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# Another **FEATHER** to Your **CAP**

I join your family, friends, and well-wishers to congratulate you as you are bestowed with the prestigious **Doctor of Public Administration, DPA (Honoris Causa)** by the **University of Nigeria, Nsukka**. I trust that this recognition will serve as a further motivation for you to break new frontiers in legal practice, business, and service to humanity.

**CONGRATULATIONS.**



Chief  
**ANDREW ORU**

Rt. Hon. (Elder) Sheriff F.O. Oborevwori  
Governor, Delta State

# Congratulations!

## ALL HAIL AN ACHIEVER

We Felicitate with you on the conferment of a Doctoral Degree (Honoris Causa) on you by the University of Nigeria, Nsukka. This honour testify eloquently to your pedigree, industry and potential, especially as regards your contributions to the economic development of Nigeria and several other African Nations.

May your star keep shining brighter, and may God add many more years to your life span, in good health, wisdom and peace.

## CHIEF (DR.) ANDREW ORU

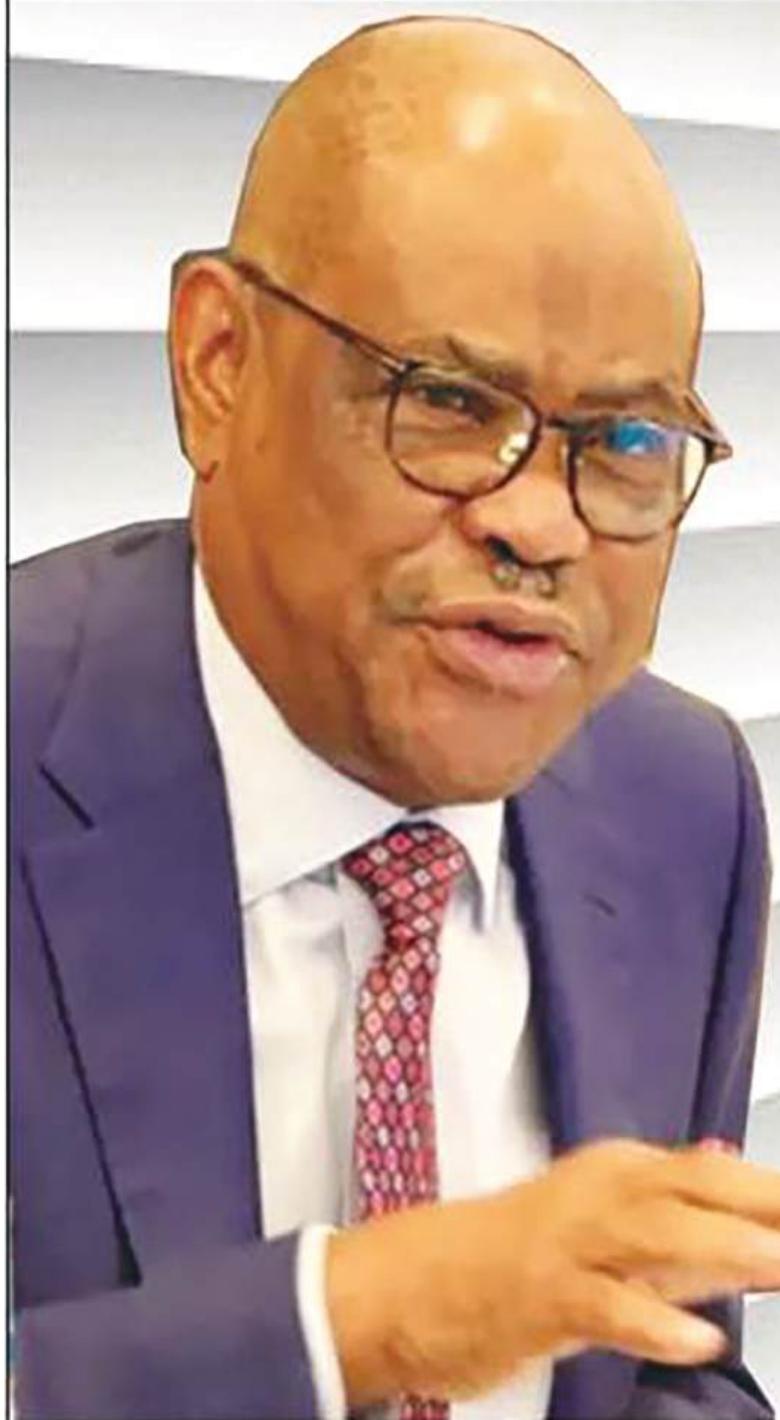
Chairman, Thunder-Bird Int'l Ltd.  
Global Group Executive Director (AITEO)  
The Egbe-RODE of Ughelli Kingdom



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Victor & Dr. Mrs. Martina Agberien  
Chief Fred Majemite  
Hon. Chief John Idogun  
Marcel Oru, SAN  
Pastor Ray Efe Yugbouvwra  
Engr. Frances Tuedor  
Sir Ovie & Lady Pauline Oghenekaro  
Sir Engr. Sylvester Oru KSM  
Ben Ziregbe  
Robert Ihwughwawwe  
Dr. Anne Mary Nash Haruna (Nee Oru)  
Engr. Dr. Victor & Barr. (Mrs.) Evita Ulinfun  
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Kennedy Emadamerho  
Orho Dickson Akpotor  
Chief Edewor Ejirobe  
Daniel Okeme



# A GREAT HONOUR FOR A GREAT LEADER!

We, the executive leadership and members of the  
**Rivers State Elders Council**  
most warmly felicitate our dear brother, friend,  
and astute leader

**His Excellency, Chief Nyesom Ezenwo  
Wike, CON, GSSRS, Life Bencher**

on the award of **Doctor of Science (Honoris  
Causa) by the University of Port Harcourt.**

As a distinguished alumnus who has contributed  
immensely to the infrastructural and educational  
development of Uniport over the years, this rec-  
ognition is most deserving.

We remain proud of your several achievements as  
governor of our dear state and Hon. Minister of  
the Federal Capital Territory under the leadership  
of **President Bola Ahmed Tinubu, GCFR.**

**Congratulations, once again!**

## SIGNED

1. Chief Ferdinand Alabara, OON, DSSRS
2. Ohna Sergeant Awuse, DSSRS
3. Chief Emmanuel Anyanwu, DSSRS
4. Chief O. C. J. Okocha, SAN, OFR, DSSRS
5. Rt Hon. Martins Amaewhule, DSSRS
6. Sen. Barinada Mpigi, DSSRS
7. Sen. Allwell Onyesoh, DSSRS
8. Chief Kingsley Chinda, DSSR
9. Rt. Hon. Chibudom Nwuche, OFR, DSSRS
10. Chief Victor Giadom, DSSRS
11. Chief Sen. Magnus Ngei Abe, DSSRS
12. Chief Sen. George Thompson Sekibo, CON, DSSRS
13. Chief Sen. Wilson Ake, DSSRS
14. Chief Sen. Olaka Nwogu, PHD, DSSRS
15. Chief Ken Chikere, DSSRS
16. Chief Frank Owhor, DSSRS
17. Chief Kenneth Kobani, DSSRS
18. Amb. Desmond Akawor, DSSRS
19. Chief Hon Boma Iyaye, DSSRS
20. Prof. Zaccheus Adango, SAN DSSRS
21. Chief Barr. Wogu Boms, DSSRS
22. Chief Felix Obuah, DSSRS
23. Rt. Hon. Ikunyi Owaji-Ibani, DSSRS
24. Chief. Hon. Ejor N. Ejor, DSSRS
25. Chief Hon. Wisdom Wakama, DSSRS
26. Hon. Dumnamena Dekor, DSSRS
27. Hon. Felix Nwaeke, DSSRS
28. Hon. Kelechi Nwogu, DSSRS
29. Professor Itotenaan Henry Ogiri, PhD. DSSRS
30. Chief Tony Okocha, DSSRS
31. Chief Chukwuemeka Aaron, DSSRS
32. Chief Emmanuel Deeyah, DSSRS
33. Chief Dr. Sampson Parker, DSSRS
34. Chief Ezemonye Ezekiel-Amadi, DSSRS
35. Chief Engr. Chukwuemeka Woke, DSSRS
36. Chief Fred Kpakol, PhD, DSSRS
37. Alabo Dakorinama George-Kelly, PhD, DSSRS
38. Chief Marcus Nle-Ejii, DSSRS
39. Hon. Isobo Jack, DSSRS
40. Chief. Hon. Igo Aguma, DSSRS
41. Hon. George Tolofari, DSSRS
42. Chief Hon. Chinyere Igwe, DSSRS
43. Barr. Rufus N. Godwins, DSSRS
44. Chief Pleasant Braide, DSSRS
45. Chief Hon. Ephraim Nwazi, DSSRS
46. Chief Nyema Weli, DSSRS
47. Dr. Benibo George, PhD, DSSRS
48. Chief Chidi Amadi, DSSRS
49. Sir. Hon Allwell Ihunda, DSSRS
50. Elder Chidi Frank Wohioka, DSSRS



Governor Babajide Sanwo-Olu (2nd right) cutting the tape at the commissioning of Bariga Fire Station. With him (l-r): Outgoing Vice Chairman, Bariga Local Government Development Council (LCDA), Hon. Adeola Kuponyi; APC Lagos Chairman, Pastor Cornelius Ojelabi; outgoing Council Chairman, Hon. Kolade Alabi and the Council Chairman-Elect, Hon. Bukola Adedeji during the commissioning of the fire station, yesterday.



Bright Echefu, President/MD of EIB Group analysing to journalists during a media tour how fighter drones are controlled and deployed to attack terrorists from its station in Abuja.

## Tinubu bails out GENCOS with N4trn as Elumelu cries out

By Johnbosco Agbakwuru, Abuja

President Bola Tinubu on Friday appealed to power generation companies (GENCOS) to give the federal government more time to complete the verification and validation of longstanding debts owed to them.

During a meeting with members of the Association of Power Generation Companies, led by Col. Sani Bello (rtd), at the Presidential Villa in Abuja, the President assured them of his administration's commitment to resolving the liquidity challenges in the power sector.

The Special Adviser to the President on Energy, Mrs. Olu Verheijen, disclosed that a N4 trillion bond programme has received anticipatory approval from President Tinubu to address the liquidity shortfall in the sector.

President Tinubu acknowledged the historic liabilities inherited from previous administrations and pledged transparency and fairness in addressing them:

"I accept the assets and liabilities of my predecessors, and there is no question about that. But that acceptance must be on credible grounds. I need to wear the audit cap of verifiability, authenticity, and the fact that this inheritance is not a mere deodorant but a support structure for critical economic and industrial promotion."

The President emphasised the need for patience from GENCOS and financial institutions, noting that government agencies are actively engaging audit and legal firms to scrutinise the claims.

"We are here. So market it to your other colleagues. Give us time to do verification and validation of the numbers," he said.

While reaffirming his belief in a market-driven electricity sector, the President said the industry's long-neglected legacy issues are now receiving the attention they deserve.

"This is a longstanding issue that is now being dealt with. I know how much we have been able to save on fuel subsidies. We introduced the alternative, CNG, to bring

relief back to the people."

President Tinubu also emphasised the government's commitment to creating a stable investment environment and avoiding extreme measures, such as bank asset foreclosures, against the generation companies.

"To our friends in the banking sector, I ask that we avoid foreclosures. Sharpen your pencils, but keep an eraser handy. Let's persevere together."

Describing electricity as "the most important discovery of humanity in the last 1,000 years," the President reaffirmed that access to electricity is fundamental to economic growth and human dignity.

The Minister of Power, Chief Adebayo Adelabu, commended President Tinubu for the attention given to the power sector, stating that the administration's reforms have restored investor confidence and improved performance across the electricity value chain.

"Your Excellency, your presence at this meeting is a clear testament to your unwavering commitment to the sustainability, stability, and long-term development of Nigeria's power sector. Under your leadership, we have recorded critical milestones in less than two years," the Minister said.

"Before you took office in 2023, we lost 97% of our daily

oil production. Today, we are retaining 98%. That's transformation. Investors are seeing greater stability and predictability," he said.

On electricity, Elumelu added: "We don't need power to complete your transformation, we need power to enable it. Power is critical to unlocking Nigeria's full potential. We urge you to help solve this debt problem."

Adesina reiterated the need for immediate liquidity support while raising concerns over gas supply shortfalls.

"Liquidity is the oxygen of our business. Without urgent intervention, generation capacity will stall, and Nigeria's industrial and economic ambitions will be jeopardised.

"The plants in the Afam axis are underperforming because we have not paid gas suppliers. We propose unlocking 800 million cubic feet of gas through NLNG to boost supply to these power plants," he said.

The meeting was attended by the Chief of Staff to the President, Femi Gbajabiamila; the Coordinating Minister of the Economy and Minister of Finance, Mr. Wale Edun; the Minister of Information and National Orientation, Alhaji Mohammed Idris; and other senior government officials, regulators, and stakeholders in Nigeria's electricity industry.

## Tik Toker who claimed President Tinubu died remanded in correctional centre

A chief magistrate court, Friday in Abuja, remanded, at the Keffi Correctional Centre, a social media influencer, Ghali Isma'il, who posted online videos purporting that President Bola Tinubu died as a result of a serious illness.

Department of State Services (DSS) operatives arrested Isma'il days after he posted the fake videos on the TikTok handle @bola\_asiwaju.

Count one of the two-count charge, titled "Publication of false news with intent to cause offence against public peace," read: "That you, Ghali Ismail, Male, twenty-nine (29) years, of Jogana village, Gezawa LGA, Kano State, on or about the 20th Day of July, 2025 and within the jurisdiction of this Honorable Court, did publish false information by uploading a video clip on your

a video clip on your verified TikTok handle ("bola\_asiwaju") wherein you falsely claimed that you reliably confirmed from official sources that President Bola Ahmed Tinubu was critically ill, having been poisoned through his meal, with intent to cause public alarm and disturb public peace.

"You thereby committed an offence punishable under Section 418 of the Penal Code Act, Cap P3, Laws of the Federation of Nigeria, 2004.

Count two, "Inciting Disaffection to the Government," read: "That you, Ghali Ismail, Male, twenty-nine (29) years, of Jogana village, Gezawa LGA, Kano State, on or about the 20th Day of July, 2025 and within the jurisdiction of this Honorable Court, did publish false information by uploading a video clip on your

verified TikTok handle ("bola\_asiwaju") where you falsely claimed that you reliably confirmed from official sources that President Bola Ahmed Tinubu was critically ill, having been poisoned through his meal, with intent to bring contempt or incite feelings of disaffection against the person of the President. You thereby committed an offence punishable under Section 416 of the Penal Code Act, Cap P3, Laws of the Federation of Nigeria, 2004."

After taking arguments by both counsels to the DSS and that of the defendant, whose application for bail was denied, the presiding judge, Ekpeyong Iyang, ordered Ismail to be remanded in Keffi Correctional Centre. The matter was adjourned till August 19.

## 2027: Two former governors, ex-NASS members attend ADC meeting in Benin

By Ozioruva Aliu

TWO former governors of Edo State, Chief John Odigie-Oyegun and Sen. Osarhiemen Osunbor, former Senate Chief Whip, Sir Rowland Owie, Sen. Ehigie Uzamere and former members of the House of Representatives including Hon. Sergius Ogunwe among the numerous people that attended the meeting of the African Democratic Congress (ADC) where they expressed confidence to win the August 16 by-elections in the state and the 2027 presidential election.

The gathering was a stakeholders meeting held at the residence of Oyegun in Benin.

At the meeting, a committee was set up to mobilise people to register as members.

