ‘Manoeuvring Masquerade Series I’ and ‘Force of Focus’ a depiction of women carrying wares on their heads on a rainy day.

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

When Things Fall Apart...God Sets People Apart

Book: Set Apart
Author: Eunice O. Obidi
Publishers: Kraft Books Limited
Pagination: 250
Reviewer: Banji Ojewale

WHEN things fell apart for Okonkwo in Chinua Achebe’s *Things Fall Apart*, the world also broke into one thousand and one shards, never to return to the old stable order. But in Eunice Obidi’s *Set Apart*, the dissolution of family and its sacred values isn’t succeeded by unredeemed disintegration, disharmony and dispersions. Rather, the author ushers in a Deus ex machina (God) Who reshuffles the narratives, scenes and personalities to set apart for His will those bitten, battered and bruised by society and its oddly arranged institutions. It’s a tale of ceaseless surprises and twists and turns, after which the burnt emerge from ashes to become the blessed.

Opening her novel with a home knocked down by spousal feuding, Eunice Obidi introduces the protagonist, Funke Adejumbi, a young undergraduate woman who can’t understand how old lovers, her parents, have become strangers, with the husband, James, always the strayed predator from the jungle. The girl ‘wished’ she had been born into a different family where domestic violence was non-existent. If wishes were horses. . .

Divorce, having served notice through beatings unleashed by James, is inevitable. When it arrives, Funke, an only child and mother are shattered, especially the former.

Following the separation, Funke’s father disappears from the book altogether. When he’s referenced, Funke tells everyone she has never had a father; since his presence in her life is the presence of pain and the absence of paternal love she feels entitled to. She gets the love aplenty from the mother. But Mrs. Adejumbi dies, plunging the girl into new depths of despondency.

At a point, she considers suicide, urged by a “disembodied voice”. She has forsaken the God Who could have counselled against such a step. Although she’s revealed as knowing the Lord from an early age, a concatenation of circumstances sets Funke on a journey away from God. Her mother says: “Funke, you used to be a very good lover of God when you were younger. You were even the one who brought

me to Christ. What’s happening to you?”

School grades dip with threatening academic fatality. For some time she runs into good friends like Remi, Caroline, Michael, Joshua etc. two of whom return her to Christianity and better school performance. She’s also gifted the kindness of a Dr. Chuma, benign wife of a pastor. Funke has a crush on her son, hoping for a marital consummation.

There’s record of a full-blown rebellion that sees Funke branch from gospel to secular music. She loses recognition as she’s sighted among drunkards and smokers, while honouring invitation to perform at high-society gatherings in Ikoyi.

Once, on a trip to Lagos to be part of a gospel programme, she’s kidnapped by ritualists along with others. Heaven uses Funke to free them and to save souls, including one of the criminals. It occurs after she’s wholly reconciled to God, Who now freely employs the Holy Spirit to give Funke clear instructions in decision-taking.

The Lord does more than make Funke graduate: He leads her to the bliss of marriage, the loss of which blights her parents’ and shoves her to the brink of destruction.

But Heaven wouldn’t allow her to perish. Funke is set apart, in the crumbled fragments around. She’s only allowed a brush with them without harm.

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





TENDER NOTICE:
GCDT/NGA/02

Design, supply, install, test, commission and place into successful operation a rooftop Solar Photovoltaic (PV) and Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) hybrid power system for NACGRAB in Ibadan, Nigeria

Title of the Contract	Design, supply, install, test, commission and place into successful operation a rooftop Solar Photovoltaic (PV) and Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) hybrid power system for NACGRAB in Ibadan, Nigeria																							
Location of the works	National Centre for Genetic Resources and Biotechnology (NACGRAB), P.M.B. 5382, Moor Plantation Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria. NIGERIA																							
Name and address of the PEA	The Global Crop Diversity Trust, Platz der Vereinten Nationen 7, 53113 Bonn, Germany																							
Submission address	Attention: Olawuyi J. Sangokunle - Head, Procurement National Centre for Genetic Resources and Biotechnology (NACGRAB), P.M.B. 5382, Moor Plantation Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria. NIGERIA (Contact phone number-08063204067)																							
Number and title of the project	Project ID BMZ-No. 2018 01141: Capitalisation of the endowment fund of the Global Crop Diversity Trust and strengthening of national seedbanks ('Seeds for Resilience').																							
Approximate value	EURO 75,000– EURO 120,000																							
Other information	Please note this is a single stage national competitive bidding procedure with qualification for small admeasurement works contracts.																							
Type of notice	Tender Notice																							
Time schedule	<table><tr><td>Tender publication date:</td><td>15 August 2026</td></tr><tr><td>Deadline to confirm interest to bid:</td><td>Open</td></tr><tr><td>Site Visit:</td><td>24 August 2026</td></tr><tr><td>Pre-bid Meeting (online):</td><td>27 August 2026</td></tr><tr><td>Deadline to request clarifications:</td><td>31 August 2026</td></tr><tr><td>Circulation of final clarifications:</td><td>3 September 2026</td></tr><tr><td>Deadline for submission of bids:</td><td>14 September 2026 01:00 PM local Nigeria Time</td></tr><tr><td>Tender opening date and time:</td><td>14 September 2026 01:00 PM local Nigeria Time</td></tr><tr><td>Tender opening venue:</td><td>NACGRAB Conference Hall, NCRI Complex, Moor Plantation, Apata, Ibadan, Oyo State.</td></tr><tr><td>Indicative Evaluation:</td><td>14 September – 17 September 2026</td></tr><tr><td>Indicative Issue of Contract:</td><td>17 September – 25 September</td></tr></table>		Tender publication date:	15 August 2026	Deadline to confirm interest to bid:	Open	Site Visit:	24 August 2026	Pre-bid Meeting (online):	27 August 2026	Deadline to request clarifications:	31 August 2026	Circulation of final clarifications:	3 September 2026	Deadline for submission of bids:	14 September 2026 01:00 PM local Nigeria Time	Tender opening date and time:	14 September 2026 01:00 PM local Nigeria Time	Tender opening venue:	NACGRAB Conference Hall, NCRI Complex, Moor Plantation, Apata, Ibadan, Oyo State.	Indicative Evaluation:	14 September – 17 September 2026	Indicative Issue of Contract:	17 September – 25 September
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2026																								
Commencement:	Soon after contract signing																							
Language and Currency of the bid	English EURO																							
Complete tender documents can be obtained from	Documents can be obtained by sending a request, with the subject: “Tender Notice: GCDT/NGA/02 – Request for Bid Documents” to the email address below: Alexander Kambili - Finance and Procurement Officer, Global Crop Diversity Trust, Platz der Vereinten Nationen 7, 53113 Bonn, Germany. Email: alexander.kambili@croptrust.org																							
For clarifications/ further information, please contact	Send an email with the subject: “Tender Notice: GCDT/NGA/01 – Request for Clarification” to the email address below: alexander.kambili@croptrust.org																							
Confirmation of interest	In all cases, please send an email confirming interest, with the subject: “Tender Notice: GCDT/NGA/02” to: alexander.kambili@croptrust.org to get you added include onto the tender mailing list for clarifications, venue for opening and any other updates.																							

Brief description of the project and tender: Seeds for Resilience is a project of the Crop Trust working with partners to upgrade the physical infrastructure of their genebanks. The project is supported by the Federal Republic of Germany through KfW. This contract is for Design, supply, install, test, commission and place into successful operation a rooftop Solar Photovoltaic (PV) and Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) hybrid power system for NACGRAB in Ibadan, Nigeria a period of 3 months.

Please be advised that the Crop Trust is not bound to accept any proposal, nor award a contract or purchase order, nor be responsible for any costs associated with bidder’s preparation and submission of a proposal, regardless of the outcome or the manner of conducting the selection process.
Late bids will be rejected.

Beyond Talent: Charting Economic Path For Nigeria's Creative Industry

By Eniola Daniel

NIGERIA'S creative economy must move beyond what many people consider as hobby to a serious business capable of creating jobs, attracting investment and generating significant export revenue, stakeholders have said.

The call was made at the second edition of the QEDNG Creative Powerhouse Summit held at the Radisson Blu Hotel, Ikeja GRA, Lagos, where professionals, policymakers and business leaders gathered to examine the industry's future.

Themed, 'Creativity, Culture and Nigeria's Next Chapter,' the summit focused on the need to translate Nigeria's enormous creative potential into sustainable economic value through deliberate investment, stronger policies and greater collaboration between government and industry players.

The urgency of the conversation is reflected in the growing contribution of Nigeria's creative sector to the economy. According to data from the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), the arts, entertainment and recreation sector, alongside motion picture and related activities, recorded an output of N728.8 billion in the first quarter of 2024.

However, stakeholders at the summit argued that Nigeria's creative economy has yet to realise its full potential because creative work is

still regarded as a product of passion or hobby rather than as a structured commercial sector.

The experience of countries such as South Korea was cited as an example of what deliberate investment in the creative economy can achieve. South Korea has successfully transformed its cultural products, including music, film, television, games and other forms of entertainment into globally competitive exports.

Its success has been driven not only by the talent of its creative professionals but also by coordinated government policies, private-sector investment, infrastructure, skills development and strategies aimed at taking Korean cultural products to international markets.

Stakeholders said the lesson is not simply to replicate South Korea's model but to develop a framework suited to the country's own creative strengths and cultural identity. Nigeria already possesses a large pool of musicians, filmmakers, fashion designers, writers, visual artists, content creators and other creative professionals whose work has gained audiences beyond the country.

Yet, translating that popularity into sustainable economic growth remains a challenge, compounded by an apparent lack of interest from the government.

Issues around access to finance, intellectual property protection, infrastructure, professional manage-

ment, skills development and international market access continue to limit the ability of many creatives and businesses to scale.

Stakeholders, therefore, called for a shift in conversation from potential to concrete action that would enable the sector to thrive.

They stressed that the industry requires policies and investments that recognise creative professionals as entrepreneurs and businesses rather than simply as entertainers.

With Nigeria's youthful population and growing digital economy providing a large domestic and international audience for Nigerian content, participants maintained that the country

has an opportunity to build a creative industry capable of competing globally.

The challenge, however, is turning talent into an organised and commercially sustainable ecosystem.

As the creative economy continues to expand, the message from the QEDNG Creative Powerhouse Summit was clear: Nigeria has the talent and cultural resources to build a powerful creative industry, but achieving that ambition will require stakeholders to move from talking about the sector's potential to walking the talk, with the government showing greater interest and commitment.

The keynote speaker, Ife Adedayo,

argued that before speaking about "what our stories can build, we must consider what the absence of telling them has cost."

He said: "We have not yet told our stories, not even to our own children. That is what a story left untold costs a nation. And it is exactly what the power of art and storytelling has the power to reshape."

"South Africa is a smaller country, with fewer people and, frankly, without our raw cultural firepower. Nobody is streaming Johannesburg the way the world streams Lagos. And yet their cultural and creative industries contribute about R271 billion and support roughly 1.4 million jobs. In their economy, their creative sector is now about the same size as agriculture."

"The difference between us and them is not talent. The difference is that they counted it, they structured it, and they financed it. We have the louder voice. They built the better microphone, provided better infrastructure, and supported it with better policies."

Speaking on the gaps, he said the average Nollywood film has historically been made on a budget that is a fraction of what a single day costs at a serious studio abroad. He lamented that a great script in Nigeria dies because it is broke.



By Daniel Anazia

WHEN lawyer turned rapper-cum entertainer, Falz, quietly dropped the audio for his TikTok-fuelled hit, *Omoge* in March 2026, few could have predicted it would become one of the year's defining Afrobeats moments. Months later, the song is still everywhere and its official video, released in June, has turned a viral sound into a full-blown cultural event.

Produced by Aykbeats, *Omoge* is built entirely around a sample of Sir Shina Peters' 1989 juju classic *Shinamania*. The track is a bold creative choice. Rather than nod to the Juju legend in passing, Falz hands him the record's entire foundation, layering his signature wit and storytelling over a rhythm that predates most of his fanbase.

This made the song sound simultaneously brand new and instantly familiar, a trick few artistes pull off convincingly. The arrival of the official video adds

From TikTok To Timeless: Falz, Sir Shina Peters Create Crossover Magic In Omoge

a new layer to its story.

Featuring the juju maestro, the visuals connect the energy of Nigeria's digital generation with the legacy of an artiste whose music helped



define an earlier era of popular Nigerian entertainment. His presence gives the track a nostalgic dimension while allowing it to remain firmly rooted in the contemporary moment.

The collaboration is particularly significant because it demonstrates how different generations of Nigerian artistes can find common ground through music. Falz, known for his versatility and ability to blend rap with diverse Nigerian sounds, has continued to explore the possibilities of contemporary African music without losing his distinctive identity.

Sir Shina Peters, meanwhile, represents a rich musical tradition that continues to influence younger generations, making his appearance on *Omoge* more than a guest feature. It is a symbolic connection between Nigeria's musical past and present.

The development also highlights

the changing dynamics of music discovery and promotion. In an era where a song can explode through TikTok, artistes are increasingly able to reach audiences without relying exclusively on traditional media or conventional promotional campaigns.

By pairing the online momentum of *Omoge* with a recognisable figure from Nigeria's musical history, Falz has given the record another dimension that could help it travel beyond the short lifespan of a social media trend. The result is a crossover that brings together digital culture, contemporary Afrobeats and Nigerian musical heritage.

For Falz, *Omoge* represents another opportunity to demonstrate his ability to move comfortably across musical boundaries. For Sir Shina Peters, the collaboration offers a fresh connection with a younger audience increasingly discovering music through digital platforms.

TEETH 4 TEETH ... With Justin Akpovi-Esade

What Really Happened To The Actress?

THE mystery surrounding the death of Nollywood actress, Temitope Osoba, is still a hardnut for her fans and perhaps authorities to crack. The first news that hit the headlines was she died of cancer remission. She had a cancer treatment a year earlier. Days after, a certain Christian cleric who claimed to be the actress's fiancé, Shepherd Itunu Onadeko, in an interview, said Ms Osoba reportedly died in a police station. He did not stop there. He dropped a bombshell that the actor was a drug addict who was addicted to a certain synthetic drug called Colorado ('colos' as referred to in the street), a strain of cannabis.

Onadeko's words: "Tope was my fiancée's. We were not legally married but her aunty knew about our relationship. We have been dating for about two years now. I met her when she came to me for prayers and we became friends. She visited me one evening and I said I wanted to buy food. She then asked me if I didn't have a wife and I said no, I was once married but separated. She replied that she liked me and we laughed over it. We started our relationship from there and we were living together."

"Concerning the allegations that I chased her out of the house, I never did. She left on her own. Tope was a drug addict. I have a lot of videos on my phone as evidence but I don't want it to be on the social media. I have complained to her severally to stop(using drugs) but she didn't. At times she would run out of the house for days just because I told her to stop using drugs."

"All the church members knew she was taking colos. Everybody around her knew. I didn't take her to a rehab because I couldn't afford the money. All I could offer was a piece of advice. I learnt she died at a police station."

Now, this is the news. Shepherd Onadeko knew Ms Osoba was an addict as he claimed, and she was his live-in lover, for a whole two years. He could not raise money to take her to a rehab, he did not seek help from authorities, her industry colleagues and even church members who he claimed always saw her taking 'colos'...he just kept quiet and watched her drift into his home and out, for two whole years. Now, she is dead, prophet abi na Shepherd is telling the world a dirty secret he helped to keep while she was alive. Is he seeking self redemption or just suffering from a crisis of conscience?

Oga Pastor, keep quiet and let the dead stay dumb as they can't defend themselves no matter the allegations levelled against them.

And, as for her reported death in a police station in Ikorodu; which of the stations? Sagamu Road or Igbogbo divisions? And if a popular figure like that dies in a police division, how come the Shepherd was the only person who got to know about it? What was Ms Osoba doing in a police station when it is not a three-star hotel?

Effurun Is Not Warri, 'Real Warri Pikin', Take Note

THE arrogance of Anita Alaire Afoke Asuohan, popularly known as 'RealWarri Pikin', is typical of this generation of young Nigerians especially the ones who call themselves Gen Z- they are always right!

If it is not crass arrogance, why should a simple correction on a show promotional materials to reflect the actual name of the town you are holding an event be a major issue that has pitched two or more ethnic groups against each other?

Days ago, the female comedian cancelled her much advertised show citing brewing ethnic conflict. In an emotional blackmail video, 'RealWarri Pikin' tried to twist the issue to make it look like it was some petty ethnic bickering.

The controversy reportedly began after she announced a comedy show promoted as "Real Warri Pikin Live in Warri." Although the event was associated with the Warri metropolitan area, the actual venue was in Effurun, which is in Uvwie Local Government Area. Following the publicity, some people from Uvwie reportedly objected to the use of "Warri" to describe the location. They argued that Effurun is Uvwie and should be properly identified as such. They demanded that the promotional materials be changed and, according to reports, threats were allegedly made that the event could be disrupted if the issue was not addressed.

What any reasonable person would do in this circumstance was to quietly change the name of venue in the campaign materials to reflect the real town's name, but not a Realwarripikin.

Let T4T break it down for who is not familiar with Delta State, especially Warri and Effurun. Effurun is not Warri even as many people conveniently and most times ignorantly sweepingly refer to Effurun as Warri. If for instance, a RealSurulerePikin is organising a show on the Lagos Island, Badagry or even in Egbeda, he or she would not name the show 'RealSurulerePikin Live In Surulere as Lagos Island or Egbeda and Badagry are not Surulere. That is the issue here. So, it is left for RealSurulerePikin to change the show title to RealSurulerePikin Live In Lagos just as one expected Realwarripikin to change her show title to Realwarripikin Live In Effurun or Realwarripikin Live In Delta instead of mischievously trying to ignite ethnic flame. Effurun is not Warri, just as Ughelli (another town in Delta State) is not Warri. So, would Realwarripikin be naming her show scheduled to hold in Ughelli as Realwarripikin Live In Warri too because she wants to sustain her Warri identity? Na her papa found Warri abi?

22Bet, Amokachi Partner To Raise Football Stake In Continent

By Gregory Austin Nwakunor

FORMER Nigerian International and Super Eagles forward, Daniel Owefin Amokachi, and 22Bet have partnered to raise football stake in the continent.

Speaking recently at the unveiling of the ex international as Pan-African brand ambassador for sports betting company, 22Bet, country director and chief operations officer, West Africa, 22Bet, Fikayo Ogunfuye, said, "the partnership is not about short-term visibility but purpose. So, Amokachi joining the 22Bet Africa platform is to support more culture, more communities for more responsible engagements across Africa." According to him, the collaboration will promote African football culture, support grassroots communities, and encourage responsible engagement with sport across the continent.

While saying the partnership was based on a shared vision to promote African football beyond commercial interests, Ogunfuye noted football remained one of the strongest uniting forces in the continent.

He noted that through the partnership, 22Bet, an indigenous sports betting company, aims to celebrate the football culture and amplify African football narratives and communities that keep the game alive.

According to him, football remains one of the strongest forces connecting African communities from the streets of Lagos, West Africa and the continent at large, and as such, the partnership was designed "to create a lasting impact rather than provide short-term brand visibility."

The partnership was announced on Wednesday,



day, August 5, 2026, at the BON Hotel in Ikeja, Lagos. It follows the recent unveiling of Amokachi as the company's brand ambassador on the back of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) by both parties, as part of ongoing commitment to boost sports development across the country.

The partnership between both entities represents the passion and commitment to develop football from the grassroots to the top level in Nigeria and on the continent.

Describing Amokachi as a football icon whose influence continues to inspire new generations across the continent, the company plans to use Amokachi's profile and experience to promote positive values around sport while encouraging responsible engagement. The company said its investment in football

would be accompanied by a focus on responsible participation. The partnership is expected to include initiatives focused on football development, community support, and responsible sports participation in the coming months.

According to him, Amokachi's great exploits in football both home and abroad influenced his choice as the company's brand ambassador.

He added that integrity, leadership and commitment to football development earned the football legend the ambassadorial endorsement by the company, "he is more than just a football legend, he is a symbol of Nigerian and African experience and a man who carries the hope of the nation in football," Ogunfuye said.

While responding, Amokachi, who was nicknamed 'The Bull', in his playing days, highlighted 22Bet's corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives as another key factor behind his decision. He said businesses operating in Nigeria and across Africa should contribute to the communities where they operate.

The former Everton Football Club player said the CSR gesture aligned with the ideals of his initiative - Daniel Amokachi Youth Development Foundation, which aims at impacting meaningfully on society.

He extolled 22Bet as an organisation whose core values resonate with youth and society development. "I appreciate the fact that out of the one million and one African Football legends out there, the 22Bet platform chose me as their brand ambassador."

"The more you make, the more you should invest in the communities and the people of the country."

The former striker said 22Bet's community-focused approach aligned with his own desire to give back to Africa.

During his playing days, he enjoyed a successful career at both club and international level. He was spotted as a talented school boy by Clemence Westerhoff in 1989. At international level, Amokachi was part of Nigeria's squad that won the 1994 Africa Cup of Nations. Two years later, he was also a member of Nigeria's Dream Team that won the country's first Olympic football gold medal at the 1996 Atlanta Games.

Since retiring from professional football, Amokachi has remained active in the sport. He has worked as a coach, football administrator, and television pundit.

Nigerian School Children Long Vacation, A Family Bonding Season

By Maria Diamond

FAMILY bonding is a way of life in Nigeria and if there is any time of the year in the country that parents bond better with their young children, it is during the school long vacation season, which commences after the third-term academic calendar year from July to mid-September.

Thus, the period of time between when the school vacation commences and resumption date, a lot of parents seize the moment to deepen their bond with family.

Parents Who Have It All Figured Out

While some parents are far away from the country, seeing the world and spending quality time with their children, others are bringing the world to the comfort zone of their homes.

Some others are taking the time to care and love their children in ways that the daily hustling and bustling of the school season doesn't allow.

Nigerian parents are doing all it takes to make the long vacation count for their children including figuring out work schedules to avail them the time.

The Family Holiday

Following a recent interview conducted by *The Guardian* with parents who are fully into giving their children a memorable long vacation to remember, a lot of working class Nigerian parents especially those with the 9-5 jobs take their yearly vacation around the long holidays so they can have a wholesome time with their children. While the business owners



PHOTO: Pinterest

and entrepreneurs make it a fixed time for a yearly family holiday.

Giving Your Children Excellent Holiday Essay Narrative

For parents still trying to figure out how to make their

children's long vacation essay narrative stand out when school resumes without necessarily breaking a bank, here is how to go about giving them the experience(s) that count:

Domestic Tourism - Take the kids to other parts of Nigeria outside their state of residence and let them know more about their country. You can also take them to tourist attractions, landmarks and

destinations within your residential community - places they haven't been to.

International Travel - Take them on that trip if you can afford it and the visa is readily available. Let them see the world; the experience will stay with them for a lifetime.

Places Of Entertainment - Take them out to places of entertainment such as the cinema and other places of interest.

MTN Nigeria Revamps Decade-old Service With Lucky Jackpot Campaign

By Suliyat Tella

BASED on the prevailing economic situation, MTN Nigeria has revived its customer service through an initiative tagged 'MTN Lucky Jackpot Campaign' to deepen engagement and bring inactive subscribers back to its network.

The Lucky Jackpot Campaign, which is scheduled to run for nine months is divided into three seasons. Under the first season, MTN Nigeria has paid out N100 million to 10 winners.

Speaking at the prize presentation held at MTN Nigeria's headquarters in Lagos during the week, the company's Chief Digital Officer, Aisha Mumuni, said the decision to revamp the more than decade-old service was driven by the need to offer customers something simple, fun and family-friendly. "We decided to give our community of customers something to look forward to."

Mumuni said the initiative had also helped bring some inactive SIM cards back onto

the network, as subscribers returned to participate in the draws.

She explained that participation was designed to be simple, requiring subscribers to text "WIN" to 4445, after which their MTN numbers would automatically be entered into the draw.

According to her, the winning numbers are generated through an automated process, with no human selection involved. "It's literally lucky," she said.

She added that the company was already considering subsequent seasons, saying the first season had been "pretty engaging" and interactive.

Senior Manager, Digital Services Partner Management at MTN Nigeria, Eytayo Amushan, said the company collaborated with Yellow Dots Africa to revive the service after reviewing its subscriber base and the prevailing economic situation. He said the partnership focused on increasing the winnings and making the service more attractive to subscribers.