Owie said members of a political group, the League of Democrats have all agreed to be part of the party "We have been holding meeting every Thursday for the past three months, every member of The League of Democrats and we have agreed to become members of the ADC.

"ADC will lead Nigeria, we are ready and I appeal to all of you to join."

Odigie-Oyegun who addressed journalists after the meeting, said the gathering was to brief leaders on developments and to receive groups from other political parties.

He added that another committee was also set-up, noting that both committees will work closely with the existing ADC State executive.

According to Oyegun, "The meeting is as prescribed by the national election authority. We are fresh blood. We don't want to disturb those who have served the party.

"This is in addition to getting messages, carrying out efficient membership registration all over, in a way that is effective and confirmed.

## Court restrains Edo govt from inaugurating new electoral commission

By Innocent Anaba

The National Industrial Court, Benin City, Edo State, has restrained parties in the suit challenging the dissolution of the Edo State Independent Electoral Commission, EDSIEC, from taking any further steps that could render the court's final judgment ineffective. Trial judge in the matter is Justice A. Adewemimo.

The suit was brought by the former EDSIEC Chairman, Justice James Oyomire (rtd), and six other members, namely Mrs. Gladys Idahor, Uduafi Gabriel, Mr. Felix Ehbota, Mr. Anthony Okekuoyen, Mr. Michael Ekhaiasomi, and Mr. Vincent Aimienota, through their counsel, Gabriel Uduafi.

They are challenging their removal by Governor Monday Okpabholo when their tenure is yet to expire.

Defendants in the suit include the Governor of Edo State, the Attorney-General and Commissioner for Justice, the Speaker of the House of Assembly, Jonathan Aifuobhokhan, and the newly appointed members of the reconstituted Commission: Asein Victor Ighomo Thomas, Imafidon Osarodion, Dr. Suleiman Ikuoria, Anthony Aikpogome, Umoru Frank, and Aremiyau Momoh.

The claimants are seeking a declaration that their dissolution was unconstitutional and are asking the court to stop the governor from inaugurating the new commission pending the resolution of the suit.

In an interim order dated July 22, 2025, the court restrained all parties from taking any action that may preempt or frustrate the court's judgment.

The order followed submissions by counsel Uduafi, who informed the court that despite a pending motion for interlocutory injunction, the 4th defendant, Aifuobhokhan, had gone ahead to issue a timetable for local government elections. Justice Adewemimo affirmed that it is a settled principle of law that parties must not engage in acts capable of rendering a court's decision nugatory.



European Union Ambassador to Nigeria, Mr. Gautier Mignot (3rd left) with President of the Nigerian Guild of Editors (NGE), Eze Anaba (3rd right); Onuoha Ukeh, MD, The Sun (2nd left); Dr. Iyobosa Uwuguiaren, Editor, Nation's Capital, ThisDay (left); Mr. Modestus Chukwulaka of the EU Delegation and Dr. Kabir Garba, Editor, Weekend Guardian, during a workshop on fact-checking organised by the EU in collaboration with NGE.

## Editors resolve to set up fact-check desks in newsroom to fight fake news

• As EU, NGE task media professionals on misinformation, disinformation

**N**igerian editors have agreed to set up fact-check desks in their various newsrooms as a measure to tackle fake news, misinformation and disinformation.

Rising from a one-day workshop organised by the European Union (EU) in collaboration with the Nigerian Guild of Editors (NGE) in Lagos on Thursday, the editors said that having Fact-Check Desk would help media organizations verify news hints, with the view to publishing only accurate information.

Other key decisions taken at the end of the workshop include: - Media organizations should organise trainings for their newsroom managers and line editors on fact-checking.

- That the Guild should set up disinformation counter groups across its zonal structures, ahead of 2027 general election.

- Media organizations should collaborate and reach out to each other to verify information.

- Media organizations should look at the quality of their Online Editors to ensure that experienced and well grounded journalist man the position.

- The Guild should use other of its bigger platforms to address issues bordering on fake news, misinformation and disinformation.

Speaking earlier at the workshop, the European Union Ambassador to Nigeria and ECOWAS, Mr Gautier Mignot and the NGE President, Mr. Eze Anaba, said that newsroom managers should acquire the skills and tools for fact-checking as a way to arresting fake news, misinformation and disinformation.

Mignot said that the EU was taking a multi-pronged approach to address the threats posed by misleading information, which he described as a "danger to democracy and public trust."

According to him, "The European Union is actively working to combat disinformation and promote media literacy, with fact-checking playing a crucial role in these efforts.

"Our choice of collaborating with the Nigerian Guild

of Editors on this programme is part and parcel of this general effort.

"We recognise the critical role of editors as the last line in the gatekeeping process. The editor is ultimately responsible for what is pushed into the public space as content."

The EU ambassador warned that the spread of misleading information - whether unintentional or deliberate, posed a threat to democratic governance and public trust.

Citing a July 2024 European Parliament Report, Mignot noted that 85 per cent of people globally worry about disinformation's impact, while 38 per cent of EU citizens now see it as a threat to democracy.

"For media professionals, particularly editors, the implications are far reaching because misleading information erodes not only the credibility of the message, but also that of the messenger and the institution", he stated. "If we want to remain credible and reliable, we have to fact-check to ensure that the information we spread is accurate."

Mignot noted that advancements in technology had made it easier to generate and disseminate deceptive content that is increasingly difficult to distinguish from factual information.

He drew attention to Nigeria's unique challenges, referring

to a 2020 report by the Centre for Democracy and Development (CDD), warning that disinformation had exacerbated long-standing ethnic and religious tensions in the country.

"Although what the report describes as Nigeria's big, strong, unimaginatively creative, but invisible rumour mill has always been there, it points out that both falsehoods and accurate information can now spread faster and in a multitude of formats, including text, audio, images, memes, and videos, all thanks to technology," Mignot said.

Despite the challenges, the ambassador argued that the evolving information landscape presented an opportunity for traditional media to reclaim its relevance.

He said: "Media must remain reliable, they must be fact-checkers and make sure in particular that the research for the scoop does not beat the research for the truth."

"A literate public is much more empowered to be able to assess the information they are exposed to, identify sources they can trust, and make well-informed decisions, participate in debates and shape policies that affect them."

Mignot outlined the EU's ongoing efforts to counter these threats globally, including the European Digital Media Observatory (EDMO), the Rapid Alert System (RAS), and the EUvsDisinfo platform.

National Chairman of the party, commended the party's leadership for the ran-cour-free process that led to Prof. Yilwatda choice.

According to the governor, "The All Progressives Congress, APC, under the leadership of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu, got a brand new National Chairman in the just concluded National Executive Council meeting held in Abuja. That remains a beautiful turning point for our great party. This has set us in motion for overwhelming victories in the forthcoming elections at all levels in the country.

form.

"We support fact-checkers and researchers working to debunk disinformation and foster collaboration among them. Our previous work with Nigeria's foremost fact-checking platform, Dubawa, is an example," he said.

Other interventions cited by the ambassador include direct training support for Nigerian journalists, including visits to Europe and Ukraine, and active engagement with students and civil society organisations.

In his welcome remarks at the workshop, President of the Nigerian Guild of Editors, Anaba, described the workshop as timely and critical, while highlighting the dangers of fake news and misinformation.

"The deliberate spread of false information, whether through disinformation, misinformation, or fabricated news, not only undermines public trust, but also threatens social cohesion, democratic governance, and national security," he said.

The NGE President expressed hope that the gathering would serve as a platform for building collective capacity to identify and combat false narratives.

"It is our hope that through informed discussions and shared insights, we will strengthen our individual and institutional capacities to identify, counter, and prevent the spread of false narratives," Anaba said.

## 2027: With Yilwatda as chairman, APC will get overwhelming victories – Aiyedatiwa

By Dayo Johnson Akure

**G**overnor Lucky Aiyedatiwa of Ondo state, has said that the All Progressive Congress will get stronger and record overwhelming victories in future electoral contests across the country under the new Chairman, Prof. Nentawe Yilwatda.

Prof. Yilwatda was nominated and unanimously endorsed as National Chairman by members of the National Executive Council of the APC in Abuja.

Aiyedatiwa while congratulating the party on the emergence of Prof. Nentawe Yilwatda as the

"Prof. Nentawe Yilwatda's emergence signals hope as his ability to organize, re-engineer and reposition the APC is never in doubt.

"He possesses the carriage to increase the harvest of members that has been orchestrated by Dr. Abdullahi Ganduje, the immediate past chairman of our party. I congratulate the leader of our party, President Bola Ahmed Tinubu, a man with a special penchant for sourcing for stars. President Tinubu has shown this ingenuity over the years and it has become his trademark".

## How Adefope's tactic ensured Oyo's sole ownership of LAUTECH—Makinde

• As gov extols the late diplomat's virtues at burial

**O**yo State governor, 'Seyi Makinde, said on Friday that the deceased former Nigeria's High Commissioner to Zambia, Ambassador Iboroke Adefope, played a critical role in solving the age-long ownership crisis that bedevilled the Ladoke Akintola University of Technology (LAUTECH), Ogbomoso.

The governor noted that the diplomat suggested the tactic, which led to Oyo State gaining the sole ownership of the institution, adding that she was one of his go-to persons on issues affecting the state.

Governor Makinde stated this at the home-going service in honour of Ambassador Adefope, which was held at the St Peter's Cathedral, Arema, Ibadan, noting that her death meant that Ibadan, Oyo State and Nigeria lost a rare and courageous woman.

Describing Ambassador Adefope as a personal tactician, the governor eulogised the late diplomat for her quality advice on leadership and her commitment to the progress of the state, adding that whenever he faced knotty issues, he always consulted Adefope, who he described as Mama.

The governor noted, however, that despite his grief and that of the family at losing the Amazon, there was a need to be thankful to God for the gracious and fulfilled life she lived.

He said: "Ibadan, Oyo State and indeed Nigeria have lost a rare, bold and courageous woman, Ambassador Iboroke Oluwafunke Adefope.

"I personally have lost a personal tactician. After my first attempt to become the governor of this state in 2014/2015 ended in failure, as I didn't even win my local government, she stayed with me.

"I call her my Mama. Sometimes from 2013 or thereabouts and for the last 10, 11 years till she breathed her last, we were inseparable. There was nothing that she would not tell me. Nothing.

"I remember when I just became the governor, I went on radio; some of you would recall that incident where I said, 'Look, this School Governing Council, I would scrap it because I think people are using it to siphon state money.'

"I just said at that time that the pupils would not be paying the N3,000 levy; that the government would pay so that we could have a lot of our students back in school.

"After the radio programme, I visited her and she was boiling. She said, 'How would you go on radio and say that School Governing Council members are thieves. Don't you know that I am also one of the Governing Council members for the school very close to our house at Bodija?'

"She said, 'I've not been stealing but I have been putting in my own money'. I said, 'Mummy, calm down, I wasn't talking about you'. She said to me, 'I think you need training on public speaking.'

"So, you can imagine the depth of personal loss to me and, perhaps, the entire family. We can only console one another.

"When I faced any knotty issue, I would go to her; sometimes in the midnight and sometimes around 1 a.m. or 2 a.m. and she would say, 'The Gov, you have turned me to a nocturnal.'

"I know you all heard about the issue with LAUTECH. I made a promise to the people of Oyo State. I said, if you vote for me, we would take LAUTECH back. They voted for me and I was asked to come through on that commitment.

"I went to Mama and said, 'So, what do we have to do here? Professor Omole had taken it to one level.' And she said it was going to be a battle, 'Why don't you get an Army General and with my support, we can engage them.'

## Excitement as 18-yr-old medical student wins Maiden NDDC Beauty Pageant • Carts Away N10m Cash Prize

By Daniel Abia, P/Harcourt

**1**8-year-old Amaoge Bozimo, a 200-level Medical student of Nile University, Abuja, emerged the winner of the Miss Niger Delta 2025/2026 beauty pageant organized by the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC), under the leadership of its Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer, Dr. Samuel Ogbuku.

This historic event was part of the week-long celebrations marking the 25th Anniversary of the NDDC. The celebrations featured a series of unveilings and commissioning of landmark projects, culminating in a grand Gala Night held at the EUI Event Centre in Port Harcourt. A highlight of the evening was the inaugural edition of the Miss Niger Delta pageant, a platform designed to showcase the beauty, intelligence, and cultural richness of the region.

Miss Amaoge Bozimo, representing Bayelsa State clinched the coveted crown. As the newly crowned Miss Niger Delta and Ambassador

of Peace and Development, she walked away with a ₦10 million cash prize and a brand-new sedan car.

Amaoge who hails from Angalabri Town in Sagbama Local Government Area of Bayelsa State is the daughter of the late Chief Gordon Bozimo, former Chairman of the Board of the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC). Her mother, Dr. (Mrs.) Judith Tari Bozimo who spoke on the sidelines of the event, said "I sincerely thank the CEO of NDDC, Dr. Samuel Ogbuku, for this groundbreaking initiative.

"This is the first of its kind in our region, and I thank God for this significant milestone in my daughter's life. She has made me, Bayelsa State, the Ijaw (Izon) nation, and the entire Niger Delta region proud. We pray for God to keep and strengthen Dr. Ogbuku—a true friend and servant of the people."

The event was attended by high-profile dignitaries including senators across the nine states of the Niger Delta region among others.



From left: Bolanle Adereti, MD, Bofik Nig Ltd; Deborah Idowu, MD, Femadous Nig Enterprises; Bolaji Anifowose, Vice-President, Commercial, Olam Agri; Nitin Mehta, MD, Wheat Milling Business, Olam Agri; Sarah Orogun, Director, Francoro Enterprises; Moshood Quadri, Head, Industrial Relations and Human Resources, Olam Agri and Bola Adeniyi, GM/Head, Marketing, Olam Agri during 15th anniversary of the acquisition of Crown Flour Mills by Olam Agri held in Lagos on Thursday

## North not neglected under Tinubu, Afenifere replies Kwankwaso

• Says by 2031, every region will feel the impact of Tinubu's administration.

By Dayo Johnson, Akure

The Yoruba Socio-Political Group, Afenifere has described as baseless the claims by the former Kano state governor and Presidential candidate, Senator Rabiu Musa Kwankwaso that President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's administration is marginalising the North and concentrating national resources in the South.

It's National Organizing Secretary, Otunba Kole Omololu, in a statement, dismissed the allegation of sidelining of the Northern part of the country in the development agenda of the Tinubu's administration.

Omololu said that the the claim "is not only grossly misleading but also deliberately incendiary.

The statement reads "As a former governor and minister, one would expect Senator Kwankwaso to speak with facts, not emotions laced with sectional bias. It must be stated unequivocally that no region in Nigeria has benefited more from concentrated federal presence in the past decade than the North.

"During the Buhari administration—a northern presidency, which Senator Kwankwaso conveniently omits—critical national resources were disproportionately channelled to the North. The World Bank Managing Director pub-

licly disclosed that President Buhari specifically directed the institution to focus its interventions in northern Nigeria. Where was Kwankwaso's voice for equity and fairness then?

Road and rail infrastructure were overwhelmingly skewed.

"The Kano-Maradi railway, constructed deep into Niger Republic with no economic significance to Nigeria, was completed under

Buhari.

"Was this done for national integration or to aid cross-border movement of Fulani kinsmen?

"Meanwhile, under the same regime, the hell on which the senator travelled was not made heaven, the Lagos Ibadan Expressway, started by President Jonathan and designed to reach Iwo Junction, remained uncompleted.

"The Second Niger Bridge was still pending upon

Buhari's exit after eight years in office.

"Less than two years into President Tinubu's administration, Kwankwaso is crying foul.