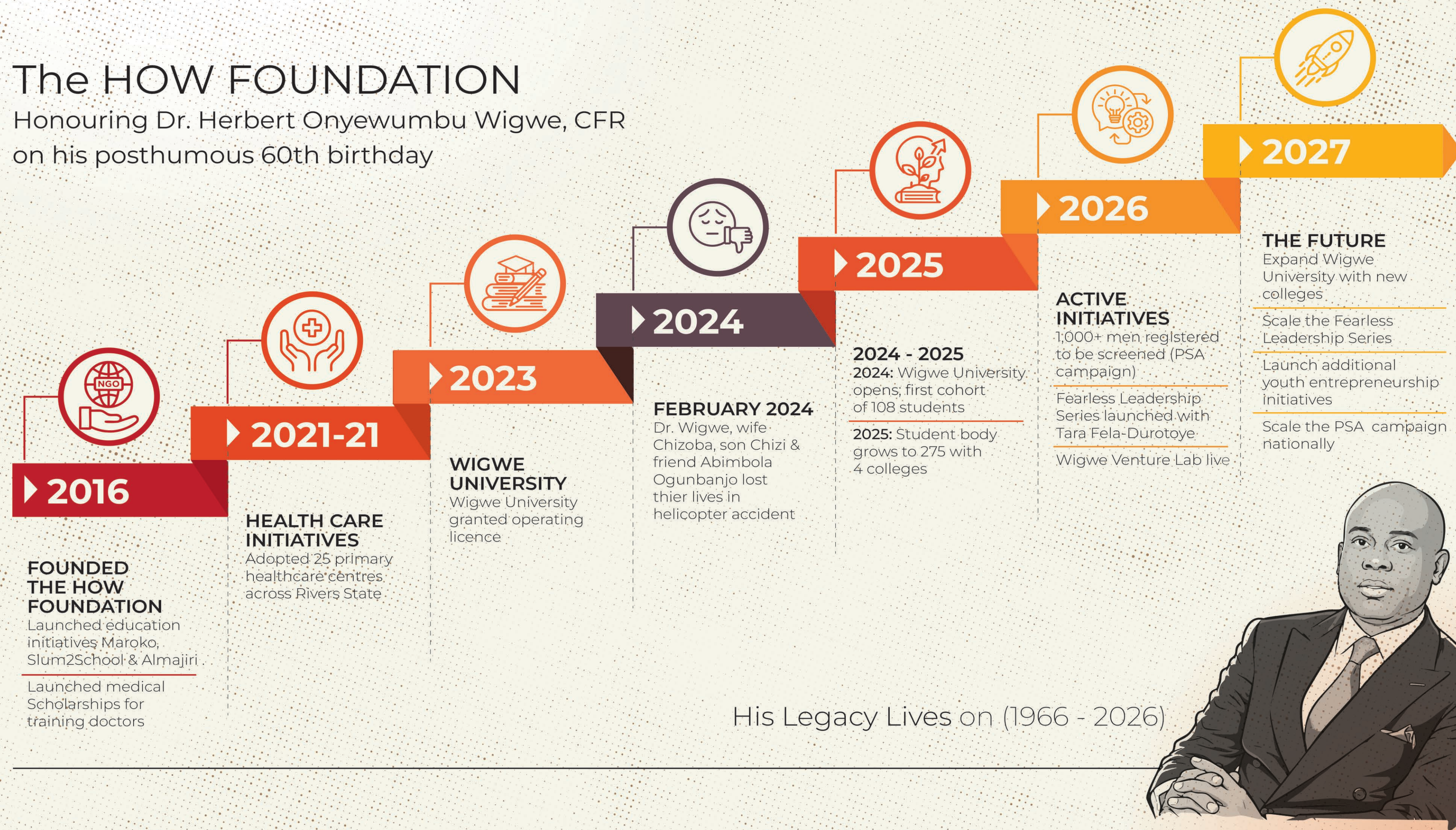


Lawal Michael Nasiru, popularly known as Nas Boi (left); beneficiary of the MTN Lucky Jackpot, Omada Emmanuel, and Chief Digital Officer, MTN Nigeria Aisha Umar Mumuni during the prize presentation in Lagos recently.



The HOW FOUNDATION

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LASUSTECH Appoints Steven Anu’ Adesemoye As Pioneer Director Of Advancement And Internationalisation

THE Lagos State University of Science and Technology (LASUSTECH) has announced the appointment of Dr Steven Anu’ Adesemoye as its pioneer Director of Advancement and Internationalisation, effective immediately. The office marks the university’s deliberate push to deepen its global footprint, strengthen institutional partnerships, and position LASUSTECH as a destination of choice for international staff and students.

In this pioneering capacity, Adesemoye will champion the university’s vision and mission before external clients, corporate partners, and international organisations. His mandate includes forging strategic partnerships and collaborations, working with stakeholders across the institution to attract international staff and students, and building a strong, globally recognisable brand for LASUSTECH.

Adesemoye brings a distinctive blend of academic credibility and industry experience to the role. He is a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Mass Communication, where he most recently served as the Head of Department from August 2024, a tenure his successor described as one in which he diligently served and elevated the department’s standards. He holds a doctorate from the University of Malaya, Malaysia, and he is



Adesemoye

a Fellow of the Business Journalism Professors programme at the Donald W. Reynolds National Centre for Business Journalism, Walter Cronkite School of Journalism and Mass Communication, Arizona State University.

His track record at LASUSTECH already demonstrates the outward-facing, partnership-driven approach the new office demands. He served as Team Lead for Digital and Creative Enterprise for the university, working alongside the Vice-Chancellor. He has also led the university’s Digital Literacy Skills initiative for the Ikorodu trading community, a corporate social responsibility programme aligned with the institution’s town-and-gown relationship. Beyond the university, his earlier career included spells as Chief Operating Officer and TV Content Director at Digital Interactive Media and Origin 8 Format, where he directed reality television productions in

Nigeria and Ghana, and he has directed documentary and distance-learning drama content for international health communication programmes.

Adesemoye said: “I am deeply honoured to take up this assignment and grateful to the Vice-Chancellor for his belief in me. Building an office from the ground up is a rare privilege, and I intend to use it to open doors for LASUSTECH on the world stage. My immediate priorities are to formalise a pipeline of international academic partnerships, launch a coordinated strategy for recruiting international staff and students, and present LASUSTECH’s story with the clarity and consistency it deserves. I will work closely with colleagues across every college and department to ensure that our global engagement translates into tangible outcomes: exchange agreements signed, joint research secured, and a student and staff population that reflects our international ambition. I do not intend to simply hold this office; I intend to build it into a lasting engine of growth for the university.”

The appointment comes at a defining moment for LASUSTECH, which has, in recent years, expanded its technological infrastructure, strengthened its research output, and pursued closer ties with global academic and industry partners.

The Great War Of Love! (6) By Segun Durowaiye (08055356855)

Continued from GUARDIAN WEEKEND, August 8-9, 2026

MALLAM Bature was taken from the hospital to the Police Headquarters to testify and state his own side of the case.

After Mallam Bature had narrated his own side of the case, the DPO, Mr. Izuchukwu referred the case to the Lagos High Court. Exactly three weeks later, the case came up at the Lagos High Court. It co-incidentally happened that the Chief Judge in charge of the case was also an Igbo man named, Francis Emeka. The elderly and bespectacled Chief Judge, Francis Emeka, listened attentively to the stories narrated by Mrs. Mamora and her lawyer. Mallam Bature was also present during the whole court proceedings. Ireti was allowed to narrate her own side of the story at the court that eventful day. She spoke the truth and nothing short of it. The Judge rose and headed for his Chamber, telling the crowded court that he would resume proceedings very soon. When he came back, he didn’t mince words by apportioning blame on Mrs. Mamora.

He said point-blank: “Mrs. Mamora, you’re guilty for causing this unnecessary trouble for yourself and the whole community, and for causing bodily harm on Mallam Bature that almost claimed his life. I have an option of fine for Mrs. Mamora. She should pay back all the money she collected from Mallam Bature or give the young beautiful girl, Ireti to the Mallam as wife. Now, Mallam Bature from your calculation, how much did you spend on the young girl? Her mum would give you back the money or be sentenced to five years jail term.”

“It’s just N1 million, my Lord.” Mallam Bature answered. “In that case she’d give you N2 million as damages, right now or she’d go to jail for five years.” The sagacious Judge replied. Mrs. Mamora opened her handbag and brought out a cheque book. She wrote the N2 million cheque for Mallam Bature, signed it and was about giving the lanky and kind-hearted Mallam the said cheque when Ireti broke down in tears and said in an emotion-

laden voice: “I’m saying this in the presence of the whole world... even if my mum gives Mallam Bature N5 million in exchange for me. I’ll still follow Mallam Bature ‘cos I’m in love with him. I’ll marry him... there’s no going back. Blood is thicker than water as love is stronger than money and pride... I love Mallam Bature... I’ll do anything to be with him...”

Everyone in the court that day were stunned and surprised. Mrs. Mamora opened her mouth in complete shock and confusion. She ran her fingers through her head in bewilderment. “What did you just say, Ireti?” her mum asked again.

“I’ll marry Mallam Bature and live with him come rain, come shine,” Ireti replied in tears. She was already beside the amiable Mallam. She hugged him tenderly and softly. Ireti’s mum couldn’t stand it; she collapsed and fainted. Mallam Bature was lost for words. When he regained his usual bearing he said: “Oh, I love you, Ireti... there’s no life without you.”

The Chief Judge raised his gavel up, hit it on the table and uttered: “What more do we need as proof and settlement of this case? Ireti has chosen the man of her heart and dream. I wish both of you a wonderful and blissful married life! You can all go home! Case dismissed and settled!”

That was how Ireti became the wife of Mallam Bature. She attended the university, while living in the house of the humble Mallam. At the moment, Ireti is a successful Medical Doctor and she has two handsome boys for her husband; and they lived happily ever after. Till today, it became a mystery and shock to Mrs. Mamora how and why her daughter chose the gentle Mallam as husband. She couldn’t help it but had to accept her fate. At the moment Ireti was happy living with the kind and nice Mallam and they enjoyed the bliss of life.

Concluded.

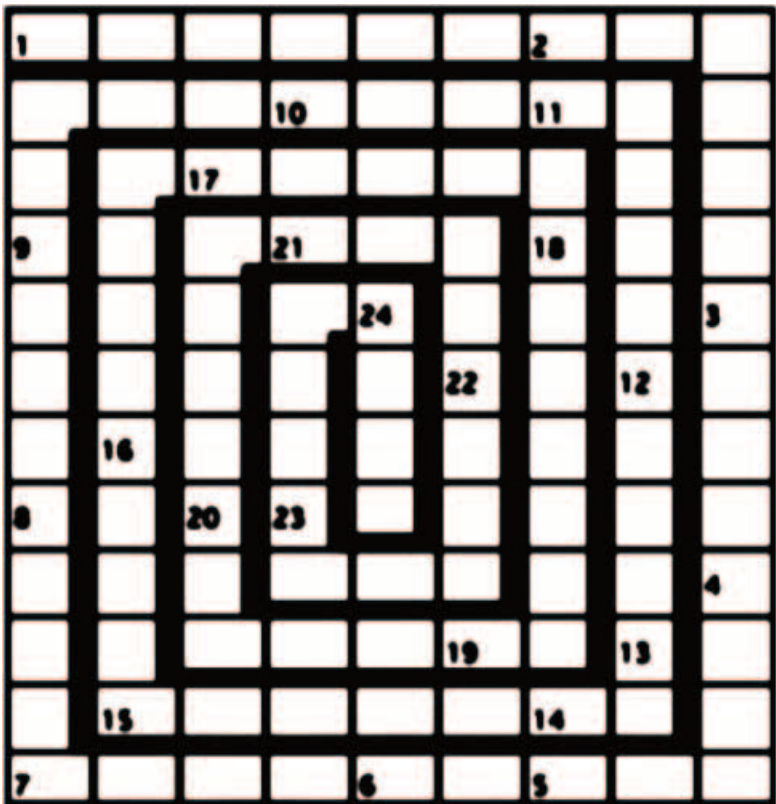
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Overlapping Word Game

with OLULANA KAYODE 08023183727 olulana3@yahoo.com

Solution

- 1 Ganduje
- 2 Erectile
- 3 Levity
- 4 Tycoon
- 5 Nasal
- 6 Salami
- 7 Mimiko
- 8 Kosher
- 9 Erotic
- 10 Chase
- 11 Seldom
- 12 Mimic
- 13 Cue
- 14 Evasive
- 15 Vermin
- 16 Intern
- 17 Nwangele
- 18 Electron
- 19 Novice
- 20 Essien
- 21 Namoda
- 22 Dandume
- 23 Egbeda
- 24 Damp



Overlapping Word Game

- 1 Enugu State ex Governor, (8).
- 2 Jewish language based on German, (7).
- 3 Sell something aggressively, (6).
- 4 Vocabulary, (7).
- 5 One time, (4).
- 6 Underground room, (6).
- 7 Get to place, (6).
- 8 Layer of plywood, (6).
- 9 Behaving badly, (6).
- 10 LGA in Adamawa state, (5).
- 11 Relating to celebration, (7).
- 12 Having rights to something, (6).
- 13 Perfect place, (6).
- 14 Language of U.K., U.S., and Canada, (7).
- 15 Tremble, (6).
- 16 Inconsistent, (7).
- 17 Somebody very reserved, (6).
- 18 Cause to stop being friendly, (8).
- 19 Suitable for eating by human beings, (6).
- 20 Teach somebody, (7).
- 21 With gentle feeling, (6).
- 22 Very knowledgeable through study, (7).
- 23 Go in, (5).
- 24 Extreme anger, (4).

Word Search

Some Mammals in the World-2

Elk	Horse	Caribou
Gnu	Camel	Reindeer
Bear	Moose	Chamois
Deer	Gazelle	Antelope
Zebra	Donkey	Wildebeest
Panda	Giraffe	Springbok

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

(c.) Olukayode Olulana

From The Rector

Ibru International Ecumenical Centre, Agbarha-Otor Delta State. www.ibrucentre.org

By Stephen Wolemonwu

WE are at war and neutrality is impossible. The Bible presents battles across different categories, where patriarchs fought physical wars to secure land, prophets engaged in spiritual wars to uphold truth, kings defended inheritance through military campaigns, and apostles waged ideological battles against idolatry to establish Christ's reign. The question is: are you clothed, prepared, and standing firm?

Readiness: The Call To Be Prepared

In a military context, this refers to how prepared an army or unit is for combat. It covers training, equipment, morale, and the ability to mobilise quickly. For example, "combat readiness" is a measure of whether troops can effectively fight at a moment's notice.

Paul commands: "Put on the whole armor of God," (Ephesians 6:11). Readiness is not passive; but active vigilance. Roman soldiers were trained daily with wooden swords and heavy shields. Their survival depended on readiness.

So, it is with us. Readiness means prayer, fasting, scripture meditation, and obedience. Israel was ready before Jericho. The church was ready before Pentecost. Preparation precedes victory.

Ask yourself: are you spiritually alert, or are you vulnerable to temptation?

Raiment: The Call To Be Clothed

This is an older word meaning clothing, in war, it symbolises uniforms or battle attire. Soldiers' raiment is not just about appearance—uniforms establish identity, discipline, and unity, while also serving practical purposes like camouflage or protection.

Paul says: "Put on the Lord Jesus Christ," (Romans 13:14). Clothing in scripture symbolises identity. Priests wore holy garments, while believers are clothed in Christ.

Roman soldiers were recognised by their uniform. Christians are recognised by righteousness. Holiness is not optional, but the uniform of God's army.

To Wear The Armour Is To Wear Christ Himself

- Belt of Truth – Christ is the Truth.
- Breastplate of Righteousness – Christ is our

The Armour Of God (2)

righteousness.

- Shoes of Peace – Christ is our peace.
- Shield of Faith – Faith rests in Christ.
- Helmet of Salvation – Christ is our salvation.
- Sword of the Spirit – Christ is the Word.

Without raiment, you are exposed. With it, you are identified as His.

Rank – The Call To Maturity

This is the structured hierarchy within the military. Rank determines authority, responsibility and command. For instance, a general outranks a captain, which affects decision-making and the chain of command during war.

Paul repeats "stand" three times (Ephesians 6:11-14). Rank is not about pride, but stewardship. Roman armies were structured as centurions, tribunes, generals. Promotion came through discipline and valour.

In the kingdom, rank means spiritual maturity. David grew from shepherd to king. Timothy grew from disciple to

pastor. Growth in rank means deeper responsibility: intercession, teaching, leadership, defending truth. Are you content to remain a spiritual child, or are you pressing toward maturity?

The Weapons Of Our Warfare

Readiness is about preparation, raiment is about what the soldiers wear, and rank is about their position in the military hierarchy. These are key to achieving a smooth operation.

Regarding: Reinforcements (additional troops or supplies sent to support), Retreat (withdrawal from battle to re-strategise – the rest/refuel concept), Resistance (organised opposition to an occupying force), Reconnaissance (military observation to gather information), Regiment (a unit of soldiers), Rifle (a common firearm used in war), Rocket (a weapon propelled to strike targets), Rations (food supplies distributed to soldiers), Reprisal (retaliatory action against an enemy), and Ruins (leaving the kingdom of darkness in total destruction through spiritual conflict).

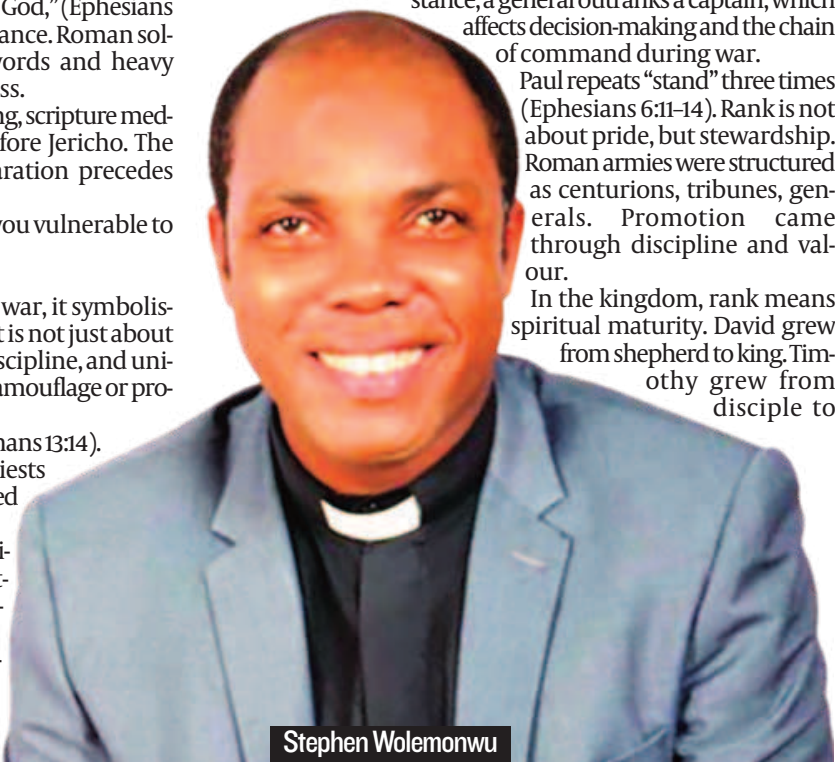
Paul declares: "The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds," (2 Corinthians 10:4).

Our weapons are prayer, scripture, faith, righteousness, praise and worship. These demolish fear, lies, doubt and oppression. While empires rise and fall, these weapons endure.

Beloved, the battle belongs to the Lord. We fight not for victory, but from victory, because Christ has already triumphed over principalities and powers (Colossians 2:15).

Practical Application

- **Daily Readiness:** Begin each day clothed in Christ.
- **Proper Raiment:** Live visibly as God's representative.
- **Growth in Rank:** Mature in faith and responsibility.
- **Community Warfare:** Stand united with other believers. Roman soldiers locked shields in formation. The church must lock shields in prayer, worship, and mission. Alone you are vulnerable; together you are invincible.
- **By The Ven. Stephen Wolemonwu, Rector, The Ibru Ecumenical Centre, Agbarha-Otor. E - mail: stephenwolemonwu@gmail.com, 08035413812.**



MFM's Mountain Top Chorale Emerges World Champion At 2026 Choir Games

By Chris Irekamba

MOUNTAIN Top Chorale of the Mountain of Fire and Miracles Ministries (MFM) has emerged winners at the just-concluded World Choir Games 2026 held in Helsingborg, Sweden. They won gold at the event where over 160 choir groups from 40 countries competed in the games.

MFM Mountain Top Chorale won gold at the C11 Category – Sacred Music with accompaniment and in C14 Category – Spiritual. The team won gold medal and became champi-

ons of the world in the Spiritual category. Recalled that it first participated in the games 10 years ago.

The church, in a statement, noted that MFM Mountain Top Chorale proudly represented Nigeria at the 2024 World Choir Games, held in Auckland, New Zealand, which featured over 11,000 singers from more than 30 countries.

"The MFM team won two gold medals in the Champions Competition in Category C19 (Contemporary Music – mixed voices) and Category

C22 (spiritual)," the statement added.

According to the statement, the Mountain Top Chorale was the only country from Africa that participated at the World Choir Games, known as the 'Olympics of Choral Music' 2026 Games, which ended on August 10.

It said that immediately, the Mountain Top Chorale was declared the winners of gold in the spiritual category, Nigeria's green-white-green flag was boldly hoisted, and the country's national anthem played to the admiration of all

guests and the participants.

While most chorale teams were sponsored to the games by their country's governments, the Nigerian representatives, comprising 53 team-member, were solely sponsored by the General Overseer, Mountain of Fire and Miracles Ministries Worldwide, Dr Daniel Kolawole Olukoya.

Olukoya once said: "It will take any church, or ministry over 50 years to get to the stage the MFM is today. No doubt, this is not just a boast, but a statement of fact."



MFM Mountain Top Chorale in a group photograph at the event

Fashola To Speak At 'God In My Life' Lecture Series On August 23

By Chris Irekamba

THE Torchbearers Society of the Archbishop Vining Memorial Church Cathedral (AVMCC), Ikeja, Lagos, has stated that the choice of former Governor of Lagos State and former Minister of Works and Housing, Mr. Babatunde Raji Fashola, as guest speaker, at this year's lecture series, titled: "God In My Life" organised by the society was informed by his exemplary record in public service and the strategic leadership roles he played in the development of Lagos State and Nigeria.

Scheduled to hold on August 23, 2026, at AVMCC, GRA, Ikeja, at 4:00p.m, the lecture series, which has become one of the flagship programmes of the society, provides a unique platform for distinguished Nigerians to reflect on the role of God in their personal journeys, leadership experiences and public service.

Over the years, the society has hosted an impressive array of eminent personalities, including former President, Chief Olusegun Obasanjo; former Commonwealth Secretary-General, Chief Emeka Anyaoku; diplomat and corporate statesman, the late Dr Christopher



Vice President/Programme Coordinator, Brother Olajide Afolabi

Kolade; and retired Justice of the Supreme Court Justice, George Oguntade, among others.

In a statement, jointly signed by the President of the Torchbearers Society, Brother Adeoye Ojuoko, and the Vice President/Programme Coordinator, Brother Olajide Afolabi, said Fashola being former Governor of Lagos State and later Minister of Works and Housing, earned national recognition for his commitment to institutional reforms, infrastructure development and public sector governance.

Shedding more light on the event, the society emphasised that although Mr. Fashola is a devout Muslim.

Psalm 50:15: "And call upon me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me."

OUR Lord, Jesus Christ, came to earth with a clear purpose and mandate, which is to deliver man from sin, and to restore the lost kingdom that Adam and Eve lost by disobeying God's instruction. It should be noted that from the early days of man's existence in this world, he was subjected to temptation and his inability to resist the devil led him to eat the forbidden fruit, thereby disobeying God's word. That single act thwarted the plan of God and His purpose for creating man.

Man was created to serve. As God's representative on earth and man was trained to manage God's resources on earth and also to control earthly government. Unfortunately, man failed the test that would have fortified him for the task ahead and the devil took over control of the earth.

However, after the divine pronouncement of punishment for both the serpent, the instrument that Satan used in his deceit, and man, God promised that a Messiah will come and He will bruise the head of the serpent. Our Lord, Jesus Christ has come to deliver man from the bondage of sin. That is why He gave a directive in the lead scripture above that whosoever shall call upon Him in the day of trouble will be delivered and the beneficiary will glorify His name.

God has the capacity to deliver man from any bondage. The deliverance power of God is never in doubt because power belongs to Him; that is why Prophet Isaiah said in Isaiah 43:10-13: "Ye are my witnesses, saith the Lord, and my servant whom I have chosen: that ye may know and believe me, and understand that I am he: before me there was no God

Living Waters

By Pastor Lazarus Muoka

Founder/General Overseer

The Lord's Chosen Charismatic Revival Ministries Worldwide

• For more messages and testimonies visit: www.tlccrm.org 08056889396



God Will Surely Deliver You

formed, neither shall there be after me. 11: I, even I, am the Lord; and beside me there is no saviour. 12: I have declared, and have saved, and I have shewed, when there was no strange god among you: therefore ye are my witnesses, saith the Lord, that I am God. 13: Yea, before the day was I am he; and there is none that can deliver out of my hand: I will work, and who shall let it?"

Yes, God is very much ready to deliver whosoever shall call upon Him for help; He has the pow-

When the even was come, they brought unto him many that were possessed with devils: and he cast out the spirits with his word, and healed all that were sick. 17: That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, Himself took our infirmities and bare our sicknesses.

er and all the resources to do so. No matter that the devil is controlling the earth and tormenting every man at will, but the intervention of God will always checkmate his excesses. Therefore, whosoever will enjoy the deliverance and salvation of his/her soul must call upon God with a faithful heart that is clean and pure. He/she must be ready to see God as his creator, serve Him with undivided attention and believe in the power of God to save.

God sent His only begotten son, Jesus Christ, into this sinful world to deliver man from the yoke of sin. He has the power to do so, and the devil cannot do otherwise, but to obey the authority of the Son of God. Jesus Christ came to take our sins away, and He demonstrated this when He died a shameful death on the Cross of Calvary. In Matthew 8:16-17, the Bible says: "When the even was come, they brought unto him many that were possessed with devils: and he cast out the spirits with his word, and healed all that were sick. 17: That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, Himself took our infirmities and bare our sicknesses."

Our Lord, Jesus Christ, took our sins upon Himself when He was crucified on the Cross of Calvary. That deliverance project perfected on the Cross is still on today. What you need is to identify with His sacrificial death and accept that sacrifice paid for the redemption of your soul. Therefore, God is calling you to repent from all known and unknown sins, embrace Jesus as the Lord and Saviour. As you do that your name will be written in the book of life in heaven and you will become a child of God; your protection and provision will become God's priority in heaven.

We need to know that God is the creator of heaven and earth, and everything therein and He is available at all times to take care of the people, who fear and honour Him. He has the capacity to do everything as the Bible has it in Jeremiah 32:27: "Behold, I am the Lord, the God of all flesh: is there anything too hard for me?" Your deliverance from sin, and the healing that you desire from Him, are minor issues when He intervenes in any case. One thing must be clear in the mind of everyone who professes Christ. That person must repent of his sins and must not go back to them again, because sin closes the door of God's intervention in our life. The Bible is emphatic in Isaiah 59:1-3, saying: "Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear. 2: But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear. 3: For your hands are defiled with blood, and your fingers with iniquity; your lips have spoken lies, your tongue hath muttered perverseness." As you distance yourself from sin and welcome God's presence in your life, He has promised to be with you and the devil will no longer torment you. Approach God today with a repented heart, without spot or wrinkle. Today, as you read this message make up your mind to serve God and He will surely deliver you in Jesus' name... Amen..

Testimony Of The Lord's Doing

Helen Onwuekwu: Only God Of Pastor Muoka Can Give You Work, Angel Said To Me

2 Cor 3v5 Says: "We are not sufficient of ourselves to think anything as of ourselves, but our sufficiency is of the Lord."

My name is Sister Helen Onwuekwu.

I JOINED The Lord's Chosen Charismatic Revival Ministries in 2008 and my family and I are happy to be members.

It happened that we moved to the village and one day, my son went out, but came back with a Chosen magazine. He gave it to me, and said we should be going to Chosen, but I told him that I cannot leave my church, but he persuaded me and eventually, we started. During the December period, the Chosen branch in my village had a programme, with the title: "Only God Can Do This." I went to the crusade and truly, I heard the undiluted word of God. In the course of the pastor's prayer that day, he was always mentioning the God of Chosen and the God of Pastor Lazarus Muoka. Before that day, I was in the dream, and we were in a queue to be selected for work and the man in charge picked all the people in my front, but when it got to my turn, he bypassed me and picked the person behind

me. I have a secondary school certificate, yet I was not picked; the people picked for the work were those with lesser qualifications. So, I began to cry, the man said Pastor Lazarus Muoka is the only one that can give me job. So, when the pastor in that programme was mentioning 'the God of Pastor Lazarus Muoka,' he built my interest on that God of Pastor Lazarus Muoka.

At the end of the service that day, the pastor called all the new comers, and I went to meet him and asked: "how I would see Pastor Lazarus Muoka?" The pastor asked me if there were any problems and I told him that I dreamt where I was told that Pastor Lazarus Muoka is the only one that can give me a job. The pastor said: 'My sister you cannot see him now because he is in Lagos' and I felt bad. He continued, "start by working in the church there and you will see him. I replied: "Work in the church! Who will pay me? The pastor said the God that sent me here, will be the one to pay you.

Eventually, I went home; later I started to work in the church as the branch pastor counselled. That work afforded me the opportunity to see the picture of G.O. in the Calendar/Almanac of the church. So, when I got home

one fateful day, I saw the G.O. in my dream. I went to him and said, "Sir, I need work and I want also to get a house. G.O. laughed at me and suddenly, I woke up.

One day, there was a crusade in Benin and I was there, in the crusade. I saw the woman I lived with when I was a small girl, she said they have been search-

ing for me, that her son came from overseas and brought something for me. She gave me the envelope containing some money, after the crusade, I followed the woman home and she gave me other packages, including fridge, stabiliser and handset. So, the miracle has started. P-r-a-i-s-e, the Lord!

Meanwhile, my son was in Auch Polytechnic, and we both engaged in menial farm work to pay his school fees. Suddenly, my son said he would not join me to do the farm work again, but preferred any other menial job. I encouraged him that he must finish his education. I had to take the bull by the horn and came to Lagos and stayed with my sister.

God did it in such a way that I started work with LAWMA, from there, I was able to send money to that my son to complete his tertiary education. God helping us, today, he has graduated from school. Then, my daughter finished her own secondary school and got admission into a polytechnic, but for lack of fund, she opted to work with me at LAWMA. One day, after sweeping the bus-stop assigned to her, she sat down there and, a passerby saw her and asked: "young girl, what are you doing here?" My daughter said she

was doing her work to meet her needs, that she got admission, but has no money to fund her education. The man told her to stop the work and instructed the supervisor to bring her to the office, where he was working. When she got to the man's office, the man asked how much she was paid, which she told him. The man opened a bank account for her and paid in some money into it, and also placed my daughter on a scholarship.

Now, my daughter has finished her education, studying up to a master's degree. She is also married. P-r-a-i-s-e, the Lord!

For my son, my brother has facilitated his trip to Italy, and now he has got his papers. He is also married and that house I begged my G.O. that I needed in the dream, my son has built it for me. He built a two-storey house for me. P-r-a-i-s-e, the Lord!

Note, as at today, I attend the Lord's Chosen branch at Maryland, Lagos. In my branch; I am a cleaner and also arrange chairs for services. God of Chosen is great. May His name be highly exalted in Jesus' name ... Amen!

I pray for our G.O. and wish all members of Chosen Worldwide, heaven at last in Jesus' name... amen!



Sister Uchechukwu Chukwuemeka with her twin babies after six years and six months of waiting on the Lord for the fruit of the womb.

Benefits Of Purity Of Heart (1)

Springs Of Wisdom

By Pastor
W. F. Kumuyi



Christ pronounced blessedness on "the pure in heart," whose hearts are washed and cleansed by His blood. He says, "they shall see God." And because every coin has two sides, there are religious people who are impure in heart.

have peace with God, who "is our peace." But as we turn away from sin, self and pride, and come to Christ for salvation, He breaks down "the middle wall of partition between us" and

Himself, as well as between us and our spouses, neighbours and others. This is because when peace is present, "the enmity" prevailing between man and God is taken away. This is what it means to be saved. It is the salvation we receive from the Lord that also justifies and makes us "have peace with God."

The experience of sanctification comes with clear proof. Any claim to sanctification that cannot be proved is counterfeit. A heart that is truly sanctified is without H - hypocrisy or hatred; E - envy; A - anger and animosity; R - retaliation or revenge; as well as T - tempestuous temper. Those who are sanctified have the "laws (of God written in) their hearts" and possess the nature of love that opposes fulfillment of the evil intentions of the flesh, with "a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned." Such people persevere in spirit and live with a clear purpose of heart.

• **Further reading (King James Version):** Matthew 5:8. Ephesians 2:14,15; Romans 5:1; Philippians 4:7,9. Matthew 5:8; Hebrews 10:14,16,22; 1 Timothy 1:5. Psalm 17:3; Daniel 1:8. Matthew 5:8; 24:35; Psalms 24:3,4; 89:34. Psalm 51:7,10; Ezekiel 36:26,37; James 1:6. 2 Chronicles 16:9; Luke 10:27,19; Acts 1:8. Matthew 5:8. Genesis 26:2-5,12; Jeremiah 1:12. Jeremiah 18:7,8. 2 Peter 1:19; Luke 1:45.

Adeboye Gives Champion Tips At August Thanksgiving Service

By Isaac Taiwo

THE General Overseer, The Redeemed Christian Church of God (RCCG), Pastor Enoch Adejare Adeboye, has called on Christians to pitch their tents with Jesus Christ if they want to be a champion. He gave the admonition at the 2026 RCCG August Thanksgiving Service held at The Throne of Grace, RCCG headquarters, Ebute-Metta, with the theme: "Divine Champions." In the service, he prayed for Sportsmen, Real Estate Developers and their families.

Adeboye said, to become a champion, three things are essential: strength, wisdom and a good coach. He noted that life is a war, and as soon as a child is born, his war begins and would terminate at his death, adding that to live a successful life, one has to be a champion.

Drawing analogy from the boxing profession, Adeboye stressed that every sojourner on earth needs strength and wisdom to defeat his enemy, as well as a good coach to train him/her. A good coach will give the right tips that will make the champion to be careful, focus on his/her day-by-day improvement, and keep on pushing to sustain it.

He said: "You need wisdom and courage to be victorious in life, as you face diverse wars, trials, temptations and problems. You need to sustain your victory because the moment you win a battle, your enemy goes to re-strategise to fight you again, remembering that the battle does not end until you exit out of the world."

"For effective strength, you need God, for wisdom more than that of your foe, you need Jesus, Who is the Wisdom and Pow-

er of God and He is the best Coach you can ever have. Jesus is always interested in your victory to the very end."

Adeboye added that in case you undermine your opponent and he knocks you down, a good coach would have advised you not to get up in time, but stay down there and be re-strategising; only make sure that before the referee counts to ten, you are up on your feet and face your enemy with new vigour. Saying this is where courage comes in, he counselled prospective champions to hook on to Jesus as the Strength, the Wisdom and the Coach.

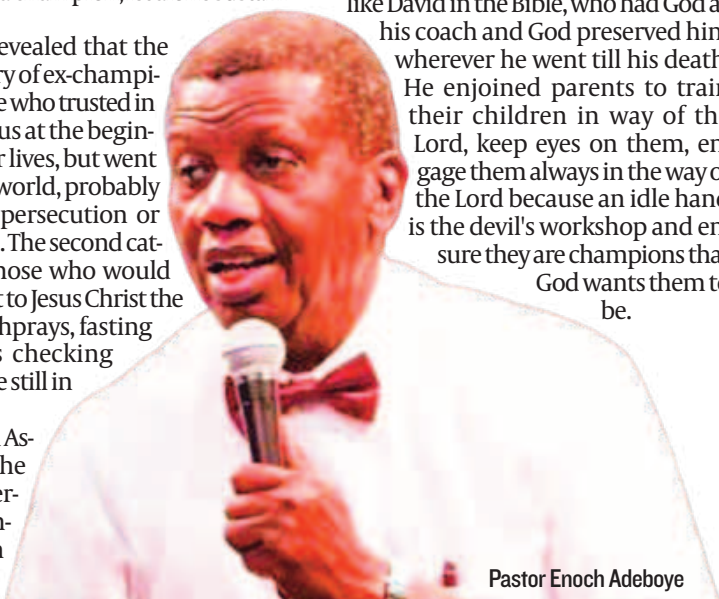
Quoting the scripture, he noted that Jesus said, 'without Me, you can do nothing' implying that without Him, nobody can be a champion, let alone sustain it.

Adeboye revealed that the first category of ex-champions are those who trusted in the Lord Jesus at the beginning of their lives, but went back to the world, probably because of persecution or tribulations. The second category are those who would not hold fast to Jesus Christ the end through prayers, fasting and always checking up if they are still in the faith.

The Special Assistant to the General Overseer, Administration and Pastor-

You need wisdom and courage to be victorious in life, as you face diverse wars, trials, temptations and problems. You need to sustain your victory because the moment you win a battle, your enemy goes to re-strategise to fight you again, remembering that the battle does not end until you exit out of the world.

in-Charge of RCCG Region 1, Dele Balogun, re-emphasised the need to have, Jesus Christ for strength, wisdom and a Coach like David in the Bible, who had God as his coach and God preserved him wherever he went till his death. He enjoined parents to train their children in way of the Lord, keep eyes on them, engage them always in the way of the Lord because an idle hand is the devil's workshop and ensure they are champions that God wants them to be.



Pastor Enoch Adeboye

Light Chapel Ends National Convention August 16

By Chris Irekamba

THE ongoing 2026 National Convention of the Light Chapel (a.k.a Jesus Is Light Ministries), which commenced on Thursday, at the church's headquarters in Lagos, would end tomorrow.

With theme, "The Light Of The World," drawn from Matthew 5:14-16 and John 8:12, the four-day event brought different speakers and ministers from Nigeria and the United Kingdom to speak to the people.

Among them were, Lead Pastor, Alpha Life Tabernacle, Lagos, Pastor Damian Ozimede Patrick; Pastor, Strong City Revival Church, Abuja, David Ola Richard; Pastor, Goodnews Church, Manchester, United Kingdom, Sesan Ajayi; and Evang. David Ikhiela of Gospel Flame Worship Assembly, Lagos. x The General Overseer, Pastor Bayo Funso Adaramola, who doubles as the host disclosed that the convention also featured guest ministers, including Odunayo Adebayo, Hope Ejatta Zion, Daisy Ikechukwu, Betty Reuben, Titi Adefuye, Paul Brown, Mike Onuorah and David Alabi.

According to a statement released by Christian Benefits



General Overseer of the Light Chapel, Pastor Bayo Adaramola J.P

Media, the church's media consultant, to the church, the convention is designed to provide participants with opportunities to encounter God through worship, the word, prayer, healing and deliverance, while challenging Christians to live as lights in a world in need of godly influence.

The programme was streamed live through Light Chapel HQ's Facebook, YouTube and Instagram platforms, making the programme accessible to worshippers beyond Lagos and members of the ministry's branches worldwide.

The Benefits Of Adoration (cont)

HIS name is "Emmanuel," meaning "God with us" (Mat 1:23). Again, at the end of his Gospel Matthew records Jesus' promise to His disciples: "And lo, I am with you always" (Mat 28:20). Mark ends his gospel with the words: "Then the disciples 'went forth, and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them,'" (Mark 16:20).

"He will feed His flock like a shepherd; He will gather the lambs with His arm, and carry them in His bosom, and gently lead those who are with young," (Is 40:11).

God is described as one who picks up an individual lamb in order to protect it and carry it close to His heart (cf. Mat 6:24-34). Although God is all-powerful (v.10) and He regards the nations as dust (v.15), He still cares for each of His own in a personal way. We must never think that God is so majestic that He ignores the needs and problems of the individual believers.

But Zion said: "The Lord has forsaken me, and my Lord has forgotten me. 15: Can a woman forget her nursing child, and not have compassion on the son of her womb? Surely they may forget, yet I will not forget you. 16: See, I have inscribed you on the palms of My hands; your walls are continually be-

Biblical Womanhood

By Emeritus
Prof. Mercy Olumide



Adoration (75)

fore Me. 17: Your sons shall make haste; your destroyers and those who laid you waste shall go away from you," (Is 49:14-17).

49:14-17 "The Lord has forsaken me." These are the words of the Israelites, who experienced great adversity and thus felt abandoned and forgotten by God. God's response gives di-

vine assurance to any believer going through trying times.

1• His love for us is greater than the natural affection of a loving mother for her children; it is therefore unthinkable that He will ever forget us, especially in our times of despair and grief (cf. Jer 31:20).

2• His compassion for us will never fail, regardless of life's circumstances; He watches over us with great tenderness and love, and we may rest in the conviction that He will never leave us.

3• The evidence of God's great love is that He has engraved us on the palms of His own hands, so that He can never forget us; the scars in His hands are ever before His eyes, as a reminder of the great love He has showered on us and of His desire to care for us.

A Thirst For God; Yearning For God (Ps 42)

When you feel lonely or depressed meditate on God's kindness and love. "My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When shall I come and appear before God?" (Ps 42:2)

As water is essential for physical life, so God and His presence are essential for satisfaction and wholeness of life.

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NIGERIAN INSTITUTE OF INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS



Roundtable Discussion on
South Africa's
"XENOPHOBIA"
IN COMPARATIVE
PERSPECTIVE



Speakers:

- 1 Prof. Adele Jinadu
- 2 Prof. Eghosa Osaghae
- 3 Prof. Bobby J. Moroe
 Consul General, Republic of South Africa, Lagos



Tuesday 18th
 AUGUST
 2026



11:00AM



NIIA Conference Chamber
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RHI: Assessing Oluremi Tinubu’s Social Intervention Programme Three Years After

Three years after its launch, the impact of the Renewed Hope Initiative (RH), a social intervention programme of First Lady Oluremi Tinubu, is visible across the country. However, there are questions around its *modus operandi* and the long-term sustainability of its activities, **TERHEMBA DAKA** writes.

THREE years after its launch, the Renewed Hope Initiative (RHI) has grown from an emergency relief platform into a broad social intervention programme spanning healthcare, education, economic empowerment, agriculture and social investment.

Its expansion has brought the initiative and its founder, Nigeria’s First Lady, Senator Oluremi Tinubu, increasing public attention, while also raising questions about its impact, funding, accountability and the place of the Office of the First Lady within Nigeria’s constitutional and governance framework.

From support for victims of floods, insurgency and communal violence to grants and productive assets for women, scholarships for indigent students, healthcare interventions and welfare assistance for elderly citizens, the RHI has established a significant footprint in Nigeria’s social intervention landscape.

However, three years into its operation, the more important question is no longer how much the initiative has done or how many people it says it has reached. It is whether the model represents a sustainable approach to social intervention, whether its impact can be independently measured and whether the structures being developed can survive the administration that created them.

A New Chapter In A Familiar Tradition

THE Office of the First Lady has no executive powers or statutory responsibilities under the Nigerian constitution. Yet presidential spouses have historically used the visibility attached to the office to promote social causes and intervene in areas of public concern.

The tradition dates back to several decades. The late Maryam Babangida’s Better Life for Rural Women programme in the late 1980s focused attention on rural women and economic empowerment. Maryam Abacha championed the National Hospital for Women and Children in Abuja, while Stella Obasanjo focused on children living with disabilities through the Child Care Trust. Turai Yar’Adua promoted specialised cancer care through the National Cancer Centre project, while Aisha Buhari’s Future Assured Foundation concentrated on maternal health, nutrition and women’s empowerment.

These programmes demonstrated how the visibility of presidential spouses could be deployed to draw attention to social issues. However, many were also closely associated with their founders and faced questions about continuity once the occupants of the Presidential Villa changed.

A senior Presidential Villa official, who requested anonymity, told *The Guardian* that continuity had historically been a major challenge.

“Many of these projects are personality-driven instead of policy-driven. Once the occupant of the office leaves, the programme often loses momentum,” the official said.

It is against this backdrop that the RHI’s three-year record is now being assessed.

From Relief To Broader Intervention

THE Renewed Hope Initiative was officially launched on June 24, 2023, shortly after President Bola Ahmed Tinubu assumed office. The initiative was structured around five broad pillars – agriculture, education, health, economic empowerment and social investment – and conceived as a complement to the President’s Renewed Hope Agenda.

Unlike some earlier First Lady-led programmes built around a single dominant cause, the RHI has adopted a multi-sector approach. Its interventions combine emergency assistance with programmes intended to improve livelihoods and expand access to social and economic oppor-



Wife of the Minister of Defence, Mrs. Oghogho Musa (left); Wife of the Speaker, House of Representatives, Hajia Fatima Tajudeen Abass; First Lady of Nigeria, Senator Oluremi Tinubu and wife of the Chief of Defence Staff, Mrs. Merman Oluyede at the presentation of support to the elderly in Abuja...recently.

tunities. The organisation says its programmes now cover all 36 states and the Federal Capital Territory, with interventions extending to communities across Nigeria’s 774 local councils.

It has also reported reaching more than 40 million households through partnerships with government institutions, development organisations and private-sector stakeholders.

According to publicly available figures attributed to the initiative, more than N100 billion had been mobilised in grants, donations, direct interventions and multi-year commitments between its launch in 2023 and April 2026. The figures are substantial, although their significance ultimately depends on the methodology used to determine beneficiaries, the nature of the commitments and independent assessment of outcomes.

Emergency Response

SOME of the RHI’s most visible interventions have come during moments of national crisis. Barely days after its inaugural meeting in July 2023, the initiative responded to the Trademore Estate flood disaster in Lugbe, Abuja, with financial support for affected families. The intervention established a pattern that has continued during subsequent emergencies.

Following a tanker explosion in Niger State, Senator Tinubu donated N100 million to support the victims and affected families. After the killings in Yelewata and Daudu communities of Benue State, she visited survivors and announced a N1 billion intervention for rehabilitation and recovery.

In Borno State, the initiative has provided assistance to victims of insurgency, widows and orphans of fallen security personnel, alongside support for communities affected by flooding. Internally displaced persons in Plateau State have also benefited from RHI interventions.

Such responses have given the initiative a high public profile, particularly in situations where humanitarian needs have outpaced the immediate capacity of formal institutions.

The challenge, however, is whether emergency assistance can translate into sustainable recovery.

Women And Economic Empowerment

ECONOMIC empowerment has become one of the most prominent areas of RHI activity. Working with partners, including the Tony Elumelu Foundation, the initiative has supported 18,500 women entrepreneurs with business grants. Other beneficiaries have received productive assets such as grinding machines, gas cookers, ovens and deep freezers to support small businesses.

Female farmers, traders, artisans and other small-scale entrepreneurs have also received grants, equipment and agricultural inputs. The underlying rationale is that strengthening women’s economic capacity can have wider implications for household income, children’s welfare and community resilience. For the RHI, therefore, the objective has been to move beyond one-off charity towards interventions capable of supporting income generation. Whether beneficiaries are able to sustain the

businesses created through the programme, however, remains a critical measure of its long-term effectiveness.

Education And Human Capital

EDUCATION has emerged as another important component of the initiative. The RHI has supported schools with books and other educational materials and established a scholarship programme for indigent students. Since its inception, 47 students in state-owned tertiary institutions have reportedly benefited from the national scholarship programme. The initiative has also pursued digital inclusion and skills development through partnerships with technology institutions and other stakeholders.

The interventions reflect a broader recognition that educational inequality is no longer limited to access to schools and classrooms but increasingly includes access to technology and digital skills.

For beneficiaries, the immediate value may be financial or material assistance. For policymakers, however, the longer-term test is whether such interventions contribute measurably to improved educational outcomes.

Healthcare And Social Protection

HEALTHCARE has also become central to the RHI’s activities. In 2024, Senator Tinubu donated N1 billion to the National Cancer Fund, drawing renewed attention to cancer awareness, prevention and treatment. In 2025, she declared tuberculosis a national emergency, seeking to raise awareness about the continuing burden of the disease and the implications of declining international donor support.