"Perhaps he is unaware that critical road projects have been initiated and awarded across the North, including the dualisation of the Kano-Maiduguri Road, Sokoto-Tambuwal-Jega Road, and the Abuja-Keffi-Lafia corridor.

## Yelewata attack: 41 new births recorded in IDPs camp

By Peter Duru, Makurdi

Indications have emerged that 41 new births have been recorded at the Internally Displaced Persons, IDPs, camp housing persons displaced from Yelewata community after the June 13, 2025 armed herdsmen attack that claimed over 200 lives in the community.

The camp located at the Makurdi ultra-modern International Market also recorded three stillbirths since the IDPs moved into the facility.

The Camp Manager, Robert Nyom who made this known weekend in Makurdi disclosed that the camp lost two adults who were sick before moving to the camp but died of health complications after being catered for.

He said: "We lost two adults in the camp. They died of

health complications. They were sick before moving to the campaign. They were sick from home, but we managed them unfortunately two of them died. Outside those two the IDPs are doing very well. There is peace and calm in the camp.

"And 41 new births have so been recorded since they moved into the camp. We also recorded three stillbirths.

"Generally the IDPs are being taking care of by the government with support from partners like UNICEF, IOM, UNHCR, WHO,

Save the Child, Christian Aid, Caritas and several others including spirited organisations and individuals.

"They are all giving us support in several areas, medical support, food and non food item support, psychological support, WASH and host of others.

"And on our part we are relating and working closely with the partners to ensure that their interventions go well. We are also relating with new ones to see how they

can come in to assist. "And to ensure that the distribution of food and non food items to the IDPs is done seamlessly we have developed a chart with which we share food and non food items to them.

"The reason we developed the chart is that after considering their number we divided them into seven blocks. And they appointed their block leaders. So whatever relief items we are sharing to them we share it according to their blocks.

"We arrange the items in seven places according to the sizes of the blocks. The block heads will come with their block members, with SEMA staff who are supervising those blocks to pack the items that belong to their respective blocks.

"They move and share it among the individuals that belong to their block. That is how we have been sharing out both food and non food items to them. And that has brought a lot of calm and orderliness in the camp."

We'll accelerate energy, digital sectors — W/Bank MD

Emma Ujah, Abuja Bureau Chief

The World Bank has pledged to accelerate its support for Nigeria's energy and digital sectors, in order to boost the nation's economic growth.

The bank's Managing Director and Chief Financial Officer, Ms. Anshula Kant, made the pledge at a meeting with the Minister of Finance and Coordinating Minister of the Economy, Mr. Wale Edun, in Abuja, yesterday.

According to the MD, "Nigeria's reform momentum is both necessary and commendable.

"We stand ready to accelerate our support, particularly in energy, digital access, and youth employment, the pillars of a competitive, future-facing economy."

Ms. Kant, who led a senior delegation to Abuja, described Nigeria as a cornerstone of the World Bank's Africa strategy and praised the government's bold macroeconomic reforms, including foreign exchange liberalisation and subsidy removal.

The reform, she said, had restored investor confidence and laid the foundation for inclusive, private sector-driven development.

The Minister told the delegation the current administration was deepening economic reforms and mobilising private capital for growth.

He reiterated that Nigeria's priority was scaling growth through strategic investment in infrastructure, agriculture, and digital innovation.

## Police bust kidnap gang in Kaduna, arrest six, recover four rifles

By Ibrahim Hassan-Wuyo

THE Kaduna State Police Command has busted a notorious kidnapping syndicate operating in Jema'a Local Government Area, arresting six suspects and recovering four rifles, including two fabricated AK-47s.

The breakthrough, according to the Command, followed a distress report filed by a resident of Ungwan Ninzom, Jagindi Tasha village, whose son, Hussaini Ibrahim, was abducted by unknown gunmen.

Confirming the development in a statement, the Police Public Relations Officer, DSP Mansir Hassan, said operatives from the Kafanchan Division swiftly responded and launched a manhunt for the suspects.

He said: "On 24th February, in a follow-up operation, the victim, Hussaini Ibrahim, was rescued from a nearby bush with a gunshot wound on his leg. He was rushed to a nearby clinic for medical attention and reunited with his family."

Four suspects were later arrested in connection with the abduction. They include: Umar Yusuf Jabiri, 30, of Jagindi Tasha, Buhari Muhammad, a.k.a. "General," 31, of Bayya village, Ahmadu Nasiru, 51, of Gidan Waya and Zakari Saleh, 50, also of Gidan Waya.

Items recovered from them include one English-type AK-47 rifle and three fabricated AK-47 rifles.

Hassan added that investigation was ongoing to apprehend other members of the gang, after which the suspects would be charged to court.

In another development, operatives of the Anti-Kidnapping Unit, led by CSP Sani Zuntu, intercepted a suspicious waybill in Kaduna on July 23, 2025, around 6:00pm. The consignment, which originated from Jos and was heading to Gusau, Zamfara State, contained a fabricated AK-47 rifle hidden in a sack.

Two suspects who attempted to take delivery of the firearm in Gusau were promptly arrested. They were identified as: Abdulkumain Sani and Naziru Musa. They are currently in custody and will be arraigned after investigation.

## NDE kicks off registration for RHEI in Oyo State

The National Directorate of Employment (NDE) in pursuit of its mandate of combating the menace of mass unemployment in the country will on Monday July 28, 2025 commence online registration of unskilled persons nationwide for the second phase of the Renewed Hope Employment Initiative (RHEI).

Speaking on behalf of NDE Director-General, His Excellency, Dr. Silas Ali Agara ahead of the takeoff of the exercise in Oyo State, the State Coordinator, NDE Oyo State, Mr. Oke Paul Adegbeye, informed that the job creation initiative, aims at training and empowering 21,782 unskilled and unemployed persons nationwide in vocational, agricultural, digital and entrepreneurial skills training with activities in Public Works Sector.

He also said that, the online registration of participants is strictly for persons within the age of 18 to 40 years adding that the exercise will end on August 11, 2025. He therefore appealed to all interested unemployed persons across the 33 Local government in Oyo State, and the nation at large to log on to [www.nde.gov.ng](http://www.nde.gov.ng) or [www.nderegistrationportal.ng](http://www.nderegistrationportal.ng) with a valid National Identification Number (NIN), functional e-mail and a recent passport photograph.

The D.G. emphasized that over the years, the activities of NDE have been refined and strengthened to meet up with the current challenges and proffering lasting solution for job creation.



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# Class of 99 Govs to Tinubu: Without security there won't be progress

\*Tell President to create cottage industries in 774 LGAs, not N5, 000 palliative

By Johnbosco Agbakwuru,  
Abuja

The Class of 1999 governors have advised President Bola Tinubu to step up his efforts in tackling security problems in the country, saying that

without security, there will not be progress.

The governors also told the President to create cottage industries in all the local government areas of the federation so as to create jobs for the people and not giving

15,000 palliative that cannot sustain them.

The Class of 99 governors are colleagues of President Tinubu, who served from 1999 to 2007.

Speaking after meeting behind closed doors on Friday, at the Presidential Villa, Abuja, Chairman of the Class of 99 governors and former governor of Edo State, Chief Lucky Igbinedion, advised the President to urgently do something on the economy, noting that people at the rural areas are bearing the brunt of the harsh economic situation in the country.

On why they came to the seat of power, Chief Igbinedion said: "We came to see one of our own Class of 99 and to bring about topics about the state of the nation. We are glad that Mr. President received us warmly, and we spoke basically about the security situation of the nation, the economy, and, of course, agriculture. The President expressed his concern about these various issues that we came to discuss with him.

"We implored him to try as much as possible to create cottage industries in all the local governments of the federation where people can be employed, because if you give palliative to somebody today, what happens tomorrow? If he has 15,000 in the morning, how about lunchtime or dinner time, what is he going to do?

"And we also proffered our own solutions about how he can go about bringing about succor to the people. The people, especially in the rural areas, are feeling the impact of the harsh economy, and he assured us that he is looking into it.

"We also spoke about the stability of the naira, which he also addressed appropriately.

So it has been a very fruitful deliberation with Mr. President. And of course, he assured us that whatever suggestions, way forward that we might have, his doors are always open for such conversation."

On their assessment of the President efforts and what they want him specifically to address henceforth, he said:

"Well, the first and foremost thing is security, because we told him that without security, there can be no progress, there can be no stability.

"And secondly, the economy, of course, needs to be stabilized by ensuring the foreign exchange remains stable and people can afford. But what is most important was, let's create industries, especially cottage industries, that can employ people, rather than just giving out palliatives.

"We implored him to try as much as possible to create cottage industries in all the local governments of the federation where people can be employed, because if you give palliative to somebody today, what happens tomorrow? If he has 15,000 in the morning, how about lunchtime or dinner time, what is he going to do?

"15,000 cannot buy much. So I thought these are part of the really heart to heart discussions we had with the President, and he agreed with us to say yes, he's going to look into it, and we appreciated."

## Aliko Dangote retires from Cement coy

...Ikazoboh steps in as Chairman  
By Peter Egwuatu

Foremost entrepreneur and founder of Dangote Cement Plc, Aliko Dangote has announced his retirement as a Director and the Chairman of the Board of Directors of the cement company, effective July 25, 2025.

He relinquished his position as chairman and retiring from the board so as to focus more attention on the Refinery, Petrochemicals, Fertiliser and Government Relations, in order to drive the company's five-year business trajectory to a superlative height.

Anthony Chiejina, Group Chief, Branding & Communications Officer, disclosed this in a statement, noting that the board of Dangote Cement Plc has therefore announced the appointment of Mr. Emmanuel Ikazoboh, an independent non-executive director, as the new Chairman, Board of Directors.

According to him: "In the same vein, Hajiya Mariya Aliko Dangote was also appointed to the Board of Directors of the Company while Prof. Dorothy Ufot retired from the Board".

According to the statement: "Reputed as Africa's leading investor, Aliko Dangote leaves giant footprints as he retires from the board. His vision and tenacity redefined not just a company, but the entire cement industry landscape by becoming Africa's largest cement producer and largest exporter of cement and clinker in Sub Saharan Africa.

Aliko Dangote's journey with cement began with a bold dream: to make Nigeria and Africa self-sufficient in cement production. Through strategic investments in state-of-the-art plants, and a commitment to local content, he not only met that goal but exceeded it".

## End to needless killings in sight, Akpabio tells Mutfwang

ABUJA- THE President of the Senate, Godswill Akpabio has reassured the people and government of Plateau State of the readiness of the Senate under his leadership to collaborate with the relevant government and security agencies to bring to an end the killings in the Plateau.

Akpabio stated this on Friday, during the funeral ceremony in honour of late Professor Janet Plang; wife of the Senate Committee Chairman on Labour and Productivity, Senator Diket Plang, at the headquarters of the Church of Christ In Nation, Jos.

Akpabio was responding to the plea of the Plateau State Governor Caleb Mutfwang for an urgent response from the Federal Government on the needless murder of innocent indigenes of the state by terrorists.

In a statement by his Special Assistant on Media, Jackson Udom, Akpabio said, "as the President of the 10th Senate, I hear you loud and clear and be rest assured that your travails will be given the needed attention and response from the relevant agencies and the Egyptians you see today, you shall see them no more.

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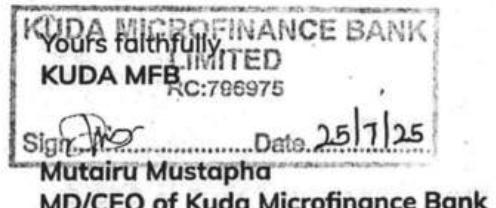
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## Clarification Statement from Kuda Microfinance Bank Limited

Kuda Microfinance Bank Limited (the "Bank") wishes to clarify that it is not the promoter or owner of the recently announced Kuda Multicurrency Wallet. This product is owned and will be operated by Kuda Technologies Canada Limited, a separate entity registered as a Money Services Business in Canada. This clarification is necessary following several media reports that have incorrectly implied that the product is being introduced by the Bank.

For further information, please send an email to [press@kudamfb.com](mailto:press@kudamfb.com).



Directors: Don Okhuofu, Mutairu Omotosho Mustapha, Babatunde Ogundeyi,

Ehia Erhaboh, Deborah Nicol-Omeruah



Left is Professor of Anatomy, Chike Anibeze, one of the newly inducted doctors, Dr Chidubem Nnamdi Mamah and his father, a former Deputy News Editor of Vanguard Newspaper, Chief Emeka Mamah

## Stop discussing politics, focus on governance, Obi tells politicians

- My focus is on pulling Nigerians out of poverty, not 2027
- Donates N20m to UNICAL dentistry for 5 surgical chairs

By Ike Uchechukwu  
CALABAR

Labour party Presidential candidate during the 2023 General election, Mr Peter Obi has called on politicians to stop discussing politics and focus on development of the people.

Obi who made call on Friday at the Margaret Ekpo International airport Calabar, after addressing University of Calabar Dentistry Students said it was high time politicians left 2027 and focus discussion around development of the people and investing in measurable areas like health, education and pulling people out of poverty.

His words: "We (politicians) must stop discussing politics and start discussing development of the people, investing in the real measurable areas of development such as education and health and pulling people out of poverty and we can't do that without investing in the people."

"Governance is about the people, service is about our people, by doing this I want to ensure and create awareness that we politicians should abandon discussing

politics daily and start discussing governance and welfare of the people.

"We cannot have a society where we spend millions to buy cars for political office holders and young people are looking for tools to get quality education. They don't have classrooms, they don't have chairs but we politicians are living like stars, it shouldn't be, we must dismantle it and invest in the critical areas of development. I was once like them, that's

why I'm struggling to build a society where a child of nobody can be somebody".

The former Anambra state governor who donated 20 million naira to the University of Calabar Dentistry department for the purchase of five dental chairs appealed to well meaning Nigerians to assist the students get 10 more chairs. He also urged the students to take their education serious as it remains their greatest asset in life for global competition.

Mr Peter Obi who politely declined to talk about politics and 2027 election, said, "I don't want to talk about politics, 2027 is not what I want to talk about, let me talk about how the average Nigerian can put food on his table. Today let me talk about how these children can be in school, how our primary and secondary schools can work, how the average Nigerian can go to hospital and be cured and when 2027 comes, we'll be there and I will surely contest".

## 18 confirmed dead as gunmen attack Ideato communities in Imo

By Chidi Nkwopara

OWERRI — It was a gory spectacle yesterday morning, as lifeless bodies littered some communities in Ideato North local council area of Imo State.

Saturday Vanguard gathered that no fewer than 18 persons were shot dead by unknown gunmen who unleashed terror on the defenceless villagers, Thursday night. Very reliable local sources told Saturday Vanguard that the assailants operated on motorbikes and dressed in "obviously fake military

gear".

One of the villagers recounted: "The attackers opened fire on people in shops at Ndiakunwanta Uno, Ndiejzie, Arondizuogu and Umualoma, all in Ideato North local government area of Imo State. The sad thing is that women, children and young men were not spared from the hot lead spewing from the gun barrels of the attackers. Another glaring thing is that the attackers operated on a straight line, which made their escape easy."

Although the attack has been widely condemned in the state, other respondents however blamed the attack on "Auto Pilot Group" which is believed to be a splinter group of the Indigenous People of Biafra, IPOB.

A housewife and mother of five said: "In Umualoma, we have counted nine dead bodies and I'm sure Arondizuogu has more casualties. It is a sad day in Ideato and now, we are no longer

sure if the state government is interested if we live or perish.

In Umualoma, a border community between Imo and Anambra States, two men in military-style uniforms arrived on a motorcycle at the bustling Nkwo Umualoma market square around nightfall and opened fire indiscriminately at villagers relaxing in nearby shops. By the time the gunfire ceased, six residents lay lifeless. Among the victims were one Nonso, popularly known as Ogba Bolu Ego, a young man named Jude Agada, and Chinonso, reportedly the only son of his parents, who had just returned home for a thanksgiving following a parent's burial.