Maternal and child healthcare programmes have included the distribution of delivery kits to frontline health workers serving rural and underserved communities. Other interventions have included medical outreach, HIV/AIDS advocacy and support for persons with disabilities.

The initiative’s Food Outreach Scheme, under its Social Investment Programme, provides food assistance to vulnerable groups, including persons with disabilities, in communities across the country.

Another component that has received less public attention is its welfare programme for elderly citizens, retired military personnel and retired police officers. The programme provides food, healthcare and welfare assistance to older Nigerians, including people who spent decades in public service.

For a country facing increasing pressure on social protection systems, such interventions address a significant gap, although questions remain about their scale, sustainability and relationship with formal government welfare programmes.

The Partnership Model

ONE of the features distinguishing the RHI from conventional charity programmes is its emphasis on partnerships. The initiative works with federal ministries and agencies, state governments, governors’ wives, development partners, private-sector organisations and philanthropic groups.

Among the institutions associated with various

interventions of the RHI are the Federal Ministry of Health and Social Welfare, Bank of Industry, National Agricultural Development Fund, National Information Technology Development Agency and Federal Ministry of Environment.

International development partners have also been involved in some of the programmes. The partnership approach enables the initiative to mobilise resources beyond what would ordinarily be available to a privately funded charitable organisation. It also allows programmes to be implemented through existing government and community structures. But partnership-based funding introduces its own accountability questions, particularly around donor disclosure, governance, expenditure and monitoring.

Thus, the growing visibility of the RHI has inevitably generated criticism. The Human Rights Writers Association of Nigeria (HURIWA), among other groups, has questioned what it considers the expanding overlap between activities associated with the First Lady and the statutory responsibilities of government ministries and agencies.

The organisation has argued that large-scale humanitarian and social protection interventions should primarily be implemented through constitutionally established institutions subject to statutory funding, legislative oversight and public accountability.

HURIWA has also called for greater transparency over the RHI’s sources of funding, governance arrangements, audited accounts and expenditure. It has argued that regular disclosure of donations and spending, supported by independent audits, would strengthen public confidence. The organisation has further raised concerns about possible conflicts of interest where corporate organisations supporting the initiative operate in sectors regulated by the Federal Government.

Other governance advocates and opposition figures have similarly questioned the expanding public role of the First Lady. Their argument is not necessarily that the interventions lack value, but that private or philanthropic initiatives should complement rather than substitute government-led social protection programmes.

Nevertheless, Senator Tinubu has consistently rejected suggestions that the initiative is financed through public funds.

“The Office of the First Lady has no constitutional allocation,” she has maintained, explaining that resources deployed through the initiative are mobilised through partnerships and individuals who share its humanitarian objectives.

Her Special Adviser on Media, Busola Kukoyi, has described the RHI as a Corporate Affairs Commission-registered non-governmental organisation governed by a board of Nigerians and funded through voluntary contributions from private sector organisations, philanthropists and other individuals. The explanation places the initiative outside the formal budgetary structure of the Federal Government.

Beyond Numbers

THE RHI’s reported figures are significant. More than 40 million households have reportedly been reached through its various programmes and partnerships, while more than N100 billion has reportedly been mobilised in interventions and commitments. Yet statistics alone cannot determine whether the programme is achieving lasting social impact. The more revealing questions are what happens after the intervention.

Can a woman who receives business equipment sustain her enterprise? Can a farmer who receives agricultural inputs improve productivity over several seasons? Can a young person who receives digital training secure sustainable employment? Can an elderly beneficiary move from periodic assistance to a more secure social protection system? Can families affected by conflict or natural disasters rebuild their livelihoods after the initial relief has ended?

Those questions point to the need for independent impact assessments that go beyond counting beneficiaries or calculating money disbursed. The history of First Lady-led initiatives in Nigeria shows that visibility and resources can produce significant short-term results, but sustaining those gains beyond the tenure of their founders is considerably more difficult.

For the RHI, institutionalisation will therefore be critical. Durable partnerships, transparent governance, verifiable impact measurement and sustainable funding could determine whether the initiative becomes a lasting social intervention model or another programme closely associated with the tenure of its founder.

Wosilat Okoya-Seriki:

Celebrating Woman Of Substance, Quiet Influence At 65

By Suliyat Tella

HERE are women whose presence in a room announces itself long before they speak, women whose warmth and poise have, over several decades, woven them into the circles they grace. Alhaja Wosilat Okoya-Seriki is unmistakably one such woman, and as she marks her 65th birthday on August 17, tributes are pouring in from family, friends and admirers who have come to appreciate her warmth, loyalty and generosity over the years.

Mrs Okoya-Seriki has built a reputation as a woman of substance in her own right, even as she has remained connected to two prominent Nigerian families. It is perhaps this combination of elegance, warmth and discretion that has kept her a familiar presence at social gatherings, where her friendships with people across different walks of life have endured over the years.

Those who know her say it is her character, rather than the prominence of the families she was born into and married into, that has defined her. They speak of her warmth, generosity and loyalty to the people around her. At 65, the milestone offers an opportunity to reflect on a life that has largely been lived away from the glare of publicity, despite her connections to some of Nigeria's

most prominent families. She is also known for her distinctive sense of style. Elegant and fashionable, she is often seen in carefully coordinated traditional outfits, carrying herself with the poise that has become part of her public image.

Yet the younger sister of Aare Rasak Okoya has never been one to seek the limelight. She maintains a relatively low profile, appearing at social occasions when necessary and returning to the quieter world of family and close relationships.

Born on August 17, 1961, into the celebrated Okoya lineage, Wosilat is a younger sibling of the legendary industrialist and philanthropist, Alhaji Rasak Akanni Okoya, CON. But despite the prominence of her family name, those close to her



Wosilat

say she has carved out an identity of her own.

She later married the late Chief Ademola Rasak Seriki, CON, Otun Aare of Lagos, who served Nigeria as Ambassador to Spain and Permanent Representative to the United Nations World Tourism Organisation until his death in December 2022.

When the late

diplomat answered the call to serve the nation, she stood firmly by him, making a home with him in Madrid throughout his diplomatic posting. She remained by his side until his final days and, since his death, has continued to honour his memory, organising prayers each year for the repose of his soul.

A mother of three daughters and grandmother, Mrs Okoya-Seriki has also devoted much of her life to her family. Those who know her say she raised her children with an emphasis on hard work, discipline and family values, and takes pride in their accomplishments. For a woman whose life has intersected with some of Nigeria's most prominent social, business and diplomatic circles, she has nevertheless maintained a measure of privacy that is increasingly uncommon in public life.

As family, friends and admirers gather to mark her 65th birthday, the tributes are expected to reflect the qualities for which she is most remembered: dignity, warmth, elegance, loyalty and a quiet commitment to the people closest to her. At 65, Wosilat Okoya-Seriki's story is ultimately that of a woman who has lived within prominent circles without allowing the prominence around her to define her.

Spotlighting Nebolisa Arah's Virtues At 75

By Suliyat Tella

THE 75th birthday of Nebolisa Arah, former Managing Director of Fidelity Union Merchant Bank, was marked not only with tributes from prominent Nigerians but also by a gathering of former colleagues whose careers were shaped by his leadership.

At the Thanksgiving and Reception ceremony held in Lagos, speakers returned repeatedly to the qualities they said had defined Arah's 46-year professional journey: integrity, humility, simplicity, professionalism and a commitment to education.

From his early education in Nigeria and the United States to his emergence as the pioneer Managing Director of Fidelity Union Merchant Bank, and later leadership roles across Nigeria's financial sector, Arah's career has been marked by responsibilities that extended beyond individual appointments.

President Bola Tinubu, in a message celebrating the banking veteran, highlighted his contribution to the development of Nigeria's financial sector, describing him as a professional who laid a foundation of integrity and professionalism not only for Fidelity Bank but for banking generally.

The President also praised Arah's influence on a generation of bankers and finance-sector practitioners, citing his life of in-

tegrity, simplicity and contentment. For those who worked with him, however, the significance of the milestone went beyond his corporate achievements.

The Obi of Onitsha, Igwe Nnaemeka Achebe, who has known Arah through their shared background and educational experiences, emphasised the role of sound education in shaping his life. He recalled the philosophy of their secondary school principal that passing examinations was merely incidental to obtaining a sound education. From secondary school through the University of Ibadan and beyond, he noted, Arah continued to pursue knowledge and succeed professionally.

For the royal father, Arah's story demonstrated how education could provide the foundation for a productive and impactful life. He also urged Nigerians to leave their communities and institutions better than they found them, an admonition that fitted naturally into a celebration of Arah's career.

Those qualities were equally central to the message delivered by Okechukwu Enalamah, who preached at the Thanksgiving and Reception ceremony. Enalamah used the occasion to speak about what he described as the rewards of righteousness, urging people to understand that the quality of a person's life is ultimately

reflected in the seeds he or she sows. Quoting Galatians 6:7, he said: "Do not be deceived: God is not mocked. Whatever a man sows, that shall he also reap."

For Enalamah, the principle was particularly relevant to a celebration of a life and career such as Arah's. He explained that the results of one's actions may not always be immediate. "We do not reap what we sow at the time we sow. There is a time to sow and a time to harvest. It is never the same time. It can be short; it can be long. But there is usually a difference between the time of sowing and the time of harvest," he said. The preacher encouraged the congregation to consciously sow good seeds through their relationships, actions, service and generosity.

December will mark 23 years since Arah left Fidelity Bank, but his former colleagues have continued to maintain a relationship with him and celebrate his contribution to their professional lives. Arah himself acknowledged the significance of their continued affection. "December will make it 23 years since I left the bank but you, my colleagues, have not stopped celebrating me at every point. Thank you from the bottom of my heart," he said.

Chairperson of the planning committee and Managing Director of FSDH Merchant Bank, Bukola Smith, said Arah's professional identity was defined by integrity, forthrightness and humility. Smith, a former Treasurer at Fidelity Bank, described the celebration as a privilege and an honour because of what Arah represented in the lives of those who worked with him. She stressed that his legacy deserved to be celebrated while he was still alive. The significance of that statement becomes clearer when considered against Arah's career trajectory.

Born on August 8, 1951, in Port Harcourt, Arah's educational journey took him through several locations, including Port Harcourt, Victoria in Cameroon, Onitsha and Lagos, before

he completed his secondary education at Government Secondary School, Owerri. He later attended the University of Ibadan, where he studied Agricultural Economics. His desire for further education took him to Ohio State University in Columbus, United States, in 1976. There, he earned an MSc in Agricultural Economics and an MBA in Finance. The combination of agricultural economics and finance provided a foundation for a career that would eventually take him into senior leadership in the financial sector.

Interestingly, banking was not his first professional destination. Arah began his career at Lever Brothers Nigeria Limited, where he worked as a Brand Marketing Trainee between July 1977 and August 1978. He entered banking in March 1981 when he joined International Merchant Bank Limited. His progression from Analyst to Senior Manager demonstrated a steady rise through the professional ranks before he left the institution in August 1988.

Just two months later, he took on the role that would define a major chapter of his career: General Manager/Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of Fidelity Union Merchant Bank Limited. He would lead the bank for 15 years, until December 2003, overseeing a significant phase in the institution's development before eventually moving on to other responsibilities in the financial sector.

Yet, one of the most remarkable features of his career was what happened after Fidelity. Rather than treating his departure as the end of his professional contribution, Arah continued to serve in different capacities across the financial sector. Between 2004 and 2005, he served as an independent director in two commercial banks and worked as a merger consultant to five banks. He subsequently founded AGL and LDL and later returned to executive banking as Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of Afriland First Bank Nigeria Plc between 2009 and 2011. He also

served as Chairman of Afriland International in Dublin, Ireland, and was associated with the boards of institutions including Consolidated Discounts Limited, Trustfund Nigeria Plc and Nigeria Interbank Settlement System.

His expertise was again called upon in 2009 when, after five and a half years in retirement, he was asked by the Central Bank of Nigeria to help reposition a bank taken over by the regulator. Later that year, he was appointed to the Governing Board of the Central Bank of Nigeria by the Federal Government. The sequence demonstrates a professional career that remained relevant beyond the institution with which his name became synonymous. But perhaps one of the clearest indications of the esteem in which Arah is held by his former colleagues came from an initiative unveiled during the birthday celebration.

The Fidelity alumni association decided to establish an academic prize at Bowen University in his honour, with a N2 million commitment to be spread over 10 years. The best graduating Banking and Finance student at the university will receive N200,000 annually. Vice Chairman of the planning committee, Emeka Obiagwu, said the initiative was inspired by Arah's love for academics. "We all know that our MD is a lover of academics, so we decided as an alumni to institute an award in his honour," he said.

The award is significant beyond its monetary value. It creates a direct connection between a successful career in banking and the education of future banking professionals. It also reflects a broader philosophy: that professional success becomes more meaningful when it is used to create opportunities for those coming behind. The choice of Banking and Finance students is particularly appropriate.

Read the remainder of this story on www.guardian.ng



Arah

Birthdays

BABANGIDA, Ibrahim Badamasi (rtd) politician, administrator and former Commander-in-Chief of Armed Forces will be 85 on August 17, 2026.

He was born on August 17, 1941 in Minna, Niger State and attended Military Training College, graduating in 1963; Indian Military Academy, 1964; Royal Armoured Centre, England, 1966-67; United States Army Armor School, 1972; Command and Staff College, 1972 and Nigerian Institute of Policy and Strategic Studies, 1979-80.

He was Career Military Officer, he served as Commanding officer during Nigeria's civil war, 1968-70; taught at

Nigerian Defense Academy, 1970-72; became lieutenant colonel, 1974; served as regiments commander of Nigerian Army, 1973-75; and as Army's armored corps commander, 1975-81.

He became director of army staff duties and plans, 1981; promoted to Major General, 1983; appointed as Chief of Army Staff by Buhari, 1984; served on the Supreme Military Council, 1984-85; assumed presidency and made himself commander-in-chief of Nigeria's armed forces, August 27, 1985; stepped aside on August 27, 1993.

He instituted various political and economic reforms; drew up plan for the nation's return to democratic rule; allowed two parties to be estab-



Babangida

lished for national elections; declared himself minister of Defense, 1990.

He controversially nullified the June 12, 1993 election, adjudged the fairest election in the history of the country.

OSADOLOR, Kingsley Osayande, former Editor of



Osadolor

The Guardian on Sunday, former Commissioner of Information, Edo State, Solicitor and Advocate of the Supreme Court of Nigeria will be 66 on August 15, 2026.

Born on August 15, 1960 in Benin City, Edo State, he attended University of Nigeria, Nsukka, where he graduated with First Class Honours in

the department of Mass Communication in 1984.

He later attended the University of Lagos, where he obtained his Bachelor of Laws (LL.B) and the Nigerian Law School, where he earned the Barrister-at-law (B.L) degree.

He has received many awards, including Distinguished Alumnus Award and Induction into the University of Nigeria Hall of Fame (October, 2004); Graduated at the top of the class (June 1984) and delivered Valedictory Address at Convocation, February 1985; Vice-Chancellor's book prize for best overall graduating student; Campus Club cash prize and trophy for the best overall graduating student; Departmental book prize for the best student of Mass Com-

munication; *Daily Times* cash and typewriter prize for the best Mass Communication graduate; and Alhaji Babatunde Jose prize for the best Mass Communication graduate in reporting.

He is a co-anchor, Good Morning Nigeria, (7 a.m.-9 a.m. Weekdays), a market-leading Current Affairs programme, incorporating general and special interest news reports, newspaper review, and incisive conversations on burning issues, on the network service of the Nigerian Television Authority (NTA).

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

Events



The celebrant, Dr. Adewale Yekinni Adeleke (middle); retired lecturer at the University of Lagos, Prof. Lai Oluode (left) and Dr. Lanre Babalola at the University of Ibadan Conference Centre where Dr. Adeleke marked his 75th birthday on August 1, 2026.



Federal University of Technology, Akure (FUTA) student, Nnusi Shiaki (left); Vice Chancellor, FUTA, Professor Adenike Oladiji; other students: Oluwaferanmi Oladepo, Adejire Adegite of Team Zenith; and Daniel Segun Akinyiwole, a Year III Medicine and Surgery (MBBS) at a reception for students who won National competitions in Akure... recently



Influencer/Content Creator, Demilade Akingbe (left); Head of Marketing, Aspira Nigeria Limited, Barbara Onianwah; Brand Ambassador, Viva Detergent, Hilda Baci; Managing Director, Wasche Point Laundromat, Ruth Okunnuga; Brand Influencer, Ejemeka Obisinachi; and Management Consultant, Wasche Point, Adesuwa Ekwale, at the Aspira Nigeria Limited Mini Lifestyle Brunch with the theme: "Come Wash with Hilda" at Wasche Point Laundromat, Lekki, Lagos...last Saturday



Former Minister of Industry, Dr. Enelamah (left); Managing Director (MD) of FSDH Merchant Bank, Mrs. Bukola Smith; Pioneer Managing Director of Fidelity Bank, Mr. Nebolisa Arah, and his wife, Mrs. Philo Arah; at the 75th birthday thanksgiving service organised by Fidelity Bank alumni in honour of Mr. Arah, in Lagos.



Prof. Dhikrullah Adetona Oluode (right) receiving the certificate of the Surgery Faculty (FCVSN, Theriogenology Speciality) from the acting Provost, Postgraduate College of Veterinary Surgeons Nigeria, Prof. Joseph Fadeyemi Akinrinmade (FCVSN), in Abuja ...on Thursday



Baale of Igboro Erekiti community, Chief Kayode Abila (left); Permanent Secretary, Office of Environmental Services, Lagos State, Gaji Tajudeen, The Abowa of Agbowa-Ikosi, Oba Owolabi Monson; Permanent Secretary, Lands Bureau, Kamar Olowosago; Permanent Secretary, Drainage Services, Mahmood Adegbite and Managing Director, Lagos Waste Management Authority (LAWMA), Dr. Muyiwa Gbadegesin during the stakeholders engagement with land owners and stakeholders of the proposed Material Recovery Facilities at Erekiti, Badagry and Agbowa in Epe in Lagos.

Aliyu, Wamakko, Speaker Attend Alhaji Mansur's Funeral Prayer In Sokoto



Aliyu, Wamakko, Bodinga and others at the event

SOKOTO State Governor, Ahmed Aliyu Sokoto, the State APC leader, Senator Aliyu Magatakarda Wamakko, and the Speaker of the Sokoto State House of Assembly, Tukur Bala Bodinga, were among Muslim faithful who attended the funeral prayer of the late Alhaji Mansur, Sarkin Fadan Jarman Sokoto, a son-in-law to an APC stalwart in the State, Alhaji Ummarun Kwabo.

Alhaji Mansur died on Thursday afternoon at a hospital in Abuja at the age of 54, following a brief illness. He is survived by two wives and 12

children.

The funeral prayer, led by Malam Bello Birnin Kebbi, took place at the Abu Huraira Jumu'at Mosque, Polo Club, Sokoto.

Aliyu expressed shock over his death, describing him as a pious and devoted Muslim.

He prayed to Almighty Allah to forgive the deceased's shortcomings, accept his good deeds and grant him Jannatul Firdaus.

The governor also prayed to Almighty Allah to grant the deceased's family the strength and fortitude to bear the loss.



A philanthropist, Chief Ademola Adetifa (middle); his brother, Mr. Olusanya Adetifa (left) and family friends, Pastor Lasisi Raseq (right) when Ademola presented two new vehicles to them for playing significant roles in his journey in Lagos.

By Gbenga Akinfenwa

THE Founder of Louis Awode Foundation, Louis Awode, has urged Nigerian youths to embrace volunteerism as a pathway to employability, leadership and community development, saying service can provide practical experience and skills that improve their prospects in a competitive labour mar-

Volunteerism Key To Employability, Community Development — Awode

ket.

He also noted that volunteering should not be viewed merely as an act of giving back to society, but also as an opportunity for young people to acquire workplace experience, build professional networks and develop the personal qualities required by

employers.

Awode, who spoke during an online Volunteer Development Workshop organised by the foundation, to encourage young Nigerians to participate actively in community service, urged youths aged 15 to 30 to take advantage of available volunteer opportu-

nities, saying participation in service projects could expose them to practical challenges and responsibilities that formal education alone might not provide.

According to him, volunteerism can help young people demonstrate initiative, teamwork, problem-solving and

commitment, while building evidence of their ability to contribute meaningfully to organisations and communities.

He said the foundation was willing to collaborate with donors and organisations involved in youth empowerment to expand volunteer opportunities that would enable young Nigerians to con-

tribute to the social, economic and environmental development of their communities.

Leadership coach and development practitioner, Bukunola Ogundele, reinforced the importance of service, urging young people to understand leadership as a responsibility rather than a title.

How Tinubu's Reforms Straighten Nigeria's Pathway To Prosperity

By **Arabinrin Aderonke**

DR. Zacch Adedeji's appearance on *Channels Television's* Politics Today on Sunday night was more than a routine television interview. It was a powerful exposition of the economic thinking behind the Tinubu administration's reforms and a demonstration of why President Bola Ahmed Tinubu made the right call in entrusting Nigeria's revenue transformation to him.

For more than an hour, the Executive Chairman of the Nigeria Revenue Service engaged Seun Okinbaloye on taxation, revenue mobilisation, subsidy removal, inflation, the exchange rate, economic growth and the broader impact of the administration's reforms. What emerged was a confident, composed and remarkably prepared technocrat who was willing to confront difficult questions with facts, figures and context.

Channels Television itself reported that the conversation focused on the performance and impact of the Federal Government's economic policies, the revenue drive and efforts to strengthen Nigeria's tax and revenue system.

Perhaps the most striking feature of the interview was Adedeji's ability to place Nigeria's present economic realities against the baseline inherited in 2023. Rather than offering simplistic political explanations, he used economic indicators and comparative figures to make his case. The Eagle Online described the appearance as an attempt to tell the story of the Tinubu administration "through numbers," noting that Adedeji came to the studio with charts covering GDP growth, inflation, exchange rates, interest rates, foreign reserves, public debt and oil production. That approach matters. In an environment where economic debates are frequently driven by emotion, Adedeji's decision to anchor his arguments in data demonstrated the value of evidence-based public communication.

His most compelling message, however, may have been his explanation of the philosophy behind Nigeria's tax reforms: "tax prosperity, not poverty." That is a significant departure from the perception that taxation is primarily about extracting money from citizens and businesses. Adedeji explained that the revenue service's interest is directly connected to the prosperity of businesses and individuals – when businesses grow and Nigerians earn more, government revenue naturally increases.

Channels Television reported his argument that the NRS is not there to extract but to create an environment in which businesses and individuals can perform better. That is the kind of explanation Nigerians need as the country builds a modern revenue system.

Adedeji also defended the difficult decision to remove the petrol subsidy, arguing that the reform prevented a potentially unsustainable fiscal burden and helped avert even more severe economic dislocation. *Channels Television* reported his claim that, without the reform, the subsidy bill could have risen dramatically and the exchange rate could have deteriorated further. Whether one agrees with every policy choice or not, what was evident was a public official prepared to defend the government's decisions and accept the burden of explaining why difficult choices were made.

The interview has already generated substantial media attention, with publications focusing on different aspects of his arguments, from the economic reforms and subsidy removal to taxation and the cost of governance. *The Cable* reported his argument that more Nigerians could have fallen into poverty without the reforms. At the same time, *The Whistler* highlighted his position that the government's tax policy is intended to support prosperity rather than punish it. The breadth of the coverage demonstrates that Adedeji succeeded in moving the conversation beyond the traditional, narrow discussion of tax collection to the broader question of Nigeria's economic future.

This is why President Tinubu deserves credit for the appointment. Economic transformation requires more than presidential speeches and policy documents; it requires capable people who can translate policy into institutions, defend difficult decisions and communicate with citizens. Adedeji has increasingly demonstrated those qualities. His performance was neither theatrical nor defensive. He spoke with the confidence of a professional who understands that revenue is ultimately about creating the resources with which government can finance development and that the prosperi-

ty of taxpayers is inseparable from the prosperity of the revenue system.

So, thank you, Mr. President, for Zacch Adedeji. You got this one right. Nigeria needs a revenue administration that understands economics, embraces technology, supports enterprise and can mobilise resources without suffocating the productive sector. On that Sunday night, Adedeji gave Nigerians another glimpse of the kind of technocratic leadership required to deliver that transformation. The assignment remains enormous and the ultimate verdict must be based on results. But if competence, clarity, courage and capacity are the criteria, President Tinubu deserves commendation for putting Zacch Adedeji at the wheel of Nigeria's revenue revolution.

• **Aderonke is a 2014 Laureate, Wole Soyinka investigative journalism Award, 2016 finalist for the CNN African Journalist Award, author, policy analyst, and a Technical Advisor on Broadcast Media to the Executive Chairman, Nigeria Revenue Service.**



Tinubu

Of 'Wikematics,' GAC And Rainbow Coalition

By **Ekesunnie Caleb**

MANY political enthusiasts extending to the academia have tried to construct and understand the meaning of 'Wikematics,' a political philosophy which has received illumination by the acts of the current Minister of the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) and immediate past governor of Rivers State, Nyesom Ezenwo Wike. While some say it is the dawning of a new era of political sophistication and mastery of the Nigerian political climate, quite a few see it as a new political system orchestrated by a man who had spent decades learning and understanding law and politics with its uncanny application to current societal dynamics.

Take it or leave it, Wike has left no one in doubt that this is his time. Wike did not just emerge from nowhere; he has paid his dues from the grassroots by going through the crucibles of the political system, to wit: serving as the Chairman of Obio/Akpor Local Council, becoming Chief of Staff, Government House, Rivers State; Minister of State Education during the administration of President Goodluck Jonathan, two-term Governor of Rivers State and now Minister of the FCT where he has left no one in doubt that he is capacity personified.

Wike parades an enviable curriculum vitae, which better explains his political trajectory and mastery of politics as an art.

Speaking at the twilight of his administration as governor of Rivers State during the launch of Lagos-Ibadan railway on the invitation of Governor Babajide Sanwo-Olu of Lagos State, Wike said: "I will not learn bad thing(s). I will not emulate wrong things; I will always learn good things." He went on to commend the economic development strides of Lagos State. These demonstrated his penchant for positive values. No wonder he was nicknamed Mr. Project by then Vice President Yemi Osibanjo, an APC member, during a visit to the state. During his tenure

as governor, Rivers State received a repertoire of dignitaries, big guns from across political parties, industry leaders, senior government functionaries and leaders of thought whose primary mission was to commission quality projects and social infrastructure that spread to the rural areas.

Wike has maintained his infrastructure development streak in Abuja such that he has earned another sobriquet WIW, which means Wike is Working. His execution of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's Renewed Hope Agenda manifested in the 30-day project commissioning exercise across Abuja to mark the president third year in office. Wike will always emulate and execute what is good.

Now, could it be said that there is no philosophical or ideational relationship between

the emerging democratic political system in Lagos State's Governing Advisory Council (GAC) and the Rainbow Coalition, a political system which is gathering momentum in Rivers State?

The Lagos GAC is a bi-partisan political council comprising industry leaders, elders, past and present political leaders, leading lights in Lagos as well as Lagosians who are distinguished in their rights, who bring to bear their wealth of knowledge and experience in a collegiate format to select would be top political office holders from a collection of many qualified aspirants from among whom the electorates could choose – a pragmatic and innovative human capital and leadership resource recruitment model engineered to steer the Centre of Excellence on the path of sustainable growth.

This is perhaps what 'Wikematics' means in the Rainbow Coalition devised by Wike. The Rainbow Coalition threw up and ensured the nomination of Ogundun Kingsley Chinda, the immediate past minority leader of the House of Representatives, as the governorship candidate of the All Progressives Congress (APC) in Rivers State for the 2027 general election.

It is noteworthy that the Rainbow Coalition is a democratic and bi-partisan group of critical political stakeholders intent on recruiting quality leadership from among qualified alternatives cutting across different electoral categories in Rivers State with less rancour and also ensuring the re-election of President Tinubu for a second term in 2027.

Thus, the Rainbow Coalition is a corollary of the GAC in Lagos State – a political system geared towards enthroning a systematic leadership recruitment procedure based on peace, unity, inclusion, faith and sustainability.

At the grand finale of Wike's thank you visit last December at the Captain Elechi Amadi Polytechnic, Rumuola, Rivers State, he told Rivers people that political violence would have no place in Rivers politics; not anymore.

Reflecting on media editorials of "Rivers of blood" in the run-up to previous elections, the minister lamented improper political behaviours where contestants battled themselves to death to the detriment of the state. He had urged party men to embrace peace, unity and brotherhood as well as broader inclusion of all and sundry in the interest of the state and its development by shunning extreme partisanship and violence.

'Wikematics' is knocking off the violence content of Rivers politics. It is eliminating the winner takes it all element, which fuels attrition, hatred and violence by promoting social and political inclusivity thereby neutralising inherent improper political motivations and incentives. Evidently, the roll call of Rivers people with federal appointments courtesy of 'Wikematics' is legendary. These appointments cut across different political parties, local councils and ethnic groups in the state who are pulling together for the election of Chinda as governor of Rivers State and re-election of Tinubu president.

It is reported that the 'Wikematics' system has set up a reconciliatory body to bring back every member of Rivers political family to the coalition's fold. Such political overtures would mark the height of Wike's political wizardry in creating a stable, progressive Rivers State where citizens, leaders, politicians and the grassroots would pull in one political direction devoid of rancour in the interest of the stability, peace, development and progress of the state.

Could this model of democracy be adopted and adapted into our political philosophy, at least conventionally? This perhaps could save the country of the rancorous elections cycles riddled with violence and with zero filters for every candidate whose only qualification is ability to show good bank account to purchase exorbitant nomination forms.

• **Caleb, the Chief Press Secretary to the governorship candidate of the APC in Rivers State, wrote via unclcaleb71@gmail.com**



Nyesom Wik

By Remi Ladigbolu

THERE are people whose death leaves a vacuum. Then there are those whose departure quietly closes an era. Oloye AbdulRasheed Olalekan Alabi belonged unmistakably to the latter category.

His passing on August 1, 2026 was not merely the loss of an accomplished journalist, distinguished public relations practitioner, prolific author or revered traditional chief. Nor was it simply the end of an extraordinary career that traversed journalism, broadcasting, government, corporate communications and cultural advocacy. It marked the departure of one of the last authentic custodians of a generation that regarded character as a greater asset than reputation, discipline as the bedrock of success and public service as a sacred trust rather than an avenue for self-promotion.

The tributes that followed were entirely deserved. President Bola Tinubu remembered him as a consummate journalist, public relations icon and cultural ambassador. Governor Seyi Makinde described his passing as a monumental loss to Oyo State. The Olubadan of Ibadanland mourned one of his most dependable high chiefs. Journalists, public relations practitioners, traditional rulers and countless protégés all spoke eloquently about the remarkable imprint he left on their professions and communities.

Yet, admirable as those tributes were, they still left an important question unanswered. Who really was Oloye 'Lekan Alabi?

The public knew the impeccably dressed high chief whose command of Yoruba history seemed almost supernatural. They knew the columnist whose remarkable memory effortlessly recalled names, dates and forgotten episodes from decades earlier. They knew the elegant raconteur whose historical essays made the past feel vividly present and whose *Iwe Iranti* radio commentaries became essen-

tial listening for those who understood that history is too important to be left to historians alone.

I knew the mentor. I had the privilege of watching Oloye from much closer quarters, where reputation gives way to reality.

For more than two decades, our paths crossed repeatedly in editorial sessions, strategy meetings, official assignments, private conversations and the ordinary moments that rarely find their way into public tributes. Those encounters revealed a man who was far more interesting than the already accomplished public figure Nigerians had come to know.

Like every relationship between mentor and protégé, mine was inevitably personal. But it was also built on prolonged observation rather than hero worship. I saw enough of his strengths to understand why he commanded unusual respect, and I saw enough of his human frailties to appreciate that they were often the inevitable excesses of virtues he pursued with uncompromising consistency.

Years before we worked together, our paths had crossed briefly at the now defunct Daily Sketch, after Odu'a Investment Company Limited revived the newspaper. Those encounters were courteous but entirely unremarkable. Neither of us could have imagined that they were the prelude to a professional relationship that would shape much of my own career.

That defining moment arrived in 2003. Having decided to leave The PUNCH, where I had worked as an investigative reporter, I attended an interview at the headquarters of Odu'a Investment Company Limited within the Cocoa House complex in Ibadan. I arrived thinking I was merely seeking another job. In retrospect, I was unknowingly walking into one of

the most consequential classrooms of my professional life. The

interview secured me employment. More importantly, it placed me under the guidance of the finest practical teacher of public relations I have ever encountered.

Looking back now, I realise he never consciously set out to become anyone's mentor. Mentorship simply became the natural consequence of the way he approached work. Anyone who worked closely with him and paid attention could hardly escape learning something valuable.

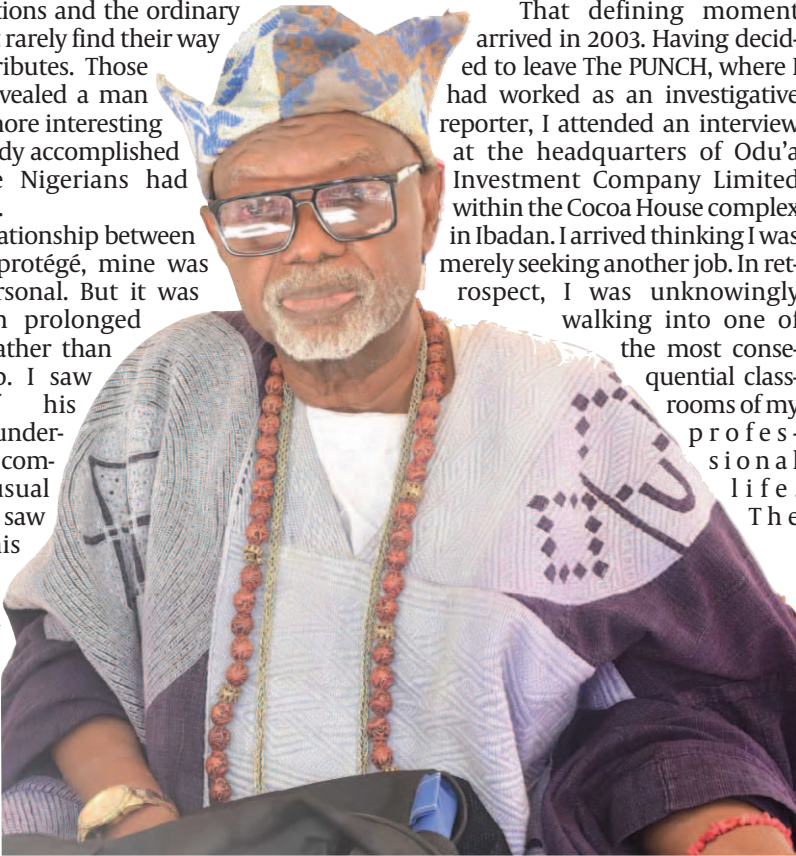
To say he taught me public relations scarcely captures what actually happened. He taught me how to think before teaching me what to write.

He insisted that every public statement had a life beyond the day's newspaper. Words released into the public space, he often reminded us, could not be recalled once they had escaped into the marketplace of opinion. That was why accuracy mattered. That was why judgement mattered even more.

He had little patience for writing that tried too hard to sound impressive. Everything I know about practical corporate communications rests on foundations he patiently laid, sometimes without either of us recognising it at the time. Like every gifted teacher, he rarely lectured. He preferred to delegate.

As Senior Manager and Head of Group Corporate Communications at Odu'a Investment Company Limited, he routinely entrusted responsibilities to those of us who had not yet acquired the years or experience ordinarily associated with such assignments. Victor Ayetoro, Soji Obalele and I, then Assistant Managers, frequently found ourselves handling responsibilities that many senior managers elsewhere would have been reluctant to surrender.

• Ladigbolu is a journalist based in Lagos.



Five Years On, Okunbo's Children Preserve Legacy Of Family, Service

By Adeniyi Ifetayo

FIVE years after the death of Captain Idahosa Wells Okunbo, his children gathered in Lagos to remember him. But as the evening unfolded, the story was not only about the man they had lost. It was also about what they had managed to hold on to: Family.

On August 8, relatives, friends, business associates, political leaders and other guests gathered at the National Theatre in Lagos to mark the fifth anniversary of the transition of the businessman and philanthropist, fondly known as Captain Hosa.

The programme celebrated a life that stretched across business, philanthropy and public service. But some of its most affecting moments were far more personal: children speaking about their father, siblings speaking about one another, and a family reflecting on what it means to inherit more than property or a name.

A day earlier, members of the family and close associates had gathered at Captain Hosa's resting place at the Wells Idahosa Farm in Benin City to pay their respects.

The commemorations then moved to Lagos, where the family hosted a Legacy and Leadership Lecture at the National Theatre. Former President of Liberia and Africa's first elected female president, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, delivered the keynote address, reflecting on leadership, nation-building and the responsibility of leaving institutions and societies stronger than one found them.

Yet one of the clearest ideas to emerge from the anniversary came from Captain Hosa's own children: that their father considered their relationship with one another part of the inheritance he was leaving behind.

Dr. Osahon Okunbo, Founder and Chairman of Vetrinox Capital, recalled how often his father spoke about the importance of his children remaining close.

For years, he said, he understood it simply as something a father would naturally want. It was only after Captain Hosa's death that the meaning of that instruction became clearer.

The businesses, investments and institutions mattered. But so did the family that would be responsible for carrying them forward.

"We could have walked away from each other," Osahon said, reflecting on the difficult period following their father's death. "But nobody did."

It was a simple statement, but perhaps one of the most revealing

ing of the evening.

The death of the head of a family can expose old tensions and create new ones, particularly where significant assets and responsibilities are involved. For the Okunbo children, the years since their father's passing have instead required them to make a deliberate choice to remain connected.

That idea of family as legacy became even more visible later in the programme.

In a surprise moment, Olori Atuwatse III, wife of the Olu of Warri and one of Captain Hosa's daughters, joined her siblings in presenting Osahon with an award recognising him as the family's "Torchbearer."

He had not known it was coming.

As his siblings spoke about him, Osahon became visibly emotional.

Olori Atuwatse III explained that the recognition was not about hierarchy or succession. It was about the role her brother had taken on within the family since their father's death.

She spoke about his generosity, his willingness to keep his door open and the way he had become a source of support to many of his siblings. In doing so, she said, he had preserved

something of their father that could not be contained in a company, building or monument.

For the family, the title "Torchbearer" was less about who came next than about who was willing to carry responsibility. That distinction matters.

Captain Hosa built interests across aviation, maritime, oil and gas, agriculture, hospitality, telecommunications and power. His philanthropy also touched communities and individuals across the country. Those achievements form an important part of the public record of his life.

The family is also working to preserve that history through a Living Museum at the Wells Idahosa Farm in Benin City, creating a permanent record of his life, work and contribution for future generations.

But five years after his death, his children appear equally concerned with preserving something less tangible. The values behind what he built. The relationships he insisted they protect.

And the understanding that a legacy is not simply what a person leaves behind, but what those who remain choose to do with it.



The Okunbos flanked by Olori Atuwatse III; Wife of the Ogun State Governor, Mrs Bamidele Abiodun and 2011 Nobel Peace Prize Laureate/ former President of Liberia, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf during the Fifth Memorial Legacy Lecture in honour of late Captain Idahosa Okunbo, in Lagos.



With Dapo Abiodun, Ogun Is Turning Housing Into Engine Of Urban Transformation

By Kayode Akinmade

DRIVE along the Siun-Sagamu Expressway today and it is easy to miss how recently the landscape around Kobape was little more than open bush. Today, standing prominently on that corridor is Prince Court Estate — a thriving residential community of completed and occupied homes, with its own electricity supply, shopping mall, health centre, ATM gallery and security post.

It is more than an estate. It is a statement of what housing policy can become when it is conceived not merely as the provision of shelter, but as an instrument of economic development, urban renewal and wealth creation. That is perhaps the most important story behind the housing transformation taking place quietly across Ogun State under Governor Dapo Abiodun.

When the first phase of Prince Court Estate took shape at Kobape, few would have imagined that it would become the anchor of a rapidly developing residential corridor. The estate has since expanded through four phases, while the surrounding area has recorded significant growth in residential and commercial activity.

The model has subsequently been replicated across the state. From Idi-Aba in Abeokuta to Sagamu, Itanrin in Ijebu-Ode, Ilaro and the Gateway Aviation Village at Iperu, the Abiodun administration has deliberately spread housing development across Ogun's three senatorial districts. The objective is clear: to ensure that the benefits of Ogun's rapid economic expansion are reflected not only in factories, roads and commercial investments, but also in the quality and availability of homes for the people who live and work in the state.

Housing as economic policy

The significance of the programme lies in its architecture. The Abiodun administration has approached housing as both a social responsibility and an economic asset. Its portfolio cuts across affordable housing for ordinary families, premium housing for middle- and high-income earners, public-private partnerships, urban regeneration and the redevelopment of under-utilised government assets. The first phase of the Kemta, Idi-Aba scheme, comprising 150 two- and three-bedroom homes, sold out rapidly. That response was an early indication of the enormous pent-up demand for decent and affordable housing in Ogun.

At Kobape, some of the early Prince Court homes were sold to civil servants and members of the public for between about N4.95 million and N5 million. According to figures provided by the state's housing authorities, similar properties are now worth substantially more on the open mar-

ket. That transformation is significant. It means the government's intervention did not simply put roofs over people's heads. For many early beneficiaries, it created an appreciating asset and opened a pathway to household wealth. In a country where housing remains one of the biggest barriers to economic security for working families, that is a powerful dimension of public policy.

From estates to communities

The most striking feature of the Ogun model is that the government has not treated housing as the construction of isolated blocks of buildings. Prince Court illustrates the philosophy. Electricity, health-care, security, banking and commercial facilities have been integrated into the development, creating a community rather than merely an estate. That approach matters because modern housing policy is ultimately about the quality of life around the house. A home without reliable infrastructure, access roads, security, health-care, commerce and other essential services can quickly become another form of urban vulnerability. But when housing is integrated with these services, it becomes the foundation for a functional community. This is where the Ogun intervention acquires a broader development significance. Housing generates demand for roads, electricity, water, retail, transportation, security and other services. Construction itself creates jobs across a long chain of activities involving artisans, engineers, architects, surveyors, suppliers, manufacturers, estate managers and financial institutions. Every new estate therefore has an economic footprint that extends well beyond the walls of the individual houses.

Unlocking forgotten public assets

The administration's housing philosophy is perhaps even more evident in its urban regeneration projects at Ibara in Abeokuta and Igbeba in Ijebu-Ode. For decades, more than 200 civil servants' quarters constructed over 50 years ago had deteriorated and become largely unusable across approximately 25 hectares of valuable government land. The Abiodun administration chose not to allow those assets to continue decaying. Instead, it moved to replace obsolete structures with modern buildings, producing more than 250 smart buildings across the two locations.

The policy significance is substantial.



Government land in prime urban locations is a finite public asset. When buildings on such land become obsolete and unusable, the state faces a choice: continue spending scarce resources maintaining failing structures or redevelop the land in a way that creates new value. Ogun chose the latter. The result is not simply new housing. It is the conversion of underutilised public land into productive urban assets, while simultaneously modernising the physical character of some of the state's most important government layouts. That is urban regeneration with a balance sheet.

A programme still gathering momentum far from winding down, the programme is expanding as the Abiodun administration enters the final stretch of its tenure. The Ogun State Executive Council has approved another package of projects comprising 450 two-bedroom semi-detached bungalows with supporting infrastructure, 28 official quarters for members of the Ogun State House of Assembly, 28 sellable duplexes at the Ibara Government Reservation Area Scheme II and the reconstruction of the Ogun State Governor's Lodge in Asokoro, Abuja.

Taken together, the approvals reveal the breadth of the administration's housing and urban-development strategy. The 450 bungalows will expand the supply of affordable housing. The Assembly quarters will provide modern accommodation for legislators and preserve institutional assets. The 28 Ibara GRA duplexes will unlock further value from a prime government location, while the reconstruction of the Governor's Lodge will preserve an important state asset and provide a modern institutional facility.

The projects also reflect a broader government policy of replacing obsolete public infrastructure with modern, functional and durable facilities capable of serving the needs of a growing state. That policy is particularly relevant to public housing and government quarters inherited from previous decades. Where structures have become severely degraded and rehabilitation is no longer economically sensible, redevelopment offers an opportunity to create more valuable, efficient and sustainable assets.

The new housing projects, meanwhile, extend the administration's affordable-housing intervention while stimulating activity across the construction value chain. From contractors and engineers to artisans, manufacturers, suppliers and service providers, housing construction generates employment and creates demand across multiple sectors of the economy.

The Ibara GRA Scheme II duplexes add another dimension: the strategic use of prime public land to generate modern residential assets, attract private investment and strengthen the val-

ue of the state's property portfolio. In that sense, the latest approvals are not isolated construction projects. They are part of a deliberate policy of combining housing delivery with urban regeneration, institutional development and asset optimisation.

The numbers behind the ambition

The scale of the intervention is reflected in the numbers. At a briefing in January on the 2026 housing roadmap, the Commissioner for Housing, Jamiu Akande Omoniyi, disclosed that Ogun planned to deliver no fewer than 3,000 additional housing units in 2026, backed by more than N100 billion allocated to the housing sector. The plan forms part of the administration's broader ambition to deliver 10,000 housing units by 2027.

The commissioner had also said that more than 4,000 affordable housing units were delivered between 2019 and 2023, with additional units subsequently taking the reported delivery figure above 5,000. The numbers are important not simply because they represent houses. They represent the scale of public intervention required to respond to a rapidly growing state whose strategic location next to Lagos continues to drive population growth, industrialisation and investment.

Ogun's housing challenge is therefore inseparable from its economic success. As more factories, businesses and people move into the state, demand for housing will increase. A government that fails to anticipate that demand risks allowing economic growth to produce housing shortages, informal settlements and uncontrolled urban expansion. The Abiodun administration's response has been to get ahead of that curve.

Housing the workforce of a growing economy

THERE is also a strategic economic dimension to affordable housing. Ogun has positioned itself as one of Nigeria's leading investment destinations, with major industrial clusters and expanding commercial activity. But investors do not operate in isolation. Workers need homes. Families need schools and healthcare. Businesses need functioning communities around them. Housing is therefore part of the infrastructure of investment. By expanding residential communities around major growth corridors, government is helping to create the conditions for a more balanced relationship between where people work and where they live. That has implications for productivity, commuting, family welfare and the long-term sustainability of urban growth. It is why the state's housing programme should not be viewed as a collection of government estates scattered across Ogun.

CSR Commitment: Firm Offers Free Medication For 200 Beneficiaries

By Sulaimon Salau

DUFIL Prima Foods, makers of Indomie, has reaffirmed its commitment to improving the quality of life of Nigerians living with Sickle Cell Disorder by providing free essential medication to 200 beneficiaries through its decade-long partnership with the Sickle Cell Foundation Nigeria (SCFN). The intervention, delivered under the partnership's "Hope Begins with Care" initiative at an outreach held at the Sickle Cell Foundation in Lagos, aims to ease the medical and financial burden of managing the lifelong condition.

Speaking at the event, Temitope Ashiwaju, Group Corporate Communications and Events Manager, Dufil Prima Foods, described the partnership as a strategic commitment to supporting vulnerable communities, while stressing the importance of sustained advocacy and awareness.

"More than what we are doing today, I'd like to also let you know that when it comes to advocacy, when it comes to awareness, it should start from you," he said, urging beneficiaries and stakeholders to deepen public understanding of Sickle Cell Disorder.

How AfCFTA Can Rescue 1.4 Billion Africans From Economic Fragmentation

By Gbenga Salau

PROMINENT pan-African corporate leaders have called for an urgent end to market fragmentation across the region, warning that the continent will remain globally competitive only in theory until it dismantles artificial trade barriers. MTN Group Chairman Mcebisi Jonas and the Board Chairman of MTN Ghana, Dr. Ishmael Yamson, made this call during the MTN's The Y'ello Chair vodcast recently, cautioning that operating as a cluster of small, isolated markets guarantees perpetual economic vulnerability.