"The assailants struck again at Ndiakunwanta in nearby Arondizuogu, claiming another six lives. Victims there included Obayi, and a woman shot dead in her shop. Several of the deceased were shot in the back, suggesting they were gunned down while fleeing the scene. The third target was Ndiejzie, another Arondizuogu village, where eight more residents were killed, including women tending provision shops.

## Presidency faults Kwankwaso's claims that Tinubu's govt favours South more than North

- Lists dozens of ongoing projects in North

By Johnbosco Agbakwuru,  
Abuja

The Presidency has faulted recent claims by a former Kano State governor and 2023 NNPP presidential candidate, Senator Rabiu Musa Kwankwaso, that the Bola Tinubu administration is concentrating federal projects in the South at the expense of the North.

In a detailed post on his verified X handle, Special Adviser to the President on Media and Public Communication, Mr. Sunday Dare, described the allegations as "wrong," stressing that the three geopolitical zones in the North have benefitted from an expansive slate of federal projects under the Tinubu's administration across sectors such as roads, rail, energy, health, agriculture, and education.

Dare in the post said: "Senator Kwankwaso. You are wrong. North not neglected.

President Tinubu has the North covered." He then presented a comprehensive list of ongoing and completed projects across the northern geopolitical zones.

Among key infrastructure efforts cited are major expressways including the Abuja-Kaduna-Kano expressway; Sokoto-Zamfara-Katsina expressway; and sections of the Sokoto-Bauchi-Aba expressway. Several roads linking key northern towns — such as Zaria, Funtua, Gusau, Sokoto, Maiduguri, Lafia, and Gaya — are either under construction or undergoing rehabilitation.

In the agriculture sector, Mr. Dare highlighted programmes such as the \$158.15 million Agriculture Value Chain Programme targeting nine northern states, the Kolmani Integrated Development Project in Bauchi and Gombe, and the Agro-Climatic Resilience in Semi-Arid Landscapes

(ACReSAL), a World Bank-backed environmental initiative.

He also referenced the revitalization of irrigation schemes like the Kano River Project, which was commissioned in 2023 and is fully operational under the Tinubu administration. The health sector also featured prominently in the rebuttal, with Dare naming teaching hospitals and diagnostic centres in Zaria, Jos, Katsina, Sokoto, Ilorin, Bauchi, and Yobe, among others.

According to him, more than 1,000 primary health centres across the North are also being reinvigorated as part of the Renewed Hope Agenda.

On energy and gas infrastructure, the statement underscored the 614km Ajaokuta-Kaduna-Kano (AKK) Gas Pipeline, the Gwagwalada Power Plant in the FCT, and the proposed 50MW ABIBA Solar Power Station in Kaduna State.

## B-R-I-E-F-S

### ESUT graduates 33 new doctors

The Enugu State University of Science and Technology, ESUT, has graduated 33 new doctors, including Chidubem Nnamdi Mamah, son of the former News Editor of Vanguard, Emeka Mamah.

The new doctors were inducted at the ESUT Teaching Hospital, Parklane, Enugu on Thursday. Eighty nine student doctors were to sit for the final examinations but only 33 of them were successful while 56 did not.

Speaking on the occasion, the Provost of the College of Medicine, ESUT, Professor Uchenna Ekwochi, said that the college which was accredited by both the National Universities Commission, NUC, and the Medical and Dental Council of Nigeria, MDCN, in 2010, has so far, graduated 15 sets of doctors since then.

According to Prof Ekeochi, "the College was a one Faculty College until 2015 with Professor Chike Anibeze as the pioneer Dean and Dr C.G.J.Orjiokwe as the Dean of the Faculty of Clinical Medicine. The college now offers BSC and Postgraduate Degrees in Anatomy, Physiology and Biomedical Engineering.

The College is presently made of four faculties including Clinical Medicine, Basic Clinical Sciences, Basic Medical Sciences and Allied Health Sciences, hosting the Medical Laboratory Sciences and Nursing Sciences and it will ensure the continued training of medical doctors who can stand the challenges in academics, research and innovative cutting edge technology in specialized and general health care delivery, both within and outside the shores of the country.

"The MBBS Programme had a very successful re-accreditation by the Medical and Dental Council of Nigeria with increment in training quota from 50 to 120 and subsequently to 240 through the ministerial directives".

The Registrar of the Medical and Dental Council of Nigeria, Dr Fatima Kyari, who was represented on the occasion, urged the new doctors to be professional in their dealings with their patients by being humane, diligent and exercising patience.

### FirstCap boss Ukandu delivers

### UNN 54th Convocation Lecture

- Tasks govt, varsities on collaborative efforts to develop citizens' potential

By Henry Obetta

The Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of FirstCap Limited, a subsidiary of First HoldCo Plc, Mr Ukandu Eme Ukandu, has urged the government to champion equity and opportunity by creating policies that reflect the potential of every citizen.

Ukandu made the call in Nsukka yesterday while delivering the University of Nigeria, Nsukka (UNN) 54th Convocation Lecture, titled "Educated to Rise: From Local Struggle to Global Strength."

He also urged industries to open their doors wider, seeing young minds not as risks but as reinforcements for growth. He equally called on universities to remain knowledge centres and innovation engines.

His words: "This is no longer the era of individual success stories. The future belongs to communities that build, institutions that collaborate, and nations that rise together. Education is the powerful weapon with which the world can be changed for the benefit of mankind. This can be done by fostering critical thinking, problem-solving skills, and innovation, as education empowers individuals and societies to address complex issues and build a more sustainable and equitable future. Education drives economic growth, providing individuals with the tools to participate in the workforce, innovate, and contribute to a more prosperous society.

"Good education starts from the family level. As such, families should inculcate the culture of reading and learning in every child so that they will grow up with it. Exploring education and being productive in life will be easier for them. On the other hand, the government should inject more money into the education sector because the current education budgets across all tiers of government are below the global benchmark".

In a remark, Mr. Akintola Oladejo, the Managing Director of Prestigious Homes Ltd, Lagos, and Chairman of the occasion, commended UNN for sustaining the dream of the university's founding fathers. "I commend the institution's management team, staff, and students for their commitment and sacrifices in sustaining the dreams and aspirations of UNN's founding fathers," he said.

### Constitution review: Clerics demand inclusion, honesty

Clerics from the Cherubim and Seraphim Church worldwide have called for a sincere and inclusive approach to the ongoing review of Nigeria's constitution. The National Assembly has said the constitutional review became imperative following the submission of several bills for consideration on the matter.

Speaking on the issue, the Conference Secretary-General of the Cherubim and Seraphim Movement Church Worldwide, Anthony Samaye, emphasised the need for honesty in the amendment process.

Samaye, who made this known at the annual Celebrating Seraphim Awards, CSA, held in Lagos at the weekend, added that Nigeria's political structure required urgent attention.

Also speaking, the chairman of the award ceremony and a Senior Advocate of Nigeria, Olusegun Fabunmi, urged the federal government and the national assembly to revisit the 2014 National Conference report.

He said, "The Confab report should be revisited because everyone was well represented.



FOR FREE, FAIR, CREDIBLE 2027 POLLS:

# Strip president of power to control judiciary, INEC — NIGERIANS

- *The judiciary and INEC are the problems of Nigeria—Activists, lawyers*
- *Government and political class are the stumbling blocks—Ajaero, NLC president*
- *There must be total overhaul of electoral umpire and judiciary—Prof Madubuike*

By Emma Amaize, Regional Editor, South-South; Dayo Johnson, Regional Editor, South West; Sam Oyadongha; Peter Duru; Jimitota Onoyume; Rotimi Ojomoyela; Egufe Yafugborhi; Ochuko Akuophia; Shina Abubakar; Steve Oko; Ibrahim Hassan-Wuyo; Ike Uchechukwu; Laolu Elijah & Deola Badru

Leaders, lawyers, activists, and other stakeholders in the country have demanded a constitutional amendment that precludes the executive arm of the government (president) from controlling the judiciary and the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) for free, fair, and dependable elections in 2027. Accusing the judiciary of selling judgments to the highest bidder and the INEC of declaring phony results, they also called for a far-reaching restructuring of both the judiciary and INEC. However, some stakeholders absolved the judiciary and INEC, saying the political class is the reason there are no reliable elections in the country.

Remove the judiciary and INEC from the executive

## arm's control, says Alaowei, an activist

Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Centre for Human Rights and Anti-Corruption Crusade (CHURAC), Mr. Cleric Alaowei, who spoke to Saturday Vanguard in Warri, Delta State, stated: "The clamor for free and fair elections in the country requires institutional reformation. To free the judiciary and INEC from executive arm control, a constitutional amendment is required. Judges should not be chosen by the executive arm and sworn into office. The same measure should apply to the INEC. It is necessary to elect the chairman and each of the resident electoral commissioners (RECs) to their respective positions. It is the National Judicial Council's (NJC) responsibility to choose judges. The executive branch should not be allowed to remove a sitting judge from office under the Constitution. Such authority ought to be granted to the NJC. The judiciary and INEC ought to have complete financial autonomy. There are numerous drafting errors in the Electoral Act of 2022. The Court of Appeal had held that some of these provisions violate the Constitution. A comprehensive amendment to the act is necessary to address those

issues. Without the enabling laws being changed to address the issues found in the current legislation, it is impossible to discuss free, fair, and credible elections in 2027," Alaowei argued.

## Without radical reform, 2027 elections will not just be flawed, they will be a farce —Adewale

Hon Stephen Adewale, an Activist and former Ondo state chairman of SDP, said "After the 2023 elections, the hopes of millions were crushed, not just by INEC's embarrassing failure to uphold the integrity of the electoral process, but by the judiciary's shocking inability or unwillingness to deliver justice in the face of overwhelming irregularities. Despite repeated assurances, INEC could not even guarantee the simple task of real-time result transmission through the IReV portal. That failure alone cast a long, dark shadow over the entire election. But what followed was even more troubling. Courts dismissing serious petitions not based on the strength of evidence but on legal technicalities that insult the intelligence of ordinary Nigerians. The presidential election tribunal, once a beacon of last resort, now serves as a cautionary tale of how justice can be delayed, denied, and ultimately derailed.

We can't expect a credible election in

2027 under this broken system unless we tear down and rebuild. INEC must be rescued from the jaws of political control. Its leadership selection process must be transparent and merit-based. Every official who betrays the trust of the people must be prosecuted, not protected. The judiciary must return to its sacred duty of justice. Judges should no longer serve as silent accomplices in the erosion of democracy. They must be courageous, impartial, and above political manipulation. Without radical reform, the 2027 elections will not just be flawed, they will be a farce. And if the people lose total faith in the ballot and the bench, what remains of our democracy will collapse under the weight of electoral corruption.

## Judges are the problem of Nigeria—Akene, a development consultant

Surveyor Furoebi Akene, development consultant and chairman of the Centre for Environmental Preservation and Development (CEPAD), Bayelsa State, said, "There cannot be justice with the present judicial officers in the judiciary. The judges are the major problem. When the courts are impartial and resolute, the abuse of offices with impunity will stop, and oppression will be history. There cannot be free, fair, and credible elections without critical reforms in the INEC that should be executed empirically. Also, the partial and oppressive roles of the security agents should be curtailed to the extent that all of them who commit human rights violations and oppression to deny people their voting rights should be prosecuted accordingly. In summary, the INEC, the judiciary, and security agencies should be drastically overhauled," he stated.

## The judiciary and INEC need exigent reorganizations

—Omare, former IYC president

Eric Omare, a lawyer and former president of the Ijaw Youth Council (IYC), said, "In respect of judicial reforms, the problem with the last election cycle was the interpretation given to provisions of the 2022 Electoral Act. Nigerians had thought that the reforms in the 2022 Electoral Act were to improve the electoral process, but implementation has become a challenge. I would suggest further amendment to outrightly address some of the weaknesses in the interpretation of the 2022 Electoral Act by the courts. I am of the opinion that there is an urgent need for reforms in INEC and also

Continues on page 11

## Strip president of power to control judiciary, INEC — NIGERIANS

Continues from page 10

judicial reforms. There is also the need to look critically at the background of people being appointed into INEC as chairman, national commissioners, and resident electoral commissioners. Though the current law says that they must be of unquestionable character and apolitical, that provision is obeyed in breach. This is because of the faulty appointment process. I suggest that the appointment of INEC top leadership should be removed from the President and be performed by a neutral body, as the Uwais Committee suggested.

### Morris, an activist, insists on judicial reform

Comrade Alagoa Morris, ex-scribe of the Civil Liberties Organisation (CLO), Bayelsa State, asserted, "Looking back and recalling the statement, 'The judiciary is the last hope of the common man,' and also juxtaposing what our society is currently experiencing with what some of us read in school about 'The incorruptible Judge,' there is a sharp and very worrisome contrast. It appears justice goes for the highest bidder and is grossly politicized. Politicians and moneybags smear the judiciary even in communal cases in court. The appalling situation calls for reform if we are to restore the fast-eroding public confidence in the judiciary. Sadly, everyone who wins a case in court would say justice has been served by reciting the statement, 'The judiciary is the last hope for the common man,' whether they got it via corruption or not."

### The judiciary and INEC need a comprehensive reform—Adima, an activist

A political activist, Mr. Blessing Adima, who spoke to Saturday Vanguard in Delta State, said, "Talking about judicial reform, it is very necessary, but how do we start the reform? What kind of reform do we require in the judiciary, because the president appoints the chief judge? The judiciary needs total overhauling, not just reform, but the major concentration now should be on the INEC because if we can reform the electoral body, it will go a long way to save a lot in 2027. As for the judiciary, we need a whole lot of time to overhaul it so that the common man can have confidence in the courts again. Look at Nigeria today; technicality is the hallmark of all issues. Nobody follows the law as it is supposed to be, and you see judges bringing up technicalities. For a credible election, the first step for a better nation in all election cycles is to carry out a holistic reform of the INEC. The reform should decentralize the INEC so that the resident electoral commissioners can declare the result of the presidential election in their respective states. Results should not be lumped together in one place, and later, they declare results different from earlier outcomes. There is a need to reform the electoral umpire, and we need to strengthen the law from where it was in 2023. For now, let us concentrate on INEC; if we can get it to an extent and the people are serious, the judiciary will have less work to do, and if it has less work to do, it will reform itself."

### INEC, judiciary need total overhaul—Prof Madubuike

Two time Minister of Education and Health, respectively, Professor Ihechukwu Madubuike, had doubts if

the outcome of the 2027 polls would be credible without complete overhaul of the electoral umpire, and the judiciary. He regretted that the antecedents of both bodies had made them lose public confidence, expressing fears that the 2027 elections might be marred by voter apathy. He said: "We are not sure Nigeria can organise a credible election in 2027 without overhaul of INEC and the judiciary. This is because since the last election, no attempt has been made to address the issues of confidence and trust. There is a trust gap in how we manage and run our elections. Nobody is sure of anything, and nobody is challenging that process. And until we challenge that process and fill those gaps, we are going to have a repeat performance in 2027. There is going to be an apathy because people will say, whatever we do, the result is already written. Both the electoral umpire and the electoral vehicle need to be seriously interrogated, reformed or totally overhauled."