Expressing deep frustration over the persistent regulatory silos choking cross-border enterprise, Yamson noted that treating sovereign markets as independent pockets cripples African businesses before they can reach global scale. "We need to understand that together we will be bigger. If we continue to deal with small companies, they're not going to make any impact anywhere," Yamson said, stressing that African nations are dangerously underestimating the power of collective market weight.

New Deep Offshore Incentive Order Will Facilitate Three Million Barrels Production Target – NNPC

By Sulaimon Salau

THE Nigerian National Petroleum Company Limited (NNPC Ltd) has welcomed Federal Government's signing of the Deep Offshore Oil and Gas Projects Incentives (Tax Remission) Order 2026, describing it as a landmark reform that significantly enhances Nigeria's competitiveness for deep offshore investment and strengthens the nation's pathway towards achieving its three million barrels of oil per day (MMbopd) production ambition by 2030.

The new Order establishes a transparent, predictable and globally competitive fiscal framework for qualifying

Existing Reforms Already Spur \$34 Billion New Investment Commitments

greenfield deep offshore developments. It provides the certainty required to unlock long-term capital, accelerate Final Investment Decisions (FIDs), and maximise value from Nigeria's offshore resources.

The framework, which reinforces Nigeria's position as one of the world's attractive destinations for deep offshore oil and gas development, is expected to unlock over \$50 billion in new investments, including major projects starting with Bonga South-West which was approved in March 2026, and the Zabazaba and Owowo Deep Offshore projects.

Bonga South West is expected to be the first FID on a Nigeria deepwater Production Sharing Contract asset since 2008.

Speaking on the development, the Group Chief Executive Officer of NNPC Limited, Engr. Bashir Bayo Ojulari, in a statement, described the Order as one of the most significant policy interventions for the upstream sector in recent years.

"This is a transformative reform that sends a strong signal to global investors that Nigeria is committed to providing a stable, competitive and investment-friendly envi-

ronment for deep offshore development. Fiscal certainty is a critical driver of investment decisions, and this framework provides the additional clarity the industry has long sought."

He added: "For NNPC Ltd., the Order aligns directly with our strategy of protecting our existing production base, accelerating near-term growth, and attracting new investment into high-value assets. It strengthens our confidence in achieving our strategic production ambition of 3 MMbopd while creating greater value for our shareholders and the Nigerian economy."



General Partner, Sabou Capital, Surayyah Ahmad (left); Managing Director/CEO, Lagos Free Zone Company, Adesuwa Ladoja; Social Development Specialist, World Bank, Dr. Yetunde Fatogun; MD/CEO, Fiducia, Ayotunde Awe and Group Executive, Human Capital & Corporate Services, Sterling Financial Holdings Company, Temi Dalley at the launch of Nigeria Gender Country Programme in Lagos. PHOTO: SUNDAY AKINLOLU

New PMI Research Reveals Widen Gap Between Sustainability Ambition, Delivery

By Sulaimon Salau

AS organisations across Africa and the rest of the world seek to translate sustainability ambitions into business outcomes, new research from Project Management Institute (PMI) and Green Project Management, the world's leading organisation advancing sustainable practices, has revealed a critical challenge, many are struggling to deliver measurable sustainability outcomes.

The findings come at a time when the world is running

out of time to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). According to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals Report 2025, only 35 per cent of SDG targets are currently on track or making moderate progress, while nearly half are advancing too slowly, and 18 per cent have regressed. Against this backdrop, PMI's latest research highlights a challenge that receives far less attention than policy or funding debates – execution.

The report, Executing

Sustainability Strategy: When Ambition Meets Reality, surveyed nearly 1,600 professionals across 35 countries and found a significant disconnect between strategic confidence and execution readiness. While 85 per cent of sustainability executives believe their organisations will achieve their sustainability goals, only 43 per cent of Project Management Office (PMO) leaders share that confidence. Among project professionals responsible for implementation, just 20 per cent are extremely confident

in their organisation's ability to deliver.

The study also found that although 79 per cent of respondents believe sustainability is important to long-term success, only 41 per cent say it is fully integrated into projects and daily operations.

For Africa, where projects underpin everything from infrastructure and energy development to healthcare, mining, agriculture, and digital transformation, the findings point to a challenge that is becoming increasingly difficult to ignore.

SCAN Summit To Tackle Financing, Regulatory Bottlenecks For Indigenous Shipowners

By Sulaimon Salau

AS part of efforts to addressing the persistent financial challenges and regulatory hurdles confronting indigenous shipowners in Nigeria's maritime sector, the Shipping Correspondents Association of Nigeria (SCAN) has concluded arrangement to hold its 2026 summit.

The high-level gathering will take place on October 29th, 2026, at the prestigious Rockview Hotels, Apapa, Lagos.

Themed, "Low-Risk Capital For Indigenous Shipowners: Overcoming Regulatory,

Financial Bottlenecks", the summit by SCAN aims to chart actionable pathways for unlocking adequate funding and creating an enabling environment that increases the participation and capacity of Nigerian-owned vessels in the domestic and international waters.

SCAN President, Moses Ebosele, said despite Nigeria's rich maritime potential, foreign operators have continued to dominate the nation's maritime domain controlling over 95 per cent of the carriage of Nigerian imports, exports, and associated

freight earnings, while the local participation remains critically low, with indigenous ship owners capturing only about four to five per cent of the market.

Noting that this was largely due to systemic funding gaps, high interest rates, and regulatory bottlenecks faced by local fleet operators, Ebosele said the 2026 SCAN Summit is expected to bring together key decision-makers, regulatory bodies, maritime experts, and primary lending institutions to forge sustainable solutions and bridge the financing gap for local

shipowners.

Renowned legal practitioner and Senior Advocate of Nigeria (SAN), Dr. Olisa Agbakoba will deliver the keynote address, while the event will be chaired by former Director General of the Nigerian Maritime Administration and Safety Agency (NIMASA), Dr. Temisan Omatseye.

Other guests of honour expected to grace the event are Managing Director, Nigerian Ports Authority (NPA), Dr. Abubakar Dantsoho; Director-General, Nigerian Maritime

Business Times Announces 2026 Awards, Celebrating Excellence Across Key Sectors

By Sulaimon Salau

BUSINESSES that create jobs, visionary leaders who inspire change, innovators transforming industries, and organisations delivering measurable impact on society will take centre stage as Business Times prepares to celebrate excellence at the Business Times Awards 2026.

Scheduled to hold on Thursday, August 20, 2026, at Lagos Oriental Hotel, Lagos, the awards ceremony will bring together captains of industry, policymakers, business executives, investors, development partners and other distinguished stakeholders under the theme, "Leading the Future: Excellence in Innovation and Impact."

The Business Times Awards 2026 will recognise outstanding achievements across more than 100 award categories, reflecting excellence in banking, finance, energy, manufacturing, telecommunications, technology, healthcare, agriculture, education, real estate, public service, infrastructure, hospitality, aviation, maritime, insurance, capital markets and other strategic sectors of the economy.

The 2026 Awards aim to recognise individuals and organisations that drive innovation and transformation through pioneering solutions, technology adoption, creative business models and initiatives that set new standards. It will also honour leaders who inspire progress through strategic vision, ethical leadership, inclusiveness and the ability to create environments where people and ideas thrive.

The awards will celebrate businesses and institutions that have demonstrated resilience, adaptability and a commitment to excellence while contributing to economic growth and industry advancement.

It will highlight organisations that continue to create value through innovation, and operational excellence.

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Stakeholders Seek N10.5tr Agrifood Budget, Warn Against Delayed Releases

By Isaac Taiwo

STAKEHOLDERS in the agriculture and food sector have called on the Federal Government to raise public investment in the agrifood system to N10.5tr in the 2027 budget, warning that inadequate funding, delayed releases and weak implementation are undermining efforts to tackle food insecurity and create jobs.

This call was contained in a communiqué issued at the end of a three-day National Stakeholders Consultative Meeting on the 2027 AgriFood Systems Budget, held in Lagos.

The meeting was organised by ActionAid Nigeria, the GIZ Global Programme Sustainable Agricultural Systems and Policies Nigeria, the Federal Ministry of Budget and Economic Planning, the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security, and the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development of the ECOWAS

Commission.

The participants, drawn from government ministries, departments and agencies, the National Assembly, research institutions, academia, civil society organisations, farmer groups, development partners, private sector and the media, said lamented that Nigeria's agricultural spending remained far below its continental commitments.

According to the communiqué, aggregate public expenditure on agriculture by the Federal Government, 36 states and the Federal Capital Territory was estimated at 4.58 per cent in 2026, against the 10 per cent target under Nigeria's Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) commitments and the Kampala Declaration.

The stakeholders also expressed concern over poor budget implementation, noting that actual capital budget implementation for agriculture at the state level averaged

about 50 per cent between 2023 and 2025.

They noted that delayed releases were particularly damaging because agricultural activities were seasonal and time-sensitive, with late disbursements resulting in missed planting windows, rushed procurement, reduced value for money and limited impact on productivity and food security.

The meeting further called for agricultural spending to be assessed not merely on allocations and releases but on measurable outcomes, including increased productivity, farmer incomes, employment, food prices, nutrition, climate resilience and poverty reduction.

The communiqué revealed that evidence presented at the meeting indicated that full implementation of approved federal and state agricultural and livestock capital budgets could generate an estimated 3.5 million direct quality jobs—2.1 million at the federal level and 1.4 million across the states and

FCT.

Stakeholders also raised concerns over the composition of agricultural budgets, particularly the inclusion of constituency projects that fall outside the core mandates of agrifood ministries.

They urged the government to rebalance investment beyond fertiliser to include extension services, mechanisation, irrigation, climate-smart agriculture, agroecology, research, storage, processing, markets and data systems

The communiqué questioned the concentration of the National Agricultural Development Fund's 2026 capital allocation on fertiliser programmes, estimated by civil society organisations at up to 98 per cent, arguing that the fund's broader statutory mandate should be reflected in its spending.

On climate change and insecurity, the participants warned that floods, drought, rising temperatures.

WACOT, BOA Launch 2026 Sesame Outgrower Programme To Support Jigawa Farmers

By Balikis Ademuyiwa

WACOT Limited has launched the 2026 Sesame Outgrower Programme in Jigawa State, expanding support for more than 10,000 smallholder farmers through a strengthened partnership with the Bank of Agriculture (BOA), under the Renewed Hope Smallholder Support and Value Chain Programme.

The programme, designed to improve access to finance, quality inputs, extension services, and sustainable farming practices, commenced with the distribution of agri inputs in Medu Village in the Gagarawa Local Council, as part of WACOT's long-term commitment to strengthening Nigeria's agricultural value chains and improving farmers' productivity and livelihoods.

Since its launch in 2018, the WACOT Sesame Outgrower Programme has grown from a pilot initiative into one of Nigeria's leading contract farming schemes, supporting over 10,000 farmers across eight local councils in Jigawa State.

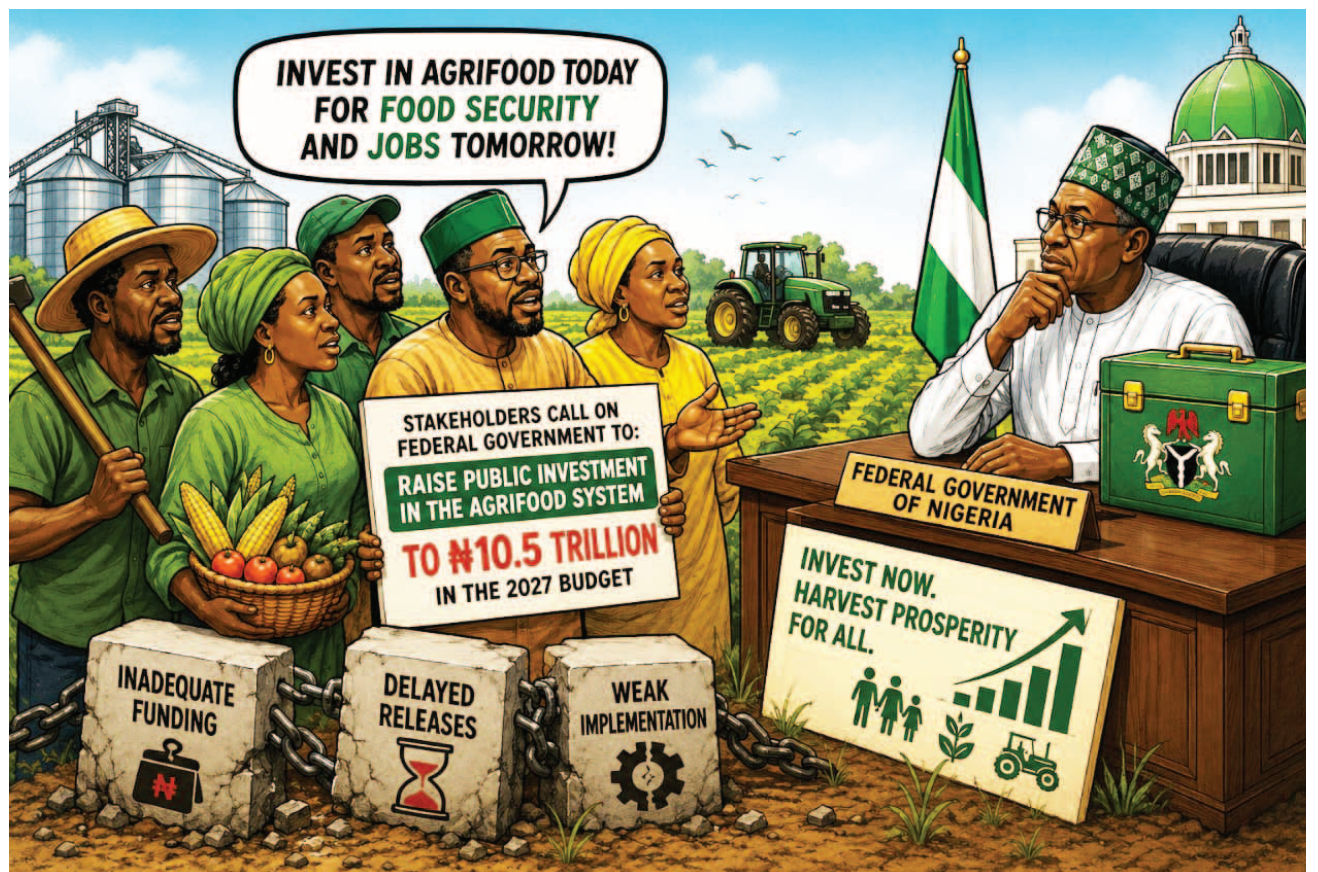
Over the past seven years, WACOT said it has disbursed more than N1b in input credit, providing certified seeds, fertilisers and crop protection products along-

side technical support through its Farmers Academy and extension services. The programme places particular emphasis on youth and women's participation, while promoting modern, climate-smart farming practices.

Through its partnership with BOA, farmers will receive input loans with repayment made through produce at the end of the farming season. Beyond financing, the partnership also provides extension services designed to improve yields, product quality and long-term sustainability. The collaboration extends beyond sesame production to include rice farmers in Kebbi State and maize and soya bean farmers in Katsina State.

Speaking at the launch, the Managing Director of WACOT Limited, Mr Naveen Chaurasia, said the company's investment reflects its commitment to building a sustainable agricultural ecosystem that benefits both farmers and global markets.

"At WACOT Limited, part of the TGI Group, we are guided by two clear priorities. Firstly, we are committed to maintaining the international quality standards our customers expect, ensuring nothing compromises the quality of our sesame.



Nigeria Food Summit 2026 Charts New Course For Strengthening Gastronomy

By Gbenga Akinfenwa

STAKEHOLDERS at the Nigeria Food Summit (NFS) has reinforced the urgent need for collaboration, innovation, quality assurance, policy alignment and industry-wide standards to promote culinary tourism and position Nigerian gastronomy as a globally competitive industry.

Rising from the NFS 2026 edition, held at the Landmark Event Centre, Victoria Island, Lagos, held under the theme: "Gastronomy in Nigeria: Journey to Standardisation," the two-day summit encouraged greater collaboration between government, industry, academia, and the private sector.

Across the two-day programme, the summit served nearly 1,000 individuals and recorded close to 800 ticket sales. The gathering included over 300 programme participants—among them speakers, moderators and panelists, as well as approximately 200 VIP guests, about 30 sponsors and strategic partners, and nearly 20 exhibitors representing food, agriculture, hospitality, technology, and related sectors.

Delegates participated in keynote presentations, fireside conversations, panel discussions, master classes, live cooking competitions, culinary demonstrations, exhibitions, networking sessions, business engagements, and the Nigeria Food Summit Awards. Together, the sessions explored practical pathways for strengthening every segment of Nigeria's food value chain, while encouraging greater collaboration between government, industry, academia, and the private sector.

Delivering the Summit Welcome Address, Chef and Convener of the summit, Captain Gbolabo Gibbs Adebakin, emphasised that the conversations initiated during the summit must now translate into measurable action.

He said: "The conversations we have had over these two days must now become commitments. Standardisation cannot remain an aspiration; it must become our collective practice. Building a globally respected Nigerian gastronomy industry requires collaboration across government, business, education, hospitality and every stakehold-

er in the food value chain. This summit is only the beginning."

One of the summit's defining moments was the keynote address delivered by the former Minister of Information and Culture, Special Adviser to the Secretary-General of UN Tourism, and Chairman of the Board of Trustees and Governing Council of the Eko Tourism Foundation, Alhaji Lai Mohammed, who spoke on the topic: "Building Nigeria's Food System: Standardising Gastronomy for Power and Prosperity."

He challenged stakeholders to view Nigerian cuisine not simply as cultural heritage, but as an economic asset capable of driving tourism, exports, investment and national development.

"Standardising Nigerian gastronomy is not a cosmetic exercise - it is nation-building work. Countries that succeed globally document, protect, regulate and intentionally promote their cuisine. Nigeria has every reason to stand alongside them. By building systems that protect quality, authenticity and our culinary heritage, we can transform Nigerian food into a powerful instrument of economic growth, cultural diplomacy and global competitiveness," he said.

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NAHCON Slashes 2027 Hajj Fare, Pegs New Payment Deadline

From Murtala Adewale, Kano

THE National Hajj Commission of Nigeria (NAHCON) has announced final fare for the 2027Hajjexercise, a slight reduction from the 2026 fare.

In the reviewed fare announced on Friday, the Commission disclosed that intending pilgrims from Maiduguri/Yola Zone will pay N7,560,822.00; their counterparts from Northern Zone (other Northern states) pays N7,672,822.00 while those embarking from Southern Zone pays N7,882,822.00. AccordingtotheCommission, the new fare was considered with the principle of transparency, cost-efficiency and the Federal Government's commitment to the welfare of Nigerian pilgrims.

Zion Ministry's Three-day Conference Begins On August 21

THE2026WorldConference of Zion Prayer Movement Outreach will be held next week at Zion City, the permanent site of the ministry at Mgbichi, Ngor Okpala, Imo State.

A press statement by Zion Ministry in Lagos, on Friday, disclosed that the three-day crusade will begin on Friday, August 21, and end on Sunday, August 23, 2026.

The World Conference is the largest yearly gathering organised by Zion Prayer Movement Outreach and attracts participants from across Nigeria, Africa, Europe, North America, Asia, the Middle East and other parts of the world.

It is the third time the annual conference will be held outside Lagos, and the crusade will mark the end of the 100 days of fasting and prayer started in May by the ministry.

August Meeting: Amstel Honours Igbo Heritage, Empowers Enugu Women

Amstel Malta joined thousands of women in celebrating a longstanding tradition of culture, community and collective impact at the August Meeting held recently in Enugu state. Senior Brand Manager, Amstel Malta, Francis Obiajulu, said the yearly homecoming saw Igbo women in Nigeria and the diaspora returning to their communities in the South-East to reconnect, deliberate and contribute to community development.

As vibrant attires, joyful reunions and rich cultural displays remained defining features of the celebration, the Enugu August Meeting attracted prominent dignitaries and stakeholders.

Nigeria-China Aquatic Protocol: Tegbe Seeks Swift Implementation To Boost Exports

By Benjamin Alade and Waliat Musa

THE Minister of Power, Joseph Tegbe, has called for the swift implementation of the Nigeria-China Aquatic Products Protocol to enable Nigerian businesses to take advantage of zero-tariff access to China's vast market.

Tegbe made the call during a courtesy visit and reception following the signing of the protocol by the Chinese Ambassador to Nigeria, Yu Dunhai, alongside officials of the Nigeria Agricultural Quarantine Service (NAQS), Federal Ministry of Justice and the Nigeria-China Strategic Partnership (NCSP).

The agreement, concluded after nearly five years of negotiations, provides eligible Nigerian aquatic products with zero-tariff access to the Chinese market, which has about 1.4 billion consumers.

Tegbe said effective implementation would translate the agreement into increased exports, higher foreign exchange earnings and new opportunities for Nigerian businesses.

The minister commended the Chinese Embassy for its support of the Nigeria-China Strategic Partnership, noting that bilateral trade reached \$18 billion in the first half of 2026, compared with \$28 billion recorded throughout 2025.

He urged Nigerian exporters to move quickly to position their products in the Chinese market and said the success of the aquatic products agreement could accelerate other trade initiatives, including

the proposed Zero Tariff Agreement for African countries.

The Chinese Ambassador reaffirmed his country's commitment to supporting the implementation of the protocol and facilitating qualified Nigerian exports into China.

Yu said bilateral trade increased by 35 per cent in the first half of 2026, while Nigerian exports to China rose by 80 per cent, indicating significant room for further economic cooperation.

The Comptroller-General of NAQS, Dr. Vincent Isegbé, also pledged the agency's support

for exporters to meet the required standards and compliance conditions. He identified opportunities for similar market-access agreements covering other agricultural and fishery products, stressing the potential of the global aquatic products market to significantly increase Nigeria's exports to China.

The private sector also expressed readiness to take advantage of the agreement. Atlantic Shrimpers, which has engaged with the Chinese market since 2018, said it had already identified buyers and was prepared to commence

exports. Stakeholders therefore agreed to prioritise the implementation of the protocol and ensure that the agreement produces measurable gains in exports, foreign exchange earnings and sustainable business opportunities.

The private sector, represented by Atlantic Shrimpers, said it was ready to commence exports to China, adding that it had already identified buyers in the Chinese market.

The Nigeria-China Aquatic Products Protocol was concluded after nearly five years of negotiations.



President Bola Ahmed Tinubu (right) with British High Commissioner to Nigeria and Permanent Representative to ECOWAS, Richard Montgomery at the Presidential Villa, Abuja... on Friday. PHOTO: STATE HOUSE

Police Arrest 29-year-old Over Alleged Ritual Desecration Of Qur'an In Kebbi

From Tunde Omolehin, Sokoto

THE Kebbi State Police Command has arrested a 29-year-old man, Abubakar Musa, over the alleged ritual desecration of a copy of the Holy Qur'an in Zuru Local Council of the state.

The suspect, who hails from Rafin Mose Village in Zuru Council, was arrested in connection with allegations bordering on criminal conspiracy, abuse of religious books, use of spells and hypnosis, and

conduct capable of inciting public disturbance.

According to a statement issued on Thursday by the Police Public Relations Officer, SP Bashir Usman, the incident occurred on August 9, 2026, at about 7 p.m. in the Zango area of Zuru.

Police said preliminary investigations indicated that Musa allegedly conspired with two other suspects identified as Rabi'u Tela and Hamza Zango, who are currently at large, to

dig a pit inside the room of one Zarau Hassan and bury several items, including a copy of the Holy Qur'an. Other items allegedly buried in the pit included semen, white and red kolanuts, underwear, dead animals and other fetish objects.

The police said the alleged act was intended to make Zarau Hassan more submissive to her husband, Rabi'u Tela.

The Command added that the circumstances surrounding

the incident were capable of provoking a breach of peace and causing tension among members of the Muslim community in the area.

Usman said efforts were ongoing to apprehend the two fleeing suspects, while Abubakar Musa remained in police custody pending the conclusion of investigations.

He added that the suspect would be charged to court once investigations were completed.

Lawyers Launch 'Reform The NBA' Campaign, Seek Rerun Of 2026 Presidential Election

By Gbenga Salau and Balikis Ademuyiwa

A GROUP of Nigerian Lawyers has launched 'Reform the NBA,' a campaign calling for electoral and institutional reform within the Nigerian Bar Association (NBA) following the disputed July 18, 2026, presidential election.

The group, in a statement on Friday by the Partner, ELIX LLP, Maduka Onwukeme, called for an independent audit and rerun of the 2026 presidential election under credible and independently verified safeguards.

The group maintained that the circumstances surrounding the election raise questions that should be resolved through evidence rather than competing claims.

It said: "The Electoral Committee of the Nigerian Bar Association (ECNBA) acknowledged that the voting platform did not commence as scheduled and identified technical issues including database connection failure, authentication changes, server instability and an authentication verification defect.

Abiodun Saves Buhari Estate From Forfeiture, Delivers 108 Homes

• First Lady to Commission Estate Tuesday

From Azeez Olorunlomu, Abeokuta

OGUN State Governor, Dapo Abiodun, has rescued President Muhammadu Buhari Estate in Abeokuta from possible forfeiture and transformed the once-stalled project into a 108-unit modern residential community.

The estate, located along the Abeokuta-Sagamu Expressway, is scheduled to be commissioned on Tuesday by the First Lady, Senator Oluremi Tinubu.

Inherited by the Abiodun administration in a largely undeveloped state, with only the infrastructure awarded and one show building completed, the project had become embroiled in a legal dispute over unpaid obligations to the contractor handling its development.

The situation put the property at risk of being lost through legal action before the Abiodun administration intervened, settled the dispute out of court and commenced payments to secure the state's interest in the property.

Rather than abandon the inherited project, the administration subsequently adopted a Public-Private Partnership (PPP) model, with the state providing the land and infrastructure while private developers undertook the construction.

Herbert Wigwe @ 60: A Legacy Of Banking, Service And Nation-Building

DR. Herbert Onyewumbu Wigwe, the late banker, entrepreneur and philanthropist, would have turned 60 on Saturday, August 15, 2026, leaving behind a legacy that continues to influence banking, education, healthcare and youth development in Nigeria and beyond.

Wigwe, who rose to become one of Africa's leading financial executives, was widely known for his role in the transformation and expansion of Access Bank. But beyond banking, he devoted considerable attention and resources to

building institutions, supporting young people and creating opportunities for disadvantaged communities.

To his family, friends and associates, he was also a mentor and a firm believer in the ability of people to achieve more when given the right opportunities. As Co-Founder and Group Chief Executive Officer of Access Bank and later Access Holdings, Wigwe played a major role in the growth of the financial institution from a Nigerian bank into a financial services group with operations across several countries. His ambition was

not simply to build a successful Nigerian bank, but to develop an African institution capable of competing with leading financial organisations around the world.

His influence also extended beyond Access Bank. As Chairman of the Bankers' Committee, Wigwe participated in discussions on major issues affecting Nigeria's banking industry and economy. He worked with government officials, regulators and other business leaders, believing that the private sector had a responsibility to contribute to

national development and help find solutions to the country's social and economic challenges.

Wigwe's belief that business success should make a difference in society was reflected in the establishment of The HOW Foundation in 2016.

Through the Foundation, he supported programmes in education, healthcare, mentorship and youth development.

Its interventions included educational support for disadvantaged children, programmes in Makoko.



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ADDITION OF NAME : I, formerly known as Osifo Godwin now wish to be addressed as Osifo Godwin Stephen. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

ADDITION OF NAME: My international passport is written as Abimbola Barreto. Now wish to be written as Monica Abimbola Barreto. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

ADDITION OF NAME: I, formerly Omishore Olufunmilayo now wished to be addressed as Omishore Florence Olufunmilayo. General public take note.

AGBOOLA : I, formerly known as Agboola Taofeekat Omotoke now wish to be known as Abdulahi Fatimo Omotoke. All former documents remain valid. Passport office, public take note.

AKINTOLU : I formerly known as Akintolu Omobolanle Omowunmi, now wish to be addressed as Sanni Bolanle Omowunmi. All former documents remain valid. Public take note.

ALONGE: I, formerly known as Alonge Ebunlomo Dorcas now wish to be known as Akintola Ebunlomo Dorcas. All former documents remain valid. Public take note.

AMINA: I, formerly known as Amina Raimi now wish to be addressed as Hayatu Amina Aronke. All former documents remain valid. General public take note

ANGELA: I, formerly known as Miss Ojugo, Warhoguwa Angela now wish to be known as Mrs. Odigie, Warhoguwa Angela. All former documents remain valid. Public notice.

AYEGBUSI: I, formerly known as Ayegebusi Olaoluwa Victoria now wish to be called Ogunrinade Olaoluwa Victoria. All former documents remain valid. General Public notice.

BABATUNDE: I, formerly known as Samuel Babatunde Olawoyin now addressed as Samuel Godsglove Olawoyin Oyinlayefa. Former documents remain valid. General public and authorities take note.

BLESSING: I, formerly known as Miss Eyakpobeya, Blessing Love now wish to be known as Mrs. Omawumi, Blessing Love. All former documents remain valid. Public notice

CONFIRMATION OF NAME. That I, Obiebi Okeoghene Gift is the same person known as Okeoghene Gift Imonita. All former documents remain valid. Financial institutions and Public note.

CONFIRMATION OF NAME: I, Tella Rukayat Adepeju is the same person as Tella Anike Adepeju and now Tella Anike Adepeju. All documents remain valid. Public take note

CONFIRMATION OF NAME: My name was wrongly written as Se-unfunmi Adejoke Ayanwale instead of Ikuesan Veronica Opeyemi My DOB is 23/2/2006 not 20/8/1993. All former documents remain valid. Public take note.

CONFIRMATION OF NAME: That, Ojizele Ehikioya and Ojezele Ehikiya is same person, now wish to be addressed as, Ojizele Ehi-men. All former documents remain valid, general public take note.

CONFIRMATION OF NAME: This is to confirm that I, Ladipo Evaristus Paul Olaoluwa, Ladipo Paul Evaristus Olaoluwa is the same person as Ladipo Paul Olaoluwa. All documents remain valid. Public take note

CORRECTION OF NAME: My name was wrongly written as Nwangue Monday instead of Uwangue Agboola Monday. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

CORRECTION OF NAME: My correct name is Ibekwe Marcus Ikechukwu and not Ibekwe Prince lyk as wrongly captured in some documents. Former documents remain valid. General public take note

CORRECTION OF NAME: My name was wrongly captured as Edosa, Samuel Izevbizua instead of Samuel Edosa Izevbizua. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

CORRECTION OF NAME: My name was wrongly captured as Jinad Abdulateef instead of Jinad Abdulateef Adisa. All former documents remain valid. General public take note

CORRECTION OF NAME: My name was wrongly captured as Nnamuka Emeka Edward instead of Nnamuka Olisemeka Edward. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

CORRECTION OF NAME: My name was wrongly written as Ajiri Sandra Adiudehe instead of Sandra Ajiri Adiudehe. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

CORRECTION OF NAME: MY name was wrongly written on my Nin,Bvn,Voters Card, Drivers Licence and Bank Account as Ibekwe Prince lyk instead of Ibekwe Marcus Ikechukwu.. All former documents remain valid General public notice

CORRECTION OF NAME: My name was wrongly written on my BVN as Ofudje Joshua Oghe-neotejiri instead of Joshua Ote-jiri Ofudje. Former documents remain valid. Banks, general public take note.

DADA: I, formerly known as Dada Aina Adunni now wish to be addressed as Ogundiran Aina Adunni. Former documents remain valid. Public take note

DANNY : I formerly known as Eghebele Gloria Ijeso now wish to be addressed as Osabuo-hien Gloria. My DOB is, 01-08-1984, not, 17-08-1983. Former documents remain valid, public notice.

DANNY : I, formerly known as Ayemere Eseohé Danny now wish to be addressed as Ayemere Eseohé Dawny. All former documents remains valid, General public take note.

DUGBO: I, formerly known as Miss Juliet Elorhor Dugbo now wish to be addressed as Mrs Juliet Elohor Yassin. All former documents remain valid. General public take note

EHINLAIYE: I, formerly known as Ehinlaiye Omataka Caroline now wish to be known as Adigun Omataka Car oline. . All former documents remain valid. General public take note

EHIOSUN : I, formerly known as Miss Ehiosun Precious Ose now wish to be addressed as Mrs Akioya Precious Ose. Former documents remain valid. General public notice.

FOLASAYO: I, formerly known as Esther Oluwafunmike Olaleru, now wish to be addressed As Folasayo Funke Izezor All former documents remain valid. General public take note

FRED: I, formerly known as Friday Izezor, now wish to be addressed As Fred Osayi Izezor All former documents remain valid. General public take note

FUBARA. I, formerly known and addressed as Miss Irene Enefiok Edem, now wish to be known as Mrs Irene Christian Fubara. All former documents remain valid. General public take note

IKUPELEYE: I, formerly Miss Ikupeleye Oluwakemi Rasheedat now wish to be addressed as Mrs Otitoju Oluwakemi Rasheedat. All former documents remain valid. General public take note

JACOB: I, formerly Afolayan Gbenga Jacob, now Afolayan Oluwagbenga Jacob. Former documents valid.General public, authorities: ICAN, Unilorin, Universitat de Valencia, WAEC, PEN-CON, FRSC, NYSC take note

JANET: I, formerly known as Janet Iwegbe Oruamen, now wish to be addressed As Janet Iwegbe Omale All former documents remain valid. General public take note

KHADIJAT: Formerly Khadijat Adebola Abdul-Azeez now wish to be ad-dressed as Adjilat Oyinkansola Adebola, My DOB:is 09/06/1972 not 09/09/1974. All former documents re-main valid. Public take note.

MGBEMENA: I, formerly known as Chidimma Marymartha Mgbemena now wish to be addressed as Chidimma Marymartha Mgbemena-Solomon. All former documents remain valid. General public take note

NDUKA: I, formerly known as Nduka Kalu Ifeoma, now wishes to be addressed as Obiukwu Ifeoma Maryann. All former documents remain valid. General public take note

NWANGUE: I, formerly known as Nwangue Monday now wish to be addressed as Uwangue Agboola Monday. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

NWANKWO : I, formerly known as Miss Deborah Nwankwo, CCCC Mrs. Deborah Chukwue-meka , All former documents remain valid. General public take note

NWOKOLI :I, formerly Florence Ngozi now wish to be addressed as Mrs Umeorizu Clara Florence Ngozi. All former documents remain valid. General public, take note.

OBJI: I, formerly known as Obi Ifeoma Goodness Angel now wish to be addressed as Edile Obi, Ifeoma Good ness. All former documents remain valid. General public take note

OBILLO: I, formerly known as Uzomaka Kate Obilo now wish to be known as Uzomaka Kate Azuogu. All former documents remain valid. Public notice.

OBOH : I formerly known as Oboh Maruellular Agbonkpolor now wish to be addressed as Oboh Maruellular Agbonkpolor. all former documents remain valid. aeneral public take note.

OGBU : I, formerly Miss Ogbu Grace Chialuka now to be addressed as Mrs Adetunji Grace Chialuka. All former documents remain valid. General public take note

OGECHI: I, formerly known as Ezeh Ogechukeu Chinwe, now wish to be addressed As Ogechi Chinwe Iheaku. All former documents remain valid. General public take note

OHIORENUAN : I, form erly known as Ohiorenuan Blessing now wish to be addressed as Amu Blessing. My DOB is, 20-10-1982, not, 20-10-1980, and, 24-01-1980. General public take note

OKO : I formerly known as Oko Esther Ologwu as in my account records and Oko Ologwu Easter as on my BVN, now addressed as Ologwu Esther as on my National Identity Card. all my former documents, records, BVN and Banks Account bearing my former names , Oko Esther Ologwu And Oko Ologwu Easter , remains valid. General public take note.

OLATAYO: I, formerly Olatayo Samuel, wish to be known as Olatayo Samuel Moriogolo. All former documents remain valid: my banks and the entire public should take note.

OLATUNJI : I, formerly known as Miss Olatunji Doyinsola Blessing now wish to be addressed as Mrs Ajayi Doyinsola Blessing. All former documents remain valid. General public notice

OLUWATOMIWA: I, formerly Olagunju Oluwatomiwa Abdul Azeez, now correcting my name to Olagunju Oluwatomiwa Azeez. Former documents remain valid. General public, NIS, and authorities take note.

OMIJORI : I, formerly as Adebare Mubarak Omijori now wish to be known as Adebare Mubarak Moshood. Former Documents remain valid. General Public take note.

OMIJORI : I, formerly known as Adesola Rihanat Omijori now wish to be known as Adesola Rihana Moshood. Former documents remain valid. General Public take note.

OMIJORI: I, formerly known as Adesire Kadijat Omijori now wish to be known as Adesire Kadija Moshood. Former documents remain valid. General Public take note.

ONI: I, formerly known as Adebola Aderonke Oni now wish to be addressed Adebola Aderonke Ojo. All former documents remain valid. Public take note.

ONYEMALI: I, formerly Miss Onyemali Chioma Joy now wish to be addressed as Mrs Abaja Chioma Joy. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

OPAKUNLE: I, formerly known as Opakunle Abosede Josephine now wish to be addressed as Yusuf Abosede Ajoke. All formal documents remain valid. General public take note

OREKOYA: My name was previously arranged as Orekoya, Anthony A Adeleke on my BVN / Bank instead of Orekoya, Adedolapo Anthony. NIBSS, BANKS, NIMC & general public take note.

OWOLABI: I, formerly known as Owolabi Abigail Abioye now wish to be addressed Abolarinwa Bola Abioye All former documents remain valid. General public take note

OYEWOLE: I, formerly known as Oyewole Gloria Rume now wish to be addressed Abegunde Gloria Rume. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

RACHAEL: I, formerly known as Miss Jimoh, Rachael Temitope now wish to be known as Mrs. Akin-tomiwa-Makinde, Rachael Temitope. All former documents remain valid. Public notice

SAMUEL :I, formerly Miss Samuel Serah Tomola now wish to be addressed as Mrs. Okeji Serah Tomola. All formal documents remain valid. Public notice.

TAHCHANG: I, formerly Christopher Tahchang, now known as Lar Nangwang Timku. My correct D.O.B is 05/08/1998, not 01/01/1992. Former documents remain valid. General public take note.

UCHE: I, formerly known as Nwosu Uche, now wish to be addressed As Uche Raphael Nwosu All former documents remain valid. General public take note

UCHENNA : I, formerly known as Ibek Uchenna now wish to be addressed as Ibek Uche. My DOB is, 02-10-1980, not, 02-05-1979. Former documents remains valid, public notice.

UNUAGWEMEN: I, formerly known as Unuagwemen Ese Endurance now wish to be addressed Terhemen Gift Dooshima All former documents remain valid. General public take note

UYAKONWU : I, formerly Mrs. Agatha Onyemaechi Uyakonwu, Mrs. Agatha 'Echi Uyakonwu, Mrs Agatha 'Echi Nmazua, Agatha Nmazua, and Mrs. Agatha David-Nmazua, now wishes to be addressed as Mrs. Osehwe Agatha David. All former documents bearing all listed names remain valid. General public take note.

UZOMAKA: I, formerly known as Uzomaka Kate Obilo now wish to be addressed as Uzomaka Kate Azuogu. All former documents remain valid. Public take note.

YUSUF : I, formerly known as Yusuf Akeem Olatunji now wish to be addressed as Adekun David Olatunji. All former documents remain valid. General public take note

News Extra

Enugu Police Bust Criminal Syndicate, Recover Five AK-47 Rifles, 2 Pump Action Rifles

ENUGU State Police Command has arrested and paraded 14 kidnap suspects involved in various kidnap operations in and outside the state.

Briefing pressmen at the Command's headquarters in Enugu, on Friday, the Commissioner of Police, Enugu State, Mamman Bitrus Giwa, said among them were two remainingsuspectslinked

to the August 2 kidnapping raid on St. Joseph's Catholic Church,Affa, Udi Local Council of the state, who fled to Port Harcourt following the operational pressure mounted by joint security operatives.

"Further intelligence-led operations by the Command's Anti-Kidnapping Violent Crime Response Unit(AK-VCRU) led to the arrest of two additional malesuspectslinkedtotheAffa

Church kidnapping.

"Preliminary investigation reveals that after fleeing Enugu, the suspects regrouped with their cohorts in Port Harcourt and abducted another victim, who was released after a ransom of N5m was paid," he said.

Giwa noted that all the 14 suspects were arrested on various dates in June, July and August 2026 in the Federal Capital

Territory, Abuja; Enugu, Kogi, Nasarawa, Rivers, Kwara and Taraba states.

The suspects had also confessed to involvement in several recent and past kidnapping incidents along the Enugu-Ugwuogo-Opi-Nsukka Road, Obioma-9th Mile-Umulumbe-Okpatu Road, Eke-Affa-Egede-Ezinze axis, and various locations in Ezeagu Local Council.

"Specifically, preliminary investigation has linked the suspects to the following armed kidnapping incidents: the abduction of a male victim

at Mgbabuowa/Aguobuowa, Ezeagu Council, on May 25, 2026, during which N5 million was obtained as ransom; the abduction of two male victims and the shooting and murder of a female victim at

Obioma, Udi Council, on May 9, 2026, during which the gang obtained \$28,700 as ransom; the abduction of two male victims along the Eke-Ezinze Road, Udi Council, on April 10, 2026, for which \$70,000 was obtained as ransom; and the kidnapping of seven victims at Obinaofia, Ezeagu Council, on April 12, 2026, during which N25 million was obtained as ransom," he explained.

National Sports Commission - Take The Lead And Solve Nigeria's Football Problems

NIGERIANS are in pain. Two nights ago, the Falcons lost and failed to qualify for the FIFA Women's World Cup for the first time in 35 years. It marked the climax of 12 years of being taken through avoidable pain and agony in losses, and frustration of failure to achieve what is easily within their reach in football.

These are not the best of times for the current administrators running the affairs of the country's most popular sport. Irrefutably and undeniably, they have failed to deliver on their promise and on the people's expectations. The defeat of the country's national football teams are hurtful for a country blessed with abundant talent, a rich history of previous achievements and humongous human and financial

resources.

The nightmare may end soon. The tenure of the current NFA board draws to an end next month. This provides the country with a great and timely opportunity for a change of guards, direction and vision.

Sentiments apart, under no circumstances must the 'failed' administration be allowed to return to status quo and continue to run the affairs of Nigerian football the way they have done to this point. No one should try to justify it. This is the worst period in terms of results in the country's football history.

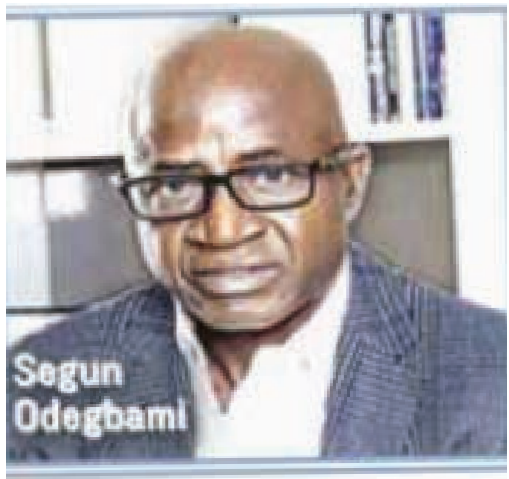
We must deliberately chart another course and create a just, transparent, fair, equitable and acceptable process of electing an administration that will do things different-

ly and pledge to deliver and achieve clear goals. To do otherwise is to knowingly embrace and court more future disaster.

It is the universal practice in football (as in all of sport) that we do not change a winning team. The converse is that we also must change a losing side. Players are sold and retired, coaches are fired, administrators resign voluntarily or are sacked. Something must give when major failure comes.

Anyone that promotes or applies any contrary measures will be considered an 'enemy' of progress and the principles that drive success in sport.

Even as players, we tasted the 'poison' and paid the price of major defeats. In



1977, we needed to win or draw a last match to qualify for Nigeria's first World Cup. We failed at the very last hurdle. To this day, almost 50 years after, Godwin Odiye continues to pay the price of scoring an own-goal that halted our march.

In 1981, we went through a similar ordeal, failing again to cross the last hurdle. For several of the players, that was our last appearance in the national team.

The reality is that failure in major competitions comes with a high price for everyone.

So, administrators must be ready always to pay the price when they fail to deliver. There is no negotiating it, or painting it in attractive colours. There is nothing attractive about losing the way the Super Eagles did in the past 12 years; and the other junior national teams did recently; and the Falcons did a few days ago.

The Falcons crowned what has been a period of monumental disasters for the country. Two weeks ago, they were considered the strongest team on the continent of Africa for 35 years.

Read the remaining story online www.guardian.ng

Edem Urges Increased Govt, Private Sector Support For Budding Tennis Players

From Tina Agodo, Calabar

FIVE-TIME African table tennis champion and five-time Olympian, Offiong Edem, has called for increased government and private-sector support for young table tennis players in Cross River State, saying the state has abundant talents capable of reaching the national and international stages.

Edem made the call in Calabar yesterday during the flag off of the sixth edition of the Offiong Edem Foundation Table Tennis Championship, where she identified lack of funding as limiting

the development and exposure of promising players in the state.

The retired Olympian, who represented Nigeria at five Olympic Games before retiring after Paris 2024, said players needed regular participation in national and international tournaments to improve their skills and compete favourably with their counterparts elsewhere.

According to her, many players train throughout the year but are unable to attend tournaments outside the state because of inadequate funding.

"They need to go out to play tournaments. They practise all year, but they don't go anywhere. They need to go and play national tournaments," she said.

Edem, who began playing table tennis as a child at her grandmother's table in Bayside, Calabar South, said her experience inspired her to establish the foundation to provide equipment and opportunities for young players.

The former African table tennis champion said she understood the challenges faced by young athletes because she also strug-

gled to obtain rackets, shoes and other equipment at the early stages of her career.

"I decided to open a foundation to support the children with equipment. The idea of this foundation is to give back to society and support the children, not just in Cross River State," she said.

She disclosed that the championship had continued to grow since its inception, attracting athletes from Cross River and other states, with more than 100 young players participating in the latest edition.

Business

TETFund: Repositioning Nigeria As Africa's Education Financing Model

THE decision by The Gambia to establish a higher education intervention fund modelled after Nigeria's Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) is beyond diplomatic relation; it is an endorsement of an institutional model created out of necessity, but which has gradually evolved into a reference point for higher education financing across Africa.

When The Gambian Minister of Higher Education, Research, Science and Technology, Prof. Pierre Gomez, led a delegation to TETFund headquarters in Abuja and announced plans to send officials to Nigeria to understudy its operations, he effectively acknowledged an intervention mechanism worth exporting. Today, the country has established the Tertiary and Higher Education Trust (THET) Fund, drawing inspiration from TETFund.

This is significant considering that TETFund emerged out of the crisis in tertiary education financing. What began as the Education Trust Fund, financed through a dedicated education tax, eventually became TETFund, with a mandate covering universities, polytechnics and Colleges of Education.

Today, the Fund has become one of the most visible instruments for injecting resources into the tertiary education system. Its interventions cover infrastructure, instructional materials and equipment, research, academic staff training and development, conference sponsorship and other areas considered critical to maintaining standards. The fact that another African country has replicated the model suggests that the experiment has moved beyond the domestic policy space.

The Gambia was not the first country to look towards Nigeria for lessons in education administration and financing. Ghana had previously sent a delegation to understudy the workings of the National Universities Commission (NUC), with its National Tertiary Education Agency identified as broadly comparable to TETFund. Tanzania is also interested in the TETFund model

for alternative approaches to financing tertiary education.

Recently, Sierra Leone provided another striking example of Nigeria's growing influence in higher education administration when a delegation led by the country's Deputy Minister of Education, Sarjoh Aziz Kamara and Vice Chancellors of Ernest Bai Koroma University of Science and Technology and Njala University, visited the country to understudy the centralised admission system operated by the Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board (JAMB) with the possibility of establishing a similar body.

For TETFund, The Gambian visit is a validation of its institutional maturity and a demonstration that the Fund is not merely a Nigerian agency dispensing interventions to public tertiary institutions, but also a repository of knowledge on how dedicated funding can be mobilised, administered and deployed to address structural deficiencies in higher education.