### Politicians are the problem —Ajaero, NLC president

Mr. Joe Ajaero, the president of the Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC), said the real challenge is not INEC and judicial reforms but the government and the political class that undermine the rule of law. Speaking at the 2025 NLC Rain School in Uyo, Akwa Ibom State, the labor leader stated: "How can you hold the government and state actors to account when the rule of law is heavily compromised? How can you hold them to account when the principles of separation of powers in a democracy are consciously undermined? When the legislature becomes an extension of the executive and the judiciary speaks the voice of the executive, democracy is kept in abeyance and becomes dysfunctional to the detriment of checks and balances and national progress. We must organize, mobilize, and build workers' political power and use it to participate and expand the democratic space. As the 2027 elections draw closer, politicians are already scheming, not to serve, but to grab power. We cannot afford to be spectators. We must rethink our political engagement. Labor must build its power, not just to endorse candidates, but to influence and dictate pro-worker policies".

### Blame politicians, not the judiciary—Ambakederimo, S-South front-runner

Elder Joseph Ambakederimo, the convener of the South-South Reawakening Group (SSRG), said, "The politicians that have refused to conduct themselves in a manner that will not be questioned are the challenge we have. We cannot continue to pass the responsibility of conducting elections and declaring candidates winners to the judiciary instead of the statutory body empowered to carry out its assigned function. So, the buck stops at the table of the politicians who have not learned to conduct themselves within the ambit of the electoral laws. I do not believe in carrying out electoral reforms every time we have elections. What we have today is enough to provide an acceptable outcome if all play by the rules. We have near-foolproof electoral laws. However, the operators are the problem, not the

electoral laws.

Therefore, we must look inward and divorce our minds from this attitude of cutting corners and manipulation of the system."

### No respect for the rule of law, says Gbemre, an activist

Zik Gbemre, the coordinator of the Niger Delta Peace Coalition (NDPC), said, "Most times, we mistake the uncontrolled abuse of power for inadequacy of the law. It is not about carrying out reforms in INEC and judiciary. While there is always room for reforms, are we enforcing the extant law we have to the letter? The legislature and judiciary pander to the whims and caprices of the president in power, and there is no respect for the rule of law. People openly engage in election rigging through vote buying, rewriting of results by the INEC officials, disruptive violence during elections, and miscarriage of justice by the bar and the bench over election petition trials in tribunals. The extant law provides sanctions for anyone found guilty of these misconducts during elections. But how many people get punished? Instead, the judiciary sells judgments on election matters to the highest bidder. Until people get punished for compromising the electoral process, we still have a long way to go in sanitizing the system. People must be punished to deter others; otherwise, change all the laws, and it still won't change anything."

### All electoral disputes must be concluded before inauguration of winners

—Jakpor

The Executive Director of RENEVLY Development Initiative (RDI) Com Philip Jakpor said: "The desire of Nigerians for an electoral system that will produce credible candidates relies largely on judicial reforms and tweaking of our electoral systems as presently obtains. In fact, these are indispensable if Nigeria must ensure the integrity of the electoral processes in the lead up to the 2027 General Elections. One of our proposals is that all matters brought before an election tribunal against any candidate and appeals that arise must be determined and concluded within a period of 90 days before inauguration or swearing in of the candidate".

### Conducting all elections same day will minimize opportunities for manipulation—Inyali

For Dr Peter Inyali, a public affairs analyst and University don, "reforms in both INEC and the judiciary are necessary in order to strengthen public confidence in judiciary and ensure credible elections in 2027. One critical reform is resolving election petitions before the swearing-in of winners. This would prevent incumbents from leveraging undue advantages during legal disputes, ensuring a level playing field. Also, empowering INEC to conduct all elections on the same day could streamline the process, reduce logistical errors, and minimize opportunities for manipulation. Amending the Electoral Act to mandate electronic transmission of results is another vital step. Real-time, transparent result transmission would enhance accountability and reduce allegations of tampering, as seen in past elections. Rather than losing hope, Nigerians should advocate for evidence-based judicial processes and push for these practical reforms to strengthen democracy".

Many judiciary, INEC staff 're compromised — Ex NDE boss, Chuku Wachuku

Similarly, a former Director General of the National Directorate of Employment, NDE, Chief Chuku Wachuku, said both INEC and judiciary had been so compromised that they need urgent reforms. According to the Development Economist, some INEC personnel and judiciary officers need to be weeded out to purge the bodies of bad eggs. He said: "We should reform the judiciary, we should reform the INEC - throw away most of the people there because they've been so compromised. We should also be educating the public on how to defend their votes."

### INEC must be truly independent —Peretei

According to Hon Kennedy Peretei, former Publicity Secretary of the PDP in Ondo state, "INEC and the Judiciary are two key institutions that should have ordinarily helped to strengthen our democracy. But regrettably, in recent years they have acted as though they are an extension of the ruling party. These institutions have been unable to insulate themselves from the general rot that has afflicted all our institutions, be it education or infrastructural. Hence, for 2027 to have a semblance of elections, INEC must be truly independent and the Judiciary the last hope of the common. These can be achieved through meaningful reforms that can deepen our democratic process."

### We must promote ethical reorientation in our society

—Prof Oke

On his part, Professor Olugbenga Oke, Director of Quality Assurance; and Former Dean - Faculty of law, Adekunle Ajasin University, Akungba- Akoko, Ondo state said, "Nigerians get the type of courts that they deserve. Where are the judges from? Are they not from Nigerian society? Are we going to import angels from heaven? How do we appoint judges? There is no doubt that we have some dependable and incorruptible judges in our bench, but the truth is that Judges are from the same dysfunctional society and homes where corrupt politicians, corrupt teachers, immoral business men and other charlatans in high places come from. We want the best of services yet we are not ready to rid our country of mediocrity and corrupt practices. We all have to agree to promote ethical reorientation in our society. Until then we will continue to lament poor service delivery across the sectors."

### Corrupt judicial officers embolden election riggers, and their INEC accomplices — Fadaka

Hon Ayo Fadaka, Political analyst said, "Certainly the days are far gone that you expect the Nigerian Judiciary to conform to the solid ethics of treating matters before it on the facts and evidence presented before it. Sadly, honor and integrity once associated with both the bench and bar are a thing of the past, it is now so terrible that people sarcastically refer to our Courts as a bazaar market. These days Judges strive to be members of Election Petition Panels. This evil development has emboldened criminally minded election riggers and their accomplices in INEC to unabashedly rape democracy, even statutory laws that should govern the conduct of election are unduly put in abeyance and when you plead it in Court, the Judges either look away, rationalise it or even ignore such pleading in their judgement. Nigeria is in trouble, honor and honesty has deserted our hallowed chambers of justice, criminality and impunity reigns. For sure, this cannot continue unabated, since the society is dynamic, devastating repercussions will one day begin to manifest and I dare say the consequences will be dire."

Continues on [www.vanguardngr.com](http://www.vanguardngr.com)



# Private sector raises alarm as public debt races to N200trillion

• How Naira devaluation exploded debt profile



By Emeka Anaeto,  
Business Editor, Babajide  
Komolafe, Economy  
Editor, Emma Ujah, Abuja  
Bureau Chief and Yinka  
Kolawole

As the Federal Government, FG, ramps up borrowings, concerns are mounting across the various private sector groups and economy experts on the impact of the escalating debt on businesses and the economy in general.

Meanwhile, with recent National Assembly approvals of further borrowings Nigeria's public debt is likely to cross N200 trillion mark by end of the current fiscal year if the approvals are implemented in full.

It was recorded at N149.4 trillion as at first quarter of 2025, Q1'25.

Vanguard findings at the backdrop of fresh borrowings initiated by the FG during the week show that the current administration is set to surpass previous regimes in debt accumulation despite the criticism that followed the massive borrowings between 2015 and 2023.

Some of the findings show that while late president Muhammadu Buhari ran aggressive borrowing at the rate of N4.7 trillion per annum across eight years, current President Bola Tinubu is running on N49.8 trillion per annum across two years. This also implies that Nigeria's total public debt which grew at 39.1 percentage points annually under Buhari is now growing at annualized rate of 99.8 percentage points.

The breakdown shows that Tinubu's debt burden has been worsened by Naira depreciation.

While Buhari ran a foreign loan

profile at \$4.15 billion annual average across his eight year tenor, Tinubu is doing just \$1.7 billion annual average across two years.

However, when denominated in Naira, Buhari's regime ran on average N2.2 trillion per annum across the eight years, but Tinubu is currently running on N25.5 trillion foreign loan per annum.

With this development, Tinubu's foreign loan profile is growing at the rate of 130 percentage points annual average as against Buhari's 119.1 percentage point.

Further breakdown shows that on the domestic loan, Tinubu is showing far more aggressive borrowing as the growth rate hits 101.5 percentage points across the two years as against Buhari's 23.9 percentage points across the eight years.

This week the Senate approved a global borrowing plan amounting \$21.5 billion while the House of Representatives approved \$347 million.

Fiscal policy experts see the total public debt further ballooning to over N200 trillion upon execution of these approvals before end of this fiscal year.

The bulk of the indebtedness is with the Eurobond, World Bank Group, African Development Bank Group, Exim Bank of China, and Agence Française Development (France).

## Ripple effect devastating for small businesses — ASBON

Commenting on the debt profile, President of the Association of Small Business Owners of Nigeria (ASBON), Dr Femi Egbesola, said that the ripple effect of the rising debt situation is devastating for small businesses in the country.

He stated: "Nigeria's rising debt profile is a growing concern, especially when the borrowings are

not transparently tied to productive investments or infrastructure that directly stimulates economic growth.

"While it is understood that borrowing in itself is not inherently bad - if used judiciously - it becomes worrisome when debt servicing gulps a significant portion of government revenue, leaving little room for developmental projects or support for critical sectors like health, education, and MSMEs.

"At the moment, Nigeria is spending more on repaying debts than on stimulating domestic production or providing an enabling environment for businesses to thrive.

"For small businesses, the ripple effect is devastating. High debt servicing pressures often translate into increased taxes, multiple levies, policy instability, and reduced government support for the private sector.

"This weakens investor confidence, stifles productivity, and limits access to credit."

Egbesola further said: "To safeguard the future of Nigerian businesses and the broader economy, we must prioritize revenue generation through diversification, improved tax efficiency, not just increased rates, plugging leakages, and channeling borrowings strictly into productive sectors with measurable return on investment (ROI). "Responsible borrowing backed by transparency and fiscal discipline is the only sustainable path forward."

## LCCI reiterates need for revenue diversification

Also commenting, President of the Lagos Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI), Gabriel Idahosa, urged the Federal Government to pursue revenue diversification among other options, to help the country out of the debt quagmire.

His words: "The continued increase in debt stock is primarily attributed to new borrowings by the Federal Government and the depreciation of the Naira, which inflated the local currency value of Nigeria's external loans.

"Significantly, although the actual rise in external debt in dollar terms was modest, the weakening naira exchange rate used in Q1 2025 amplified the debt in local currency terms.

"Instruments such as bonds, treasury bills, sukuk, and green bonds continue to underpin domestic borrowing, which - while insulated from currency volatility - raises concerns about rising interest rates and the crowding out of private sector credit.

"LCCI remains concerned about the sustainability of the rising debt trajectory and urges the Federal Government to pursue revenue diversification, improved spending efficiency, and better debt management strategies to reduce fiscal pressure and restore macroeconomic stability."

## Capacity to repay should be a major concern

— Stockbroker

Also commenting, Olatunde Amolegbe, former President, Chartered Institute of Stockbrokers, CIS, said: "It is well known that the budget deficit projected for 2025 needed to be covered primarily through a combination of external and domestic borrowing. This new loan is probably in fulfillment of that.

"Borrowings from multilateral bodies typically come at relatively variable terms relative to commercial borrowing and this is expected to be the case for this new \$21.5 billion loan.

"For me, borrowing in itself is not a problem as long as the capacity to meet up with repayment obligations, as at when due is there.

"It is, however, important that we pay particular attention to application and usage of the loans."

## Borrowing could be fruitful if tied to reforms, projects — Egboomeade

Reacting to the new borrowings, Clifford Egboomeade, economy analyst and communications expert said: "President Tinubu's request to borrow \$21.5 billion externally and issue a domestic bond of N757.9 billion to settle pension liabilities is a significant move that could have both short and long-term implications.

"On one hand, settling outstanding pension

obligations can provide immediate relief for retirees and help stimulate domestic consumption, which supports economic activity. Similarly, if the external loans are concessional and targeted at productive sectors like agriculture, job creation, and infrastructure, they could contribute to broader economic development.

"That said, Nigeria's current debt profile is already high, with total public debt at N144.7 trillion (about \$94.2 billion) as of December 2024. Debt servicing costs remain a major concern, taking up a large share of government revenue. "So, while these measures could help address urgent social and economic needs, their success will largely depend on how efficiently the funds are used and whether they are tied to reforms that boost revenue and reduce waste.

"Careful planning and transparency will be key to ensuring these efforts strengthen the economy, rather than deepen fiscal strain".

## There is need for caution

— Abidoye

On his part, Tunde Abidoye, Head of Equity Research, FBNQuest Merchant Bank, said: "I believe some caution is now very necessary given the potential rise in debt service cost, and the inherent exchange rate risks associated with foreign denominated borrowings. This also has implications for the fiscal space.

"I would go on to add that it is becoming increasingly important for the DMO (Debt Management Office) to do a new fiscal strategy paper. The last one done stipulates a public debt to GDP ratio of 40%. Nigeria's total public debt was roughly around 52% of GDP in 2024.

"The new loans being proposed imply that the debt to GDP ratio will rise significantly beyond this point, possibly close to 64% of GDP."



With great pride and deep admiration, we celebrate your well-deserved conferment of Doctor of Business Administration (DBA) Honoris Causa by the prestigious University of Nigeria.

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May this new title serve as both a crown of honour and a call to continue leading with impact.

**Congratulations!**

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**DR. EMMANUEL EFE  
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**Signed:**

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## HAPPY BIRTHDAY to A Quiteessential Leader

I join numerous well-wishers in celebrating a visionary leader and dedicated public servant, Engr. David Umahi, as he marks his birthday. His commitment to advancing critical infrastructure projects across our nation is truly commendable and inspiring. I wish you a joyous celebration and continued strength in your service to the country.

# ANOTHER GIANT STRIDE FOR A MAN OF HONOUR

DR. CHIEF (BARR.)

## ANDREW OVIKUROMA ORU

Global Group Executive Director/Coordinator,  
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Your conferment with a Doctorate, *Honoris Causa*, by the esteemed University of Nigeria, Nsukka, marks yet another milestone in a life defined by visionary leadership, service to humanity, and nation-building.

This award is a towering reflection of the profound impact that conviction, compassion, and quiet consistency can have through the actions of one individual.

Congratulations on this well-earned honour.

From all of us at



# PROPOSED ANIOMA STATE: Okowa/Nwoko rivalry fuels division among stakeholders

•Why Delta North royal fathers should intercede

By Emma Amaize,  
Regional Editor, South-South

The Anioma people in the Delta North senatorial district, Delta State, may probably celebrate the creation of Anioma State sooner than they expected, given the turbo energy exerted in the campaign for the new state in the last few months.

The struggle currently led by Senator Ned Nwoko, representing the Delta North senatorial district, dates back over 50 years. The former premier of the defunct Midwest Region, Sir Dennis Osadebey, Senator Nosike Ikpo, and other eminent leaders spearheaded the move in the defunct Western and later Midwestern Region. In the defunct Bendel, and now Delta State, succeeding Anioma leaders continued the pursuit.

However, disagreement among the present crop of leaders over the setting of the new state is threatening the realization of the shared vision. Nwoko's proposition in his bill before the Senate is for Anioma State to be the sixth state in the South-East region.

The Anioma people are found in nine local government areas in Delta State, which is in the South-South region. The nine local government areas include Oshimili North, with headquarters in Akwukwu-Igbo, and Oshimili South, with headquarters in Asaba. Others are Aniocha North with Issele-Uku as the headquarters; Aniocha South (Ogwashi-Uku); Ika South (Agbor); Ika North East (Owa-Oyibu); Ndokwa East (Aboh); Ndokwa West (Kwale); and Ukwuani (Obiaruku).