The significance becomes even greater under the leadership of TETFund Executive Secretary, Arc. Sonny Echono, who since assuming office, has pushed the agency beyond the traditional perception of an agency primarily concerned with physical infrastructure.

Echono's international engagements have helped reposition the agency beyond traditional responsibilities. In 2023, Echono led a Nigerian delegation to the University of Maryland Eastern Shore in the United States to study models for innovation laboratories, innovation hubs and entrepreneurship centres that could be adapted for tertiary institutions. The engagement produced plans for regional centres of excellence, entrepreneurship and innovation cooperation and scholar

exchanges.

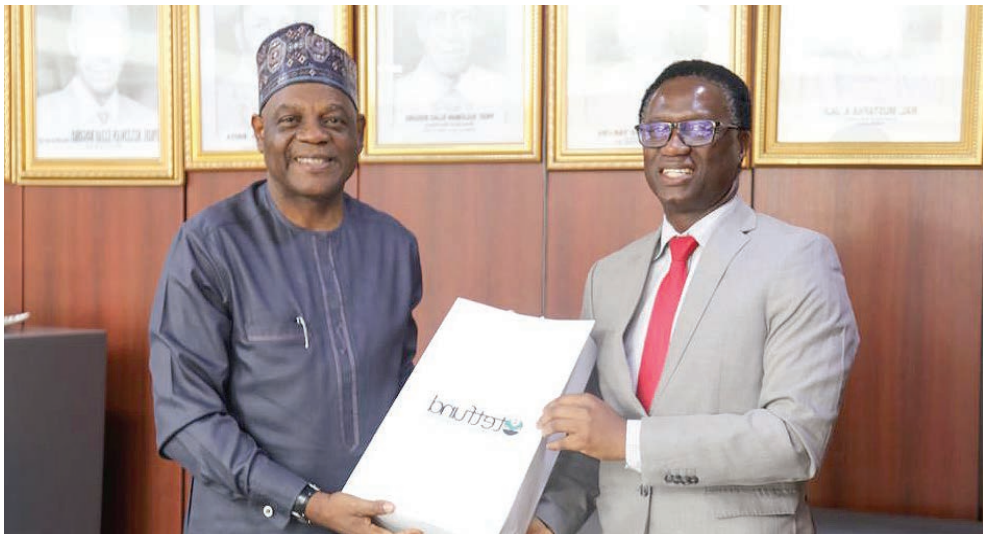
Similarly, TETFund under Echono has deepened partnership with Brazil's Federal University of Viçosa, the Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa and the Agricultural Research and Innovation Fellowship for Africa. The collaboration enabled Nigerian scholars to study Brazil's agricultural research and innovation system, with the broader objective of using science and technology to address Nigeria's development challenges.

This creates an interesting reversal as Nigeria is simultaneously sending its academics and researchers abroad to understudy successful models while foreign governments are increasingly coming to Nigeria to examine systems that have worked locally. This is arguably one of the strongest indicators of institutional credibility and the fact that an organisation

becomes influential when it can learn from others while also becoming a source of lessons for others.

The Gambian study tour was beyond a ceremonial visit. It provides an opportunity for TETFund to codify and share the lessons accumulated over decades - how to mobilise dedicated education funding, establish intervention priorities, enforce accountability, monitor projects, support research and develop academic manpower.

For Echono, the development is an important addition to the growing international profile of the Fund under his watch. His emphasis on research, innovation, industry partnerships and international collaboration has increasingly positioned TETFund as more than a funding agency. The objective is to create an ecosystem, where intervention funds translate into knowledge, innovation, skilled manpower and ultimately economic development.



Executive Secretary, Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund), Arc. Sonny Echono (right), presenting a gift to the Gambian Minister of Higher Education, Research, Science and Technology, Prof. Pierre Gomez during a courtesy visit to TETFund headquarters in Abuja.

TheGuardianSports

www.guardian.ng

NFF Has Lost Its Relevance, Says Adelabu As NSC Meets Presidency Over 'Normalisation' Committee

By Gowon Akpodonor

THE 'free fall' of Nigerian football came to a climax in Morocco, on Thursday night, with 10-times Africa Champions, Super Falcons, eliminated from the 2027 FIFA World Cup, no thanks to their 1-2 defeat by the Banfana Banfana of South Africa.

The Super Falcons have appeared at every edition of the FIFA World Cup since the tournament began in China 1991, but all that 35-year-old history came crumbling on Thursday night during the Africa playoff for the 2027 World Cup.

The Super Falcons' exit, coupled with other defeats suffered by Nigeria national teams have forced many stakeholders to voice out their anger.

Former Green Eagles winger, Adegoke Adelabu, told *The Guardian* on Friday that the present NFF leadership has lost its relevance in the administration of football.

"We need to look at the root cause of this free fall, which is domestic league and the level of professional competence of the coaches," Adelabu said. "The administrators are too big to attend conferences to upgrade themselves and also there is a wide gap in knowledge among the key players or administrators."

According to Adelabu, a former player of IICC Shooting Stars of Ibadan, now a Sports Scientist, the free fall of the nation's football must stop.

"Everyone has his or her definitions of what is right and wrong depending on whose connection brought them into administration, irrespective of their experiences or level of administrative competence," he stated.

There were insinuations, on Friday, that some top officials of the National Sports Commission (NSC) are planning to see President Bola Tinubu to brief him on a 'Planned Normalisation Committee' to run the NFF affairs for three months.

• Stakeholders Lament Super Falcons' Exit



U.S.-based Super Falcons defender Michelle Alozie weeps after Nigeria lost 2-1 to South Africa on Thursday in Morocco

The committee, it was gathered, is being planned to replace the NFF Elective Congress already scheduled for next month in Lafia, Nasarawa State.

A source told *The Guardian* on Friday, that the NSC would have loved to avoid crisis by allowing Ibrahim Gusau to continue his second

term but the free fall being experienced in all the national football teams has thwarted it.

"What we are hearing now is that the NSC has already briefed FIFA and is looking for a way to discuss it with President Tinubu. But the only problem now is that a particular NSC official wants to bring back former NFF President Amaju Pinnick to head the Normalization Committee. That won't work because all these problem started under Amaju-led administration. The NSC also want to retain Dr. Mohammed Sanusi as the secretary pending when the Normalization Committee conduct elections in three months time. Sanusi has been around for over 19 years, and it will not make any sense to retain him in the Normalisation Committee," the source stated.

No official of the NSC was ready to speak on the planned 'Normalisation Committee' on Friday.

For some stakeholders, Nigerian football presently need hard working football technocrats to stop the mess.

NFF Sets Up Fact-finding Committee On Nigeria's Football Setbacks, Solanke Joins Presidential Race

By Gowon Akpodonor

THE Nigeria Football Federation has set up a fact-finding committee to look into the unwholesome poor run of the country's National Teams in international competitions, with specific attention to the Super Falcons' failure to qualify for next year's FIFA Women's World Cup finals.

Ten-time champions and holders of the Women Africa Cup of Nations, the Super Falcons, were booted out of the ongoing 14th edition of the competition in Morocco at the quarter-final stage, and then fell 1-2 to South Africa in a playoff to enter into the Inter-Confederations Playoffs scheduled for later this year.

It means that Nigeria, hitherto, the supreme power of African women football, will not be at the 2027 FIFA Women's World Cup finals to be staged in Brazil, after being a fixture at every edition

since the competition was launched in 1991.

Former NFF General Secretary, Ambassador Fanny Amun, MON heads the committee that also has former Nigeria U20 tactician and president of the Nigeria Football Coaches Association, Coach Ladan Bosso; former Super Falcons' captain, multiple Women AFCON winner and FIFA World Cup star Desire Oparanozie; former Super Eagles' captain, AFCON winner and FIFA World Cup star, Mutiu Adegboye and former FIFA referee, Dr. Alex Mana.



Segun Solanke joins NFF Presidential race

Chairman of the Sokoto State Football Association, Mallam Mohammed Nasiru Sa'idu, will serve as the Secretary.

The decision by the NFF to set up a committee to 'look into itself' was described as laughable by some stakeholders on Friday.

Meanwhile, the race for the September elections to the board of NFF is gathering momentum and with more individuals throwing their hats into the ring for the top seat, as the NFF President.

Determined to bring a breathe of fresher air into the Nige-

ria football ecosystem, is the consummate sports administrator and entrepreneur, Segun Solanke, who has expressed his strong interest for the NFF presidency.

Speaking with journalists on his ambition, Solanke, who is coming aboard with the agenda 'One Vision, One Football, One Nigeria', said, "For me, this is not about the title of NFF President. It is about what that office can do for Nigerian football and for the millions of Nigerians who live and breathe the game."

"I have seen Nigerian football from different angles as an administrator, as an investor, as a club owner and as somebody working with young athletes."

"And what concerns me is that we have an extraordinary amount of talent, passion and resources, but we have not built a football system that consistently converts those advantages into success."

Dolphins Begin Zenith Bank/NBBF Women's Premier Basketball League Title Defence

By Christian Okpara

CHAMPIONS, Dolphins Women Basketball Club, will begin the defence of the NBBF/Zenith Bank Women Basketball Premier League title they won last year with a game against First Deep Water tomorrow at the Indoor Sports Hall of the National Stadium, Surulere, Lagos. It is the first phase of the season, which is dunking off with the Atlantic Conference.

The opening game of the day will see IGP Queens taking on new entrants, Victoria Queens, with the game between the record winners of the league, First Bank and Royal Aces taking place in the afternoon, same as the battle between two-time winner of the league, MFM and Bayelsa Blue Whales.

With the arrival of teams scheduled for tomorrow, the first phase of the Atlantic Conference will hold from tomorrow to August 22, with the biggest game of the opening phase seeing MFM taking on First Bank in the evening of the day.

Meanwhile, the Savannah Conference will tip off two days later on Tuesday, August 18, with Air Warriors taking on Kada Angels in the first game of the day.

Other games for the opening day of the Savannah Conference are Nasarawa Amazons against Ham Warriors, Titans and Nigeria Customs, as well as the last battle between Aso Sky Queens and Plateau Rocks.

Unlike the Atlantic Conference, the Savannah Conference, holding at the Basketball Arena, Rayfield, Jos, will end its first phase on August 24. Dolphins defeated MFM in the final of the 2025 edition to end the reign of Olukoya girls, who won the title back-to-back in 2023 and 2024.

Rumble At Wembley As Arsenal, Man City Battle For Community Shield

THE new English football season begins with a heavyweight clash this Sunday as Arsenal and Manchester City face off in the Community Shield at Wembley.

The match, which kicks off at 3pm, will be available live to DSTV Yanga and GOTV Jolli subscribers via SuperSport Premier League (DSTV channel 203) and SuperSport Premier League Africa (GOTV channel 65).

The traditional season curtain-raiser promises an early taste of the rivalry that dominated last season, with Arsenal looking to begin their title defence with silverware and Man City aiming to make an immediate statement under new manager Enzo Maresca following the departure of Pep Guardiola.

Arsenal ended a 22-year wait to win the Premier League title last season, finishing four points ahead of Man City.

However, City's recent head-to-head record provides extra spice, with Guardiola's side winning the last league meeting 2-1 at the Etihad in April before defeating Arsenal 2-0 in the Carabao Cup final at Wembley in March.

This Sunday's encounter will also provide the first competitive opportunity to see some of the clubs' major summer changes.

Man City begin life after Guardiola with Maresca at the helm, while Arsenal will hope new £75 million signing Bruno Guimaraes, recruited from Newcastle United, can make an immediate impact in midfield.

Delta Chairman Commits N4m To South-South Badminton Tournament

From Monday Osayande Asaba

THE fourth edition of the South-South U-13 Badminton Tournament has commenced in Asaba, Delta State, with the Chairman of the Delta State Badminton Association and South-South Representative on the Badminton Federation of Nigeria (BFN), Felix Awala Tangbe, reaffirming his commitment to grassroots development of the sport in the region.

The tournament, which brings together young badminton players across the South-South region, is designed to identify and nurture talents from an early age while providing

children and teenagers with a productive sporting pathway alongside their formal education.

Speaking on the commencement of the competition, Tangbe said the initiative was targeted at "catching them very young" and giving young people meaningful opportunities to develop their talents and build a future through sports.

According to him, the fourth edition was expected to feature all six South-South states, but only three teams were able to make it to the tournament due to financial and logistical constraints.

He listed the participating teams as

Delta State, Edo State and the NNPC Badminton Club from Warri, while Rivers, Cross River, Akwa Ibom and Bayelsa States could not participate.

Tangbe disclosed that he was personally financing the tournament because of the difficulty in securing sponsorship, stressing that although government had an important role to play in sports development, it could not shoulder every responsibility.

He said, "Currently, it is self-sponsored. I'm taking my time to self-sponsor it because we're not getting sponsors from anywhere. You all know the situation of things. Governments cannot really do every-

thing. Even if they need to do a little bit of it, we know the situation of things. But currently, I am self-sponsoring."

The badminton administrator explained that his decision to continue funding the competition was driven largely by his passion for the sport and his desire to provide opportunities for young athletes.

"I am a badminton player. I played badminton from the beginning and it's a game that I love. So it's a passion," he said.

Tangbe added that the growing number of children participating in badminton in Delta State had also

encouraged him to sustain the tournament.

"Seeing the children, I come to Asaba once in a while and see the children, the crowd of children here, it gives me motivation that we have future badminton players in this state," he said.

He expressed particular satisfaction that the grassroots programme had already produced a player who progressed to the national team, describing the development as evidence that sustained investment in youth competitions could produce athletes capable of representing Nigeria at the highest level.

W&P

HERBERT
WIGWE

@

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An extraordinary man. A remarkable
life. An enduring legacy.

Today, we celebrate Herbert - his
courage, his generosity, his vision,
and the countless lives he touched.



Forever *missed*
Forever *remembered*
Forever *inspiring*





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Abuja@50: Wike, Remember Institutions, Legacy

The beauty and the engine

ABUJA at 50 looks good and worth celebrating as noted in this serial. The roads are being fixed. The abandoned projects are moving. For the first time in years, authorities want the residents to perceive that "Abuja is working." That is largely to the credit of one man: **Mr. Nyesom Wike**, who has earned the title "Performing Minister." But there is a danger in performance without institutions. Beauty without an engine isn't sustainable. As we celebrate Abuja@50, let's argue that Minister Wike's second legacy must be this: Move from 'Performing Minister' to 'Founding Father' by building a functional FCT Bureaucracy. And here is why: no serious political leadership survives without a strong bureaucracy. And right now, the FCT Civil Service that the Minister inaugurated with fanfare in March 2024 is curiously showing signs of stagnation.

The promise of 2024 - Birth of the FCT Civil Service
FOR 48 years, the FCTA operated without a proper Civil Service Commission. Staff were seconded from federal ministries to join the ones recruited without a Commission. Promotions were delayed. There was no career path. The FCT was treated like a Department, not a State. That changed in March, 2023 when the FCT Minister inaugurated a full-fledged FCT Civil Service Commission to feed already functional nine Mandate Secretariats. That effectively gave Abuja the structure to function as if it were a state as the constitution provides. The FCT Civil Service Commission (FCT-CSC) was established by an Act in 2018 but inaugurated in March 2024 by the FCT Minister, Wike. When inaugurated the minister said the new structure would "bring efficiency, professionalism and speed to governance in the FCT." **The promise was huge:**

1. **Own HR system.** Own recruitment. Own promotions. Own discipline.
2. **Mandate Secretaries to act like Commissioners.**
3. **Permanent Secretaries to act like Accounting Officers.**

For FCT staff, it was liberation. For residents, it was hope that the bureaucracy would finally match the infrastructure. But 18 months later, the engine is sputtering.

The signs of stagnation - 5 Red Flags: Follow-up reporting, and review of FCTA internal memos reveal five (5) critical problems threatening the new bureaucracy.

The Head of Service In Perpetual "ACTING"

ON September 9, 2025, Mrs. Nancy Nathan was appointed as **Ag. Head of Service, FCT** following death of her predecessor. As of August 2026, she has acted for 11 months. Next month makes it one year. This is curious and unprecedented for a civil service. In civil service rules, "Acting" is meant to be 3-6 months maximum while confirmation processes are completed. One year in acting capacity is abnormal. It creates three (3) problems:

1. **Authority Deficit:** An Acting Head of Service (HoS) cannot make irreversible decisions on discipline, promotion, or postings without looking over her shoulder.
2. **Morale Problem:** Staff ask: "If our head is not confirmed, are we serious?"
3. **Legal Risk:** Key circulars signed by an Acting HoS for 12 months can be challenged in court. This alone sends a signal that the FCT bureaucracy is in limbo.
5. **Permanent Secretary Vacancies**

THE FCT Civil Service was designed to have 18 Permanent Secretaries to head the 18 Secretariats and Departments. Today, five (5) positions are vacant in the permanent secretaries cadre. What does this mean? Directors are "holding forth." Files are delayed. No one wants to sign big contracts in acting capacity. Accountability is blurred. In the Federal Civil Service, a permanent secretary vacancy



Wike

for three (3) months triggers a crisis. In FCT, they have had five (5) vacancies for some time.

3. Mandate Secretary Vacancies

THE Mandate Secretariats are supposed to be the FCT's "ministries." There are nine (9) of them. Currently, three (3) are without substantive Mandate Secretaries. The offices are being run by Permanent Secretaries or Directors. This defeats the whole idea of the 2024 reform. The Mandate Secretary system was to bring political direction + bureaucratic execution. With vacancies, we have execution without direction, or direction without execution. It is therefore embarrassing for a capital that wants to be compared to London and Dubai.

No Tools To Work - The Official Vehicle Problem

THIS sounds small but it is huge. Most directors and newly promoted Permanent Secretaries do not have official vehicles. They use personal cars to supervise projects across 8,000 sq km of FCT. Meanwhile, the Minister's office has been supplying vehicles to some judicial agencies outside FCTA – courts, tribunals, etc. That is good. The judiciary must work. But the people who implement the Minister's roads, water, sanitation, and education policies are trekking between meetings or begging for few pool vehicles. You cannot ask a Director of Engineering to supervise 10 road sites without mobility. You cannot ask a Director of Health to do oversight in Gwagwalada, Kuje and Abaji in one day without a car. This is how performance dies – not with a bang, but with fuel scarcity.

ELONGATED Tenure And Treasury Problem

THE Permanent Secretary, Treasury continues to enjoy "elongated service" beyond normal retirement. Instead of a proper replacement and competitive process, the office is being managed in a way that breeds suspicion. Treasury is the heart of the bureaucracy. If there is no clarity, no confidence, and no succession plan there, every other secretariat suffers. Contractors are not paid. Salaries are delayed. Budgets are not released. This is the single fastest way to kill the gains of Abuja@50.

The consequences on service delivery: A stag-

nant bureaucracy does not shout. It whispers. And the whispers are now loud in Abuja that politics trumps policies that strengthen institutions. **The Water Crisis:** There are hushed but persistent complaints across Abuja that water is not flowing in most locations. Areas like Gwarimpa, Kubwa, Lugbe, Karsana, and parts of the Central Area go weeks without FCT Water Board supply. Sources say the problem is not just infrastructure. It is "budget approval". The Board cannot procure chemicals, repair pumps, or pay technicians because releases are delayed and tied to "ministerial authorisation" for every small thing. A bureaucracy that cannot release water cannot claim to be working.

Project Implementation Lag: Wike commissions 50 roads. But who maintains them after six (6) months? Who does the drain clearing? Who enforces building codes on the new corridors? Without Permanent Secretaries and Directors with power and tools, everything returns to the Minister's table. That is not sustainable. One man cannot run 8,000 sq km.

Staff Demoralisation: The recent promotion of stalled directors is a good move. But promotion without tools is frustration. "How can you promote me to Director and I don't have an office, a car, or budget to run my department?" one director asked. When you celebrate Abuja@50 with lights and roads, but your civil servants use torchlight to work at 7pm, the celebration rings hollow. **The political economy - Why bureaucracy matters @50**

SOME will say: "Minister, just keep building. The bureaucracy will catch up." History says no. London works because of the Greater London Authority (GLA) bureaucracy. Dubai works because of the Roads and Transport Authority (RTA) and Dubai Development Authority (DDA). Kigali too works because of a disciplined civil service in Rwanda. Abuja will only work if the FCTA bureaucracy works even when the minister travels. Here is the political economy logic: Infrastructure decays without maintenance: Roads need engineers. Parks need horticulturists. Water needs technicians. All of them sit in the bureaucracy. Investment needs predictability: No serious investor will put money in Abuja if permits take one (1) year because the relevant Permanent Secretary is "acting." Accountability needs institutions: If everything depends on the Minister, then when the Minister leaves, everything collapses. Institutions outlive individuals. Legitimacy needs service: People don't feel government through billboards. They feel it through water, schools, clinics, etc. All delivered by the bureaucracy. Behold, Abuja@50 is not just about celebrating the past. It is about securing the next 50 years. That requires strong institutions. Not strong leaders.

From Performing Minister To Founding Father

MINISTER Wike has done what a predecessor could not do in eight (8) years. He has given Abuja visibility, pride, and momentum after the el-Rufai bulldozer and action mentality too. To move from "Performing Minister" to "Founding Father of Modern FCT Administration," he must now do the boring but critical work of institution-building. And here is how: Founding Fathers

don't just cut ribbons. They write the rules. They set up systems that work after them.

Nnamdi Azikiwe, Obafemi Awolowo and Ahmadu Bello built first regional universities the federal military government seized in 1975. Obafemi Awolowo built free and compulsory basic education, first Television Station and Stadium in Africa.

What will Wike be remembered for in 2076? The roads? Yes. But also: "He gave FCT a civil service that worked." That should be his sustainable development goal, (SDG). **Roadmap to fix the FCT bureaucracy before December 2026.** Here is what can be done in the next 120 days: **Confirm The Head of the Civil Service Immediately:** The FCT Minister, should confirm the Ag Head of Service before September 9, 2026. One year acting is an embarrassment. Give her the authority to lead the brand new Civil Service. **Fill All Vacancies - PSs And Mandate Secretaries:** Appoint five (5) new PSs and three (3) Mandate Secretaries within 60 days. Use the FCT Civil Service Commission. Make it transparent. Stop "holding forth." **Empower the Civil Service Commission:** The Commission was created to hire, fire, promote, and discipline.

Let it function. **Mobilise The Bureaucracy Tools, Not just the titles:** Budget for official vehicles for Permanent Secretaries and Directors. Provide office equipment, laptops, and running costs. You cannot do "Renewed Hope" with 2005 computers. **Normalise Tenure in Treasury:** Appoint a substantive Permanent Secretary, Treasury through due process. Elongated tenure creates risk. Let fresh blood bring fresh ideas. **Release the Water Board Budget:** The FCT Water Board needs a direct budget line and authority to procure. Water is life. If Abuja@50 residents don't have water, the celebration is a lie. Give the Board Management authority to act without daily sign-off. **Delegate and Trust:** Minister, you don't need to approve every virement. Set policy. Set targets. Let the bureaucracy execute. Hold them accountable quarterly. That is how states are run.

The link to the Permanent FCTA Complex: Last week, this column revealed that 50 years after Abuja, the FCTA has no permanent office complex. The foundation laid by Obasanjo and El-Rufai in 2007 is still abandoned due to a 2007 court injunction. The two issues are linked. You cannot have a functional bureaucracy working from 15 rented buildings. You cannot have permanent secretaries and directors motivated when they don't have a befitting headquarters. The Permanent FCTA Complex and a functional Civil Service are "twin pillars" of Abuja@50 legacy. Build the house. And put the right people inside it with the right tools. **What Happens If We Don't Act?** If we ignore the bureaucracy and only focus on infrastructure, here is the forecast for 2027-2030: Roads will pot-hole because there is no Director with budget to patch them. Water will fail because the Board cannot buy chlorine. Files will pile up because five PSs offices are vacant. Corruption will rise because acting officers are afraid to say no. The next Minister will inherit a beautiful but broken city. That is not legacy. That is waste.

The choice before FCT Minister: Wike, you have restored faith in government. You have shown that Nigeria can still work. But Nigerians don't just need a man who works. They need systems that work. Abuja@50 is your stage. The world is watching. History is watching. And 50 years from now, when Abuja turns 100, civil servants will say: "It was Wike who gave us an institution." That is greater than any road. Reason: there is no serious and sustainable political leadership without a strong bureaucracy.

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