## Where Okowa and Nwoko differ

Nwoko's proposal for Anioma State to be part of the South-East region is a major point of contention between him and the immediate past governor of Delta State, Senator Ifeanyi Okowa, and other Anioma political leaders. The arguments for and against the setting triggered a storm among the people of the Delta North senatorial district, with some siding with Okowa and others rooting for Nwoko.

No Anioma leader, including Okowa, is opposed to the creation of Anioma State; the disagreement is carving out Anioma from the present Delta State in the South-South region and adding it as a new state in the South-East region.

Senator Nwoko voiced a few



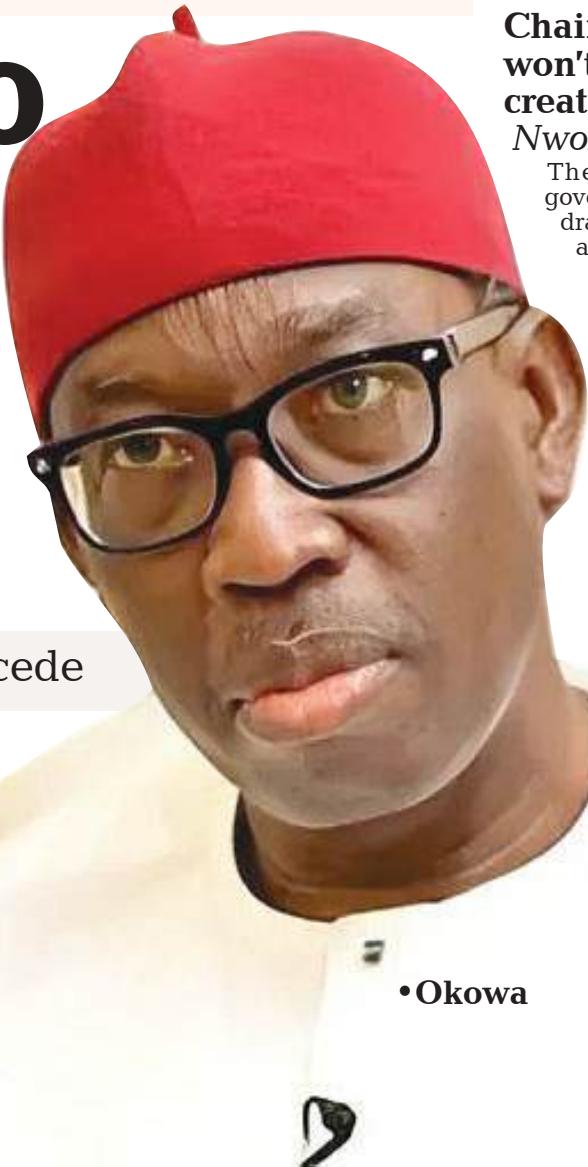
•Nwoko

hours after he defected from the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) to the All Progressives Congress (APC) in January, "I left because I want to be able to get the support of the ruling party in the creation of Anioma State. The governor (referring to Rt. Hon. Sheriff Oborewori) and former governor (meaning Okowa), who are the leaders of the PDP, are against the creation of Anioma State."

The senator did not reveal the details of his disagreement with Okowa and Governor Oborewori. Okowa, an Anioma son, has not openly exhibited disapproval, but sources said he is against Nwoko taking Anioma to the South-East geopolitical zone. Governor Oborewori is not from Anioma; he hails from the Delta Central senatorial district.

Okowa and some other notable Anioma political leaders were noticeably absent at the Anioma Stakeholders Summit, which Nwoko convened in Asaba in August last year to drum up support for the new state.

Commenting on the former



•Okowa

governor's non-appearance at the summit, Nwoko said, "I told Okowa what we are doing. Okowa told me he is supporting Anioma State. But he said it should be in South-South, Nigeria."

The Senate held a public hearing on the bill to create Anioma State in Akwa-Ibom State on July 4. A participant hinted that the organizers moved the hearing to the Ikot-Ekpene community following an alleged threat to interrupt the proceedings in Asaba.

In his words, "They conscripted lawbreakers to upset the hearing, so while some people are planning for the creation of Anioma State, others are using stand-ins to halt the program."

## Delta North LGA chairs deny Nwoko

A few hours after the conclusion of the public hearing on the creation of Anioma State at Ikot-Ekpene, the Forum of Delta North Local Government Chairmen in the nine local government areas dissociated themselves from a document purporting that they had endorsed the creation of Anioma State as proposed by Senator Nwoko.

They stated, "We wish to state unequivocally that we are not in any way against the creation of Anioma State, but that due process has to be followed. We neither saw, reviewed, nor signed the document purporting to support the creation of Anioma State from Delta State. At no time did any of us authorize any member of our management team or any individual to sign such a document on our behalf in our respective councils."

"As of today, none of us have held any

private meeting with Senator Ned Nwoko, representing Delta North Senatorial District, who is purportedly championing the movement for the creation of Anyama State."

"The creation of a new state is a constitutional matter of serious national importance and should neither be conducted by proxy nor enveloped in secrecy or misrepresentation of people's interests."

**Chairmen's blackmail won't stop Anioma State creation —Aliko, Sen. Nwoko's aide**

The outburst of the nine local government chairmen constituted a drawback to the efforts of Nwoko and his team, who left Ikot-Ekpene with their heads held high less than 24 hours earlier.

However, Senator Nwoko, through Barrister Festus Aliko, the legal head of the Anioma State Creation Technical Committee, issued a rebuttal to the council chairs.

In a statement, he said, "My attention has been drawn to a statement issued by the Forum of Delta North Local Government Chairmen disassociating themselves from a document

titled "Request for the creation of Anioma State under Section 8 (1) (a) (i) of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999 (As Amended)," which has been widely circulated across official and public platforms."

"While the statement may appear disappointing, self-indicting, and dismissible on the surface, its implications for public accountability and historical truth require a clear and factual response. Silence in the face of such deliberate misrepresentation would be a disservice to the people and the integrity of this process."

"First, let it be unequivocally stated: there is no forgery, impersonation, or coercion involved in the said document. The claim is false, reckless, and entirely misleading. What we are witnessing is the unfortunate consequence of local government chairmen abdicating their responsibilities to subordinates and political handlers, only to feign ignorance when the gravity of constitutional engagement begins to unfold."

"For the record, the said document was formally and individually transmitted to all nine (9) local government chairmen in Delta North. Upon receipt and full understanding of its content and intent, many of the chairmen instructed their secretaries or designated officials to sign on their behalf, a practice not uncommon in public administration, especially where delegation of duties has been authorized."

## What truly is the bone of contention?

Many assumed that the council chairmen acted at the behest of Okowa, who also defected to the APC with the governor, Oborewori, on March 27. He (Okowa) controls the political structure of the Delta North senatorial district, leaving no strong sphere of authority for Nwoko. His reported sidelining in the political leadership of Delta North is one of the reasons Senator Nwoko is not at peace with Okowa.

However, it became palpable that Okowa and Nwoko were at loggerheads when the former governor, after leaving office, attempted to consolidate power in the Delta North in 2023/2024. Senator Nwoko reasoned that Okowa tactically put him on the back burner with his political footwork.

*Continues on www.vanguardngr.com*

## Time to end this shame

By Emeka Alex Duru  
(08054103327, nwaukpal@yahoo.com)

Those that snigger that Nigeria's politics is never short of drama, may not be wrong. Even when the theatraclals tilt to the absurd, they are never limited in supply. I had in this space, on Friday, March 28, 2025, recalled a disturbing experience of governorship candidate of one of the smaller political parties in Akwa Ibom state, during the 2011 general elections.

The candidate had narrated that on the day of the election, he was accompanied to the poll by his wife, mother, and other supporters, where he voted for himself and was at least, sure that his wife and mother did same. But at the end of the exercise, he was scored zero in the polling unit. His shock was that even if his wife, mother and supporters did not vote for him, he was sure that he voted for himself. How then was he scored zero? That question was not resolved. That was part of the shenanigans in our electoral system.

But the most current in the awful series is the disgraceful drama involving the Senator representing Kogi Central Senatorial District, Natasha Akpabi-Uduaghan, on one hand, the Senate President, Godswill Akpabio and the entire chambers on the other hand. It all commenced in March when Senator Natasha was suspended by her colleagues for six months over what was termed violation of Senate rules after a seat arrangement argument with Senate President, whom she accused of sexual misconduct—an allegation Akpabio denied.

Armed with the orders of Justice Binta Nyako of the Federal High Court, which held that her six-month suspension violated Section 63 of the 1999 Constitution, which mandated senators to participate in legislative sittings for a minimum number of days annually, Senator Natasha made an attempt to resume Senate proceedings on Tuesday, July 22, 2025, but was stopped from accessing the chamber by security personnel who claimed to be acting on order from above. In explaining the action, the Chairman of the Senate Committee on Media and Public Affairs, Senator Yemi Adaramo, argued that even if there was a court judgment, the enforcement must follow due process.

The insistence on the so-called due process was what turned the National Assembly Complex into a theatre of confusion. The nearest to Tuesday's demonstration of shame was in November 2014 when members of the House of Representatives scaled the fence to enter the National Assembly to abort a plot to impeach the then Speaker, Aminu Tambuwal, who later became Sokoto State governor and Senator. The lawmakers on that occasion rose against the Executive arm of the government which felt humiliated at the emergence of Tambuwal as Speaker and worked to undo it. That could be seen as lawmakers defending the integrity and independence of the legislature.

But what has been playing out in the Akpabio-Natasha debacle does not in any way, approximate to protecting the legislature. It is rather, mockery to rule of law- the very essence of democracy! Democracy is about robust interplay of ideas for good governance and development. In democracy, plurality of views matters; those with opposing ideas and tendencies are accommodated and

•DURU is the Editor, TheNiche Online Newspapers, Lagos

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# The Saturday Issue

## When pushed to a wall...

By Martin Ugboma

For me, it has always come down to a simple question.

If our good lord was to call me, who amongst the Presidential candidates would I rather willingly leave my kids with for tutelage?

For 2015 and 2019, it was Muhammadu Buhari. As an idealist young man, I detested the lack of meaningful economic development from his days as military Head of state. So, I told my friends I would hold my nose and vote Buhari.

PDP made it easy by depriving the east the chance to produce their Presidential candidate, in a manner that suggested the Igbo do not count and were probably delusional to expect that the party respects a promise to present a Southerner for President. Atiku, their chosen candidate, had a beautiful recommendation from his previous boss and embarrassing names from the Economist magazine. It was a no-brainer.

From Buhari (Khalifa), I fully expected a frontal attack on corruption which for most of us had become a way of life. I was optimistic that the Police and Judiciary would be cleansed to create the platform for development. I dreamt that the era of weekend and midnight injunctions from my neighbor to stop me from hosting my daughter's birthday the next day would be over. I believed 2015 was not the time for economic policy, but sanity. Nigeria desperately required a cleansing of the system and a return to common sense and civility.

Khalifa took power. And for a brief period, body language was enough to knock some sense into the system. PPPRA no longer demanded \$1m payments for the allocation of 5,000 m/t of kerosene or AGO. The Police did not insist on their little bribes spread out by the giver in mint notes or direct POS transfers. Discretion crept in as we all enjoyed what we hoped was the calm before the rolling of heads.

We waited.

One,

Two,

Three months.

Nothing.

Nothing happened.

Not even a ministerial list.

The storm never came. Lagos to Abuja flights went back to being the target for cash thefts as all the Managing Directors of tank farms, owning Oil & Gas companies resumed the regular trips with their stash of cash for the PPPRA. The Policeman on the road resorted to his bribe being given with respect—smoothened out and handed over like an offering to the gods and not an unholy price of extortion.

Khalifa was ill, and understandably more concerned with mortality. He craved for peace with our maker, and nothing else mattered.

Not corruption, not banditry, not the growing convoys of ineffective Government officials. Service chiefs were still rewarded with life changing promotions without demonstrating capacity in their new roles.

So, we suffered.

Nigeria suffered.

I hear he asked for our forgiveness.

I forgive him. He built us the 2nd Niger bridge.

In 2023, I voted Tinubu.

He was the man for me as I relied on his track record in Lagos state, the ability to retain credibility, build performing teams even with people he may not like. His rise from former Governor of Lagos state to a political powerhouse is a study in resilience and politicking. Retaining the loyalty of many who have worked for him and building alliances and disciples from every nook and corner of our country. He understood how Governments create wealth. I recognized that a brimming pot would also increase the appetite of government officials, but then, the Holy book reminds us all that the laborer deserves his wages.

I was not fooled by the former Governor who had the phone numbers of all the senior prefects in secondary schools during his eight years in



Anambra state. I believed that was not his job as he had a Commissioner of Education and many other officers who could meaningfully apply that information. Micro-managing as President would surely not get us anywhere. He did not meaningfully grow the state's IGR, and so, at best, was just a good manager of resources. He built nothing.

The removal of the ruinous petrol subsidy, floating of the Naira and tax reforms I fully supported, though I recognize the haphazard implementation and the lack of visible cushions from inevitable consequences of these policies.

Butter disappeared from our breakfast tables. Eggs followed. Bread and rice, and now we battle with garri—the giver of life. It has been heart wrenching watching the broken faces when the cashier at the till gives us our bill at the check-out counter. Me? Ebubedike, shamefully dropping the Blue Band butter I had hoped would soothe my longing for the N14,000 lump of French butter?

While the masses suffer, government officials struggle with our musicians for attention in the social media space with heart wrenching displays of wealth and affluence.

Bello Turji still reigns.

Igbos now hold traditional weddings in Lagos and Abuja and Monday sit at home continues in the East because of IPOB.

In the Delta region, we still pay those who had robbed and bullied us to protect our oil and gas infrastructure.

And still, the Service chiefs trot around with shiny new epaulets.

Painfully, these failures are not the reasons I am now fully committed to voting for Peter Obi in the next Presidential elections. I have regularly joked that in Nigeria while Hausa/Fulani/Yoruba rule they expect the Igbo man to dutifully tag along, carrying their briefcases. But now, it has become obvious.

Jagaban is taking away the briefcase.

My people have accepted lopsided appointments to government positions. We have accepted that our kids must score 250 and above in JAMB for admissions their classmates get for a score of 190. We have accepted that if a Hausa/Fulani/Yoruba and Igbo man with equal qualifications move to Abuja, the Hausa/Fulani would be first with a government appointment. The Yoruba would follow. And many years after, they could call upon their Igbo friend to execute a contract given to one of their children.

It is our lot because we dared to fight the civil war.

It is our lot because we have failed to organize and think long term.

It is our lot because we are Republicans.

But painfully, it is now apparent that Jagaban has excised Igboland from his Nigeria. He has made it abundantly clear that the little we have should be taken and given to those who already have, so they would have in abundance.

I do not want my children to struggle to breathe in my country. I do not want them seeking a change of name and state of origin to survive in their homeland. I do not want them scrambling for crumbs from the table of their masters.

For this reason, just like I did with Buhari, I will hold my nose and vote Peter Obi. It is my hope that this choice will yield fruits that take us back to us back to the words of our anthem.

Though tribe and tongue may differ  
In brotherhood we stand  
Nigerians all  
Are proud to serve  
Our sovereign motherland

BY: MARTIN AZUBUIKE UGBOMA  
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## PalmPay emerges in World's top 300 Fintech companies of 2025 by CNBC, Statista

By Juliet Umeh

Fintech platform, PalmPay, has been recognised in CNBC and Statista's 2025 Top 300 Fintech Companies in the World list.

This marks the second year in a row that PalmPay has earned a place among the world's most innovative and impactful financial technology firms.

The selection is based on a rigorous evaluation of thousands of companies globally, assessing growth, innovation, market penetration, and impact.

This year's list includes a mix of global leaders, including Revolut, Nubank, and Ant Group, alongside rising stars from high-growth markets, underscoring the growing

influence of emerging-market fintechs like PalmPay.

PalmPay's inclusion reflects its continued momentum as one of Africa's leading fintech platforms. With over 35 million registered users and up to 15 million transactions processed daily, the company offers a comprehensive suite of digital financial services tailored to the needs of underserved communities.

In its main market, Nigeria, PalmPay operates as a full-service neobank, offering consumer financial services such as transfers, bill payments, credit, savings, and insurance, all accessible through its user-friendly app and supported by a nationwide network of over 1 million agents and merchant partners. The company also provides POS and API-driven

B2B solutions tailored to the needs of merchants and enterprise clients.

Founding Chief Marketing Officer at PalmPay, Sofia Zab, said: "To be recognised as one of the world's top fintech companies by CNBC and Statista is a powerful affirmation of our mission to build a more inclusive financial system."

"Through cutting-edge technology, deep local distribution, and a customer-first mindset, we have built Nigeria's leading neobank."

"As we scale PalmPay to more emerging markets, including Tanzania and Bangladesh, our focus remains on closing financial access gaps for everyday consumers and businesses, while expanding the partner ecosystem that

fuels our reach and impact."

As part of its broader expansion strategy, PalmPay recently launched in Tanzania and Bangladesh through a smartphone device financing model that serves as an entry point to digital financial services.

Group Chief Commercial Officer at PalmPay, Jiapei Yan, also said: "PalmPay is building a neobanking platform tailored to the realities of emerging markets."

"We are creating the infrastructure for a connected digital economy, where people and businesses can thrive through reliable, inclusive financial tools."

"This recognition from CNBC and Statista affirms our progress and also the scale of the opportunity ahead."

By Luminous Jannamike, Abuja

It's 6:14 AM on Wednesday, 23 July 2025, but this story begins the night before, in a cosy Abuja restaurant. The aroma of jollof rice, fried plantain, and beef still lingers in the air.

Clemens Westerhof, the Dutch coach who transformed Nigeria's Super Eagles into a global football force, sits across from Saturday Vanguard. His wife, Lillian, brings warmth to the dinner table. Soft laughter fills the air as the couple shares fond memories of their love for Nigeria.

"I must have a house here," Westerhof says with a smile, his voice filled with affection. "Lillian cooks Nigerian food for me and the kids, but sometimes I say, 'This is too spicy, give it to the dog!'"

Lillian chuckles, her eyes shining. Her presence clearly keeps the legendary coach grounded.

Westerhof's bond with Nigeria runs deep. "The people, the energy, the culture, I love it all," he says, leaning forward.

He even praises the firm orthopaedic bed at their Abuja hotel, a welcome change from his electric bed back in the Netherlands.

"That's what my back needs!" he jokes, patting his lower back. Lillian smiles knowingly. They've adapted to Nigeria's vibrant chaos together.

This intimate dinner sets the stage for a journey through Westerhof's past: a story of triumph, challenges, and an unbreakable bond with a country he proudly calls his 'second home'.

## A Mission Begins: Football, Discipline, and Dollar Bills

As the meal continues, the conversation shifts to football, the passion that brought Westerhof to Nigeria in 1989. The restaurant's warm glow reflects the nostalgia in his voice as he begins recounting the Super Eagles' golden era.

"When I arrived, there was talent but no structure. The players were strong, but lacked basic skills and discipline. That was my job. Discipline first, talent second; always my rule," he said.

He introduced strict training routines and pushed the players hard.

"After one fitness session, Jay Jay Okocha was flat on the grass and said, 'Coach, I've never trained like this in my life!'" Westerhof laughs, clearly proud.

He used creativity to motivate them.

"Sometimes, I'd bring out \$1,000 and say, 'Whichever side wins in training today gets this.' Suddenly, it would become a battle! It wasn't bribery, it was motivation," he insists.

He also offered \$1,000 to goalkeepers who made key saves.

"Back then, that money meant something. They dived like their lives depended on it!" he said, laughing. He always knew how to fire up his team.

## Fostering Nigerian Talent

Westerhof's influence went beyond tactics. He believed in developing Nigerian talent.

Finidi George's move to Ajax in 1993 was inspired by his performance in the crucial World Cup qualifier against Algeria on 8 October 1993.

"He scored the goal that took Nigeria to its first World Cup. That match changed everything," Westerhof says proudly.

"His brilliant performance caught the eye of Ajax coach Louis van Gaal. I helped Finidi grow and gain exposure."

Westerhof's belief in Finidi and his coaching approach gave the winger the platform to succeed, leading Ajax to sign him alongside Nwankwo Kanu, the beginning of Finidi's successful European career.

"That's what I tried to do; identify talent, develop it, and give players the chance to shine abroad. Nigeria has so many hidden gems," he says.

Then he looks down at the table, eyes gleaming. "That's why I always said, 'Believe in your players. They have the talent, they just need guidance and trust.'"

## Battles Behind the Scenes and Superstitions on the Pitch

But it wasn't always easy. Westerhof had tough battles with sports officials who didn't understand the game.

He recalls one exchange with a former Minister of Sports who questioned why he needed 25 people on a tour.

"The minister said, 'You only need 11 players in a match, why 25?' I said, 'What about substitutes, medics, coaches?' That was the kind of challenge we faced. But there were also good people," Westerhof says.

He also faced cultural differences. On a trip to Cameroon, players refused to enter the dressing room, afraid of witchcraft.

"They believed juju was everywhere. I told them, 'I'm white, I'll go in first.' Nothing happened. I said, 'Now let's play football.'"

"He's fearless," Lillian adds. "He'd walk into any situation and take control."

In another case, players found strange

# An evening with Westerhof in Abuja

• Gov Abdulrazaq visits him, Dangiwa, Dikko assure him over his house matter



• Gov Abdulrazaq with Westerhof



• Shehu Dikko, Westerhof, his wife Lillian, Housing Minister, Ahmed Musa Dangiwa

packages left by opponents from Ivory Coast at their hotel, suggesting witchcraft again.

"I asked, 'Are we playing football or casting spells?' We ignored it, and won 4-1," Westerhof laughs.

## The 1994 World Cup: Nigeria's Defining Moment

Westerhof's greatest achievement was taking Nigeria to its first FIFA World Cup in 1994.

"In Algeria, we were leading 1-0 at half-time when our chairman, Alex Akinyele, stormed into the dressing room and said, 'You're not playing well.' Can you believe that? We were winning!" he says, visibly irritated.

The players were shocked. Westerhof didn't hesitate. "I told them, 'Ignore him and focus.' Then I turned to Akinyele and said, 'Please, could you shut the door on the other side?'"

Lillian laughs. "He was so bold."

Akinyele later said he would deal with me back in Nigeria. But I didn't care, we qualified. That was our mission," Westerhof recalls.

He remembers how Nigeria celebrated.

"The whole country came alive. That was our dream, and we did it," the former Super Eagles coach said.

He credits Vice President Augustus Aikhomu for his support.

"I walked into his office unannounced. He let me in right away and gave us what we needed – training tours, bonuses, allowances."

"I told him, 'If I fear we don't qualify, I'll shake you now, thank you for your support and go back to Dutchland. But I go to USA with Nigeria. We will qualify and you'll come with us to the U.S.' And we made it," Westerhof recalls.

Nigeria reached the Round of 16 and rose to 5th in FIFA's world rankings, the highest ever for an African team.

## Fond Memories, Fallen Heroes, and an Unfinished Dream

Westerhof speaks warmly of his players and those who worked with him. He remembers Christian Chukwu, his assistant coach, with great respect. His voice darkens slightly when he mentions players who have passed on.

He recalls Peter Rufai, who died in 2025 at the age of 61.

"At first, I didn't believe in him. But our goalkeeper trainer, Van Iyke, did. Rufai worked hard, stayed humble, and became our number one. He was fearless," Westerhof says.

As plates are cleared, the mood turns reflective. "We didn't have the best facilities or the biggest budget. But we had unity. I believed in them, and they believed in me," he says.

For the final World Cup preparations, he chose a quiet, family-run hotel in the Netherlands.

"No officials, no distractions, just focus. Even the hotel owners' children helped out. It felt like home," the Dutch coach adds.

Westerhof's tone becomes sombre as

he remembers fallen heroes – Rashidi Yekini, Stephen Keshi, Thompson Oliha, Uche Okafor, Wilfred Agbonavbare, and Rufai.

"Peter was a good man. Van Iyke kept saying he was the best, and he was right," he says.

## Westerhof's Training Spirit

Beyond tactics, Westerhof was famous for his fiery training sessions. His shooting ability became legendary; powerful, precise, and used to test his goalkeepers.

"During training, I'd take shots myself. I offered rewards to goalkeepers who could stop my shots," Westerhof says.

He laughs, recalling one session: "I fired a thunderous shot at Peter Rufai. It went 'Zooooom!' Everyone froze."

Rufai, stunned by the power, shouted, "It is not war!"

The story captures Westerhof's drive, and the lively, competitive atmosphere he built.

"Those moments kept us sharp. I wanted my players to be ready for anything. That confidence was key to our success," Westerhof says. Many former Super Eagles players credit his tough sessions for the resilience they showed on big stages.

## Westerhof's Dedication and Humility

Saturday Vanguard Editor, Onochie Anibeze, who joined the dinner, shares another side of Westerhof's story.

Anibeze recalls: "I saw him spend his own money for Nigeria, out of pure dedication. He owned a small but lovely hotel in the Netherlands.

"When the Under-17 team was preparing for a tournament in Japan, and the NFA failed to send funds, he hosted the team at his hotel for free. "Imagine feeding and accommodating 25 to 30 players for weeks! Sometimes he changed Eagles' hotel and used his own credit card to ensure they stayed somewhere better.

"He insisted players deserved the best. He

negotiated with Dutch hotel managers so players only paid for food. That's how Eagles started staying in Sheraton that had a Dutch manager, Per Ingamasson."

According to him, Westerhof sometimes even bought boots and shin guards when the NFA couldn't provide them.

## Anibeze also reflected on their friendship

"We became close after Nigeria lost 5-1 to Algeria in Algiers 90 in the first match of a tournament we later won silver."

"I asked what went wrong. He was angry at first but later explained everything. Some players were unhappy because their friends weren't selected. A few sabotaged the team."

"His assistant, Sebastian Broderick, knocked on players' doors the next day, demanding training. But Westerhof told them to rest while he investigated."

"He later said to me, 'I have gangsters in my team, so I'll play the gangsters in next match, but don't report it yet!' He trusted me with the truth," he adds.

"If they don't win next match, then you can report it." Eagles kept winning, reaching the final where they lost by a lone goal.

## The House That Took 25 Years

One painful issue remains, a house promised by the Abacha government in 1994, in recognition of Nigeria's football achievements.

He only received it in 2019; a flat in Gwagwalada, a remote part of Abuja.

"Lillian and I want to retire here, but Gwagwalada? It's too far," he says.

He tried to sell it to buy a place in central Abuja, but the offers were too low.

He has appealed to the National Sports Commission, Chairman Mallam Shehu Dikko, Director-General Bukola Olopade, and the Federal Government, to swap the property. They are now considering it.

Only on Wednesday, Minister of Housing and Urban Development, Ahmed Musa Dangiwa, and Dikko promised to look into his request.

Dikko first welcomed Westerhof warmly and led him to Dangiwa. The minister assured him that Nigeria still values his contribution.

"Your legacy is deeply appreciated. We will do our best to honour your service," Dangiwa told him.

Though the house issue lingers, Westerhof remains hopeful that a fair solution will come, one that reflects Nigeria's gratitude for all he has done.

## Rekindling Nigeria's Football Flame

As the evening winds down, Westerhof's passion reignites.

"Nigeria can rise again. But we need people who understand football, former players, real coaches," he says firmly.

The dinner, which began with laughter and memories, ends in a spirit of hope and unity.

"Always tell the truth," Westerhof tells Saturday Vanguard. It's a principle that guided his leadership, and a challenge to Nigerian football today. "Vanguard reported everything when I was here."

As he and Lillian step into the Abuja night, their love for Nigeria is still strong; shaped by history, carried by memories, and burning with hope.

This is more than a reflection. It's a call to action. Will Nigeria answer?

## Abdulrazaq meets Westerhof

Sports-loving Governor, Abdulrahman Abdulrazaq of Kwara State traced Westerhof to his hotel in Abuja and spent quality time with him, discussing his days in Nigeria. He is humility personified. His passion for sports especially football knows no bounds. He still celebrates the Westerhof era. Abdulrazaq is also setting record like Westerhof. A few weeks ago Kwara won the FA Cup, the first ever time their team would ever do so since the creation of the state. Before then, they qualified to play in the continent in the first year of his administration. His reforms in the state have spread to sports, too.

The way Shehu Dikko, Housing Minister, Dangiwa and Abdulrazaq received Westerhof in Abuja made him proud of the work he did here. Now 85, he still lives Nigeria.

• Westerhof's house in Gwagwalada



## Aero boss, Ibom Air MD call for investor-friendly airport policies



Managing Director of Aero Contractors, Captain Ado Sanusi, has urged the Federal Airports Authority of Nigeria, FAAN, to adopt structured Public-Private Partnerships, PPP, models that retain national ownership of critical assets while harnessing private sector expertise.

Sanusi expressed dismay over the situation of many of the country's airports, saying they had become inadequate for modern operations due to lack of maintenance and reinvestment.

This was just as Managing Director/Chief Executive Officer of Ibom Air, Mr George Uriesi, called for a more pragmatic and professional approach to airport development across the country.

Sanusi and Uriesi spoke at the Air-port Business Summit and Expo, ABSE, organised by the Nigerian Aviation, NIGAV, at the Murtala Muhammed Airport, MMA, Lagos, themed:

### Investment Opportunities in Airport Public-Private Partnerships.'

Sanusi argued that effective PPPs would involve the concession or privatisation of terminal buildings and commercial landside assets, just as sovereign assets such as runways would remain under government control for security reasons.

He said: "One major issue with PPPs in Nigeria is the lack of clarity on what they truly entail. Nigerian government has already defined what PPP is, yet we often misinterpret or misapply it.

"The runway system is the heart of airport infrastructure and is rightly classified as a sovereign and security asset. Most PPPs do not include the runway itself, but concessionaires may be allowed to manage lighting, parking or maintenance, while ownership stays with the state."

On long-term planning for the country's airports, he added that it should include

airport redesigns, upgraded terminals and improved access routes to meet international standards and rise in passenger traffic.

On lack of inter-agency collaboration at the country's international airports, he said: "You go through five or six agencies, all asking the same questions. Everything can be done in one instance. Inadequate coordination among agencies causes hardship for both operators and passengers.

"Such inefficiencies could harm Nigeria's reputation among potential investors, especially when very important persons, VIPs, bypass protocols in full view of regular passengers.

"If those passengers are intended investors, they will feel that there is a breach of protocol. It undermines the integrity of the airport system."

Meanwhile, Uriesi said: "It does not matter what model you adopt, what matters is how well the model is implemented and whether it is driven by professionalism, planning, and the will to make it succeed. If you want to do PPP, then do it transparently and correctly. Do not pretend to be pursuing a PPP while secretly favouring a pre-determined outcome. That only leads to failure."

On building airports without a master plan, he said building terminals kilometres away from existing ones, with no connection to existing infrastructure, was a common mistake that reflects poor planning.

He said: "When you build the wrong infrastructure, you end up spending even more to correct those mistakes. We have made too many of those."

## NCAA seeks global best practices to close aviation security gaps

Nigeria Civil Aviation Authority, NCAA, has expressed commitment to improving the country's Aviation Security, AVSEC, oversight system by addressing audit findings and enhancing quality control mechanisms through global best practices.

NCAA, while partnering with the International Civil Aviation Organisation, ICAO, to organise a five-day national quality control workshop for the Universal Security Audit Programme Continuous Monitoring Approach, USAP-CMA, said it was a strategic response to gaps identified during the ICAO USAP-CMA audit conducted in March 2024.

In March 2024, USAP-CMA audit, which lasted for two weeks, scored Nigeria 71.4 per cent.

Analysts said the score was below expectations for an African country with Nigeria's reputation and globally.

This technical workshop, however, would address some of the gaps identified.

Speaking at the workshop, Director-General of the NCAA, Capt Chris Najomo, represented by the NCAA Lagos Regional Manager, Olubukola Teriba, described the workshop as a strategic response to gaps identified during the ICAO USAP-CMA audit conducted in March 2024.

Najomo said: "The training is designed to enable stakeholders develop actionable strategies to improve the outcomes of ICAO's security audit. This includes strengthening quality control measures, managing AVSEC-related crises more efficiently, and ensuring all aviation security measures are grounded in comprehensive risk assessment."

Also speaking at the event, ICAO's AVSEC Regional Officer for West and Central Africa, Mr Ademola Oladele, said: "Nigeria is among the most active aviation hubs on the continent. Strengthening its aviation security capabilities is not just a national priority, but a regional necessity."

## United sees demand surge, strong operational gains in Q2 2025

United Airlines has reported a second-quarter profit and grew both earnings as well as pre-tax margin in the first half of 2025 versus the first half of 2024.

The company had second-quarter pre-tax earnings of \$1.2 billion, with a pre-tax margin of 8.2 per cent and adjusted pre-tax earnings of \$1.7 billion, with an adjusted pre-tax margin of 11.0 per cent.

The company also achieved diluted earnings per share of \$2.97 and adjusted diluted earnings per share of \$3.87, compared to guidance of \$3.25 to \$4.25.

Total operating revenue grew 1.7 per cent compared to the year-ago period to \$15.2 billion.

A statement by the airline said:

"Beginning in early July, United has seen a sequential 6 point acceleration in demand and a double-digit acceleration in business demand versus the second quarter.

"The airline attributes this to less geopolitical and macroeconomic uncertainty and has updated its full-year adjusted diluted earnings per share guidance to \$9.00 to \$11.00, underscoring the resilience of United's brand-loyal, revenue-diverse business model.

"United's diverse sources of revenue contributed to its second-quarter results: Premium cabin revenue rose 5.6 per cent year-over-year; revenue from Basic Economy rose 1.7 per cent year-over-year; cargo revenue rose 3.8 per cent year-

over-year and loyalty revenue rose 8.7 per cent year-over-year.

"United's operational performance during the second quarter continued to lay a foundation for its overall success. Its consolidated on-time departures were highest and seat cancellation rates were the airline's lowest for a second quarter since the pandemic, and hubs in Newark, Los Angeles and San Francisco all achieved their best on-time departure for a second quarter since the pandemic.

"In June, United posted a better on-time arrival rate at Newark Liberty International Airport than all other major airlines at LaGuardia International Airport and John F. Kennedy International Airport.

"Importantly, United saw a positive shift in demand beginning in early July, and, like 2024, anticipates another inflection in industry supply in mid-August. The world is less uncertain today than it was during the first six months of 2025 and that gives us confidence about a strong finish to the year."

Quoting the airline's Chief Executive Officer, Scott Kirby, the statement said: "Our second-quarter performance was more proof that the United Next strategy is working. I am extremely proud of the team for executing a strong operation and navigating through a volatile macroeconomic period, while still growing earnings and pre-tax margin for the first half of the year."

## Experts brainstorm on actionable solutions for sustainable SMEs

By Prisca Sam-Duru

The maiden edition of the Lagos Green Economy Forum hosted by the Lagos State government, through its Ministry of Environment and Water Resources, held on Wednesday at the Shell Hall of Muson Centre, Lagos.

The Forum had thought leaders, innovators, and changemakers brainstorming on how Nigerian Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) can drive sustainable growth while exploring green opportunities.

Themed "Sustainability in SME Businesses", the event also created a huge opportunity for Nigerian SMEs to learn how they can lead the green transition for sustainability.

The forum featured speakers from various sectors, including the Lagos Chamber of Commerce and Industry, 7UP Bottling Company, Food and Beverage Recycling Alliance (FBRA), IHS Towers Nigeria, Technoserve, Sustainability Professionals Institute of Nigeria (SPIN), Nigeria Climate Innovation Centre (NCIC), First City Monument Bank, MTN Nigeria PLC, Global Shea Alliance, and many others.

The speakers harped on the need for Nigerian SMEs to key into conversations on sustainability and also adopt conversion of waste to wealth.



L-R, Korede Oluwole, Convener, Lagos Green Economy Forum; Equi Nwabudike, Co-Convener, Lagos Green Economy Forum, and Dr. Babatunde Ajayi, General Manager, LASEPA, Representing the Lagos State Commissioner of the Environment and Water Resources, Tobunbo Abdulwahab at the Lagos Green Economy Forum on Wednesday, 23rd July, 2025, at MUSON Centre, Onikan, Lagos.

They also emphasised how to enable, encourage, and empower SMEs with financial, environmental, and business management training to help them sustain their businesses, as well as how to maintain robust partnership in the sector.

Speaking at the forum, the General Manager of Lagos State Environmental Protection Agency (LASEPA), Tunde Ajayi, who represented the Commissioner for Environment, and Water Resources, Dr. Tokunbo Wahab, gave profound insights into government efforts at providing alternatives to banned items like nylons, and the need for vibrant organic waste management.

He said that the Lagos Green Economy Forum was meant to highlight the importance of discussing financing to drive growth and sustainability in the state.

Ajai further said that "The forum was to highlight the importance of discussing finance and bringing sustainable commerce into the economy of Lagos. Lagos has over 8,000 SMEs, and driving sustainability is one way of pulling more people inside and I think that's what it seeks to achieve, and we have done a good job at it."

He then explained steps taken as a city to drive sustainability in SMEs. "We have provided opportunities for them to get

financed to transition from fossil fuel to green power or green electricity where you have solar panels. There's the employment trust fund or loans for them. These loans help them scale faster. There's a ministry of wealth creation where there's a lot of funding opportunities and creating even equipment for them to scale much faster. So, I think that all of these things put together help them drive their sustainability.

"Also, women empowerment and poverty alleviation does a lot of work with giving equipment and putting women on the paths of commerce, where they can begin to earn something for themselves. That in itself helps them become sustainable as a people."

The Convener of Lagos Economy Forum, Korede Oluwole, also shared the essence of the forum. According to him, over the years, there have been conversations in the space of climate change and sustainability, mostly by states and federal governments, international development organisations, and the business community; mostly the large corporations, leaving out the SME sector. He noted that "Global reports have it that 80 or 90 per cent of the global environmental footprints are caused by the SME businesses. So we thought that if we had a group that contributed largely to environmental footprint and nobody had brought them into the conversation, it is important that we should bring them in. Let's start with educating and guiding them, and let's start with monitoring their adaptation and their transition into sustainability."

## Secret of my 24-year marriage —Omoni Oboli

Nollywood actress cum producer Omoni Oboli has attributed the success of her 24-year marriage to a crucial decision she made with her husband, Nnamdi Oboli, before exchanging marital vows not to make divorce an option. Featuring in this week's episode of #WithChude, Omoni said that this commitment has been the bedrock of their union, helping them navigate life's challenges, including a turbulent first year of marriage. Omoni emphasized that deciding to stay committed to each other, despite challenges, has been vital to their marital success. According to her, "From day one, we decided that divorce was not an option even before we got married. Staying married for over two decades. First things first, you have to decide. It's a decision," she added. The mother of three highlighted the importance of forgiveness in a successful marriage, stating, "there's almost nothing someone can do that you can't forgive, if you want to forgive. We all have to realize that we're all sinners." The couple's love story was fast-paced, with Nnamdi proposing two weeks after meeting and marrying four months later. Despite initial uncertainty, Omoni fell in love with Nnamdi's unwavering affection. Nnamdi advised young couples to take ownership of their relationships, emphasizing that "marriage is a responsibility. You don't go into a marriage expecting it to happen to you. You are the relationship. It's between two people; you have to make it work."



**Afrocentric Vibe** returns with big names and brands

The third edition of the Afrocentric vibe is scheduled to take place this evening, at Sinatra Place in Ikeja. For this unique and highly attended event's third edition, brands such as Chelsea London Dry Gin, LOGS wine, Coca-Cola, and Guinness Nigeria have partnered with the organizers. The show will be headlined by Samad, Dezign OVO, and Nimsy, while Dread, Josh, and Slimm will return as the hype men. Five disc jockeys, including DJ Presh, DJ Omoh, DJ Elsie, DJ Bigsmallz, and DJ Texas, will entertain attendees with music. The event, held monthly, builds on the success of the first two editions, which featured Klever J, DJ YK, and Barry Jhay as headliners.

Organizers have further spiced up the event, which is held once every month and kicks off at 6pm, with various activities including special dancers, rap context, fire dancers, dancing bunnies, face painting, strippers and table games.

Sinatra Place's management is behind the third edition, aiming to make each event stronger. "Afrocentric is our project at Sinatra's place, and the reception has been very encouraging. We've created a safe environment for pure entertainment," a statement from management reads.

Known for hosting music and entertainment lovers, Sinatra Place has welcomed stars like K1, Pasuma, Adewale Ayuba, Sir Shina Peters and Bella Shmurda in the past.

## Wizkid hits another milestone

Music superstar, Ayodeji Balogun, popularly known as Wizkid has added another feather to his cap. He recently surpassed nine billion streams across all credits on Spotify, becoming the first African artist to achieve this milestone on the platform. His most streamed song is the collaborative hit "One Dance" with Drake and Kyla, which has garnered 3.7 billion streams. "One Dance" is one of the top 10 most streamed songs of all time on Spotify and holds the Guinness World Record for being the first single to surpass 1 billion streams. In 2023, Rema's hit single, "Calm Down," recorded a similar feat, reaching one billion streams on the platform. Wizkid's most streamed lead single is "Essence," featuring Tems, with over 303 million streams.

## George Beke joins Grammy Recording Academy 2025 class

George Beke, also known as Geobek, a prominent Nigerian music executive, has been inducted into the Recording Academy's 2025 New Member Class. This prestigious recognition highlights his dedication to championing African music globally and shaping the industry's future. As the CEO of Geobek Entertainment, Beke has propelled individual careers and contributed significantly to Afrobeats' global recognition and commercial success. Beke's membership signifies the Recording Academy's commitment to global representation and diversity, ensuring all genres and regions are represented in the Grammy Awards process.

As a member, Beke can now vote in the Grammy Awards, submit music for consideration, and support innovative voices in Africa and beyond. This milestone is expected to inspire a new generation of African music professionals, showcasing the power of dedication and innovation in achieving global recognition.

"We are thrilled to welcome George Beke to the Recording Academy. His extensive experience, keen ear for talent, and dedication to cultural exchange make him an invaluable addition to our community of music creators and professionals. His insights will be crucial as we continue to celebrate and advocate for the diverse sounds that resonate across the globe", stated a representative for the Academy. Geobek's career has been marked by a relentless pursuit of artistic development and strategic market penetration for African artists. His work has not only propelled individual careers but has also significantly contributed to the broader recognition and commercial success of Afrobeats and other genres originating from the continent. His addition to the Academy's ranks signifies a deepening commitment to global representation and diversity within the organization.

## Etinosa Idemudia aims high despite challenges

Nollywood actress Etinosa Idemudia is working tirelessly to achieve her goals before the year ends. She has already released several films and has more lined up, including "Mind, Spirit, and Body."

Recently, she released "She Calls Me Brother" on YouTube, which is trending. The film, inspired by true events, explores platonic friendships and underlying feelings.

Etinosa noted that despite the current economic challenges in the country, her passion for filmmaking drives her. "There have been ups and downs, rewards and setbacks, consistent with every industry. But one thing I know for sure is that Nollywood is resilient," she said.

In her new movie, Etinosa said "The story was inspired by true life events to highlight the beauty of platonic friendships from the opposite genders and how underlying feelings can be developed from such friendships inadvertently. The movie stars the likes of Watson, Mercy Isiyip, Isaac Aloma Jnr, Zicsaloma among others."



Etinosa

# nollynow

## Doris Akonanya: Bold and daring physically-challenged actress

Doris Akonanya, a physically-challenged Nollywood actress and social media influencer has undoubtedly demonstrated that she can be sexy, daring and charming despite her condition.

In fact, she has risen above her limitations, demonstrating remarkable resilience and inspiring others who share similar fate with her.

Doris, also known as Doris Still Smiling on Instagram lost a leg in an accident, while she was 13. But despite her ordeal, the actress is living her dream and enjoying the best that life can offer her.

The actress has continued to showcase the power of determination and the ability to overcome her travail.

As an amputee, Doris is always on social media, creating content and entertaining her fans with her sensual looks. As far as she's concerned, she's the sexiest actress in Nollywood and her Instagram page is a testament to this claim.

Doris once revealed how her amputation was a blessing in disguise as she used to get paid in

dollars, making videos for white men who derived pleasure from watching amputees. The actress is even making more dollars these days, having upped her game and embarking on vocations in choice countries like Qatar. And

those men, whom she once lamented were dating her out of pity, are now queuing to have her again. In one of her Instagram posts, Doris declared that "Missing a leg, not the vibe."

Celebrating her birthday, the actress described herself as "a woman, who has turned every challenge into power. My journey isn't about perfection. It's about owning my story, embracing my body, and shining in a world that's learning to see beauty in every form. Here's to chasing dreams, breaking barriers, and living out loud," the actress stated.

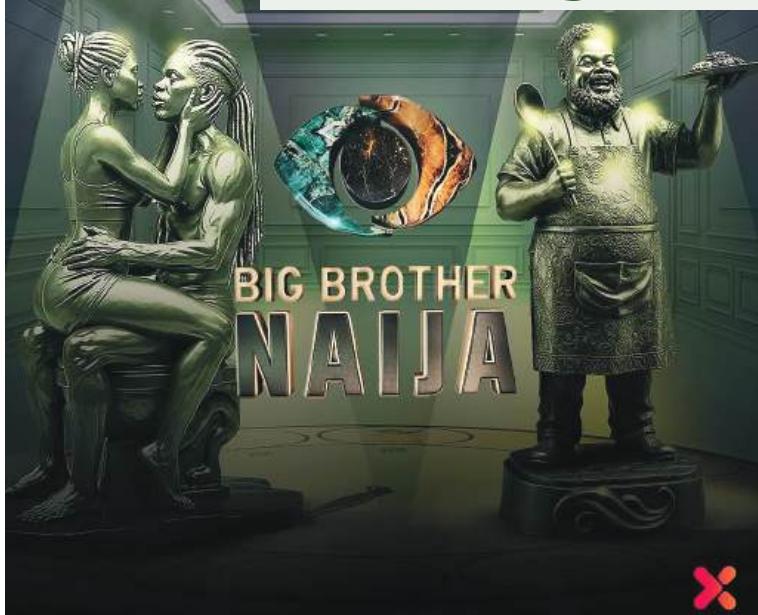


Doris

By Benjamin Njoku  
njokujamin@yahoo.com  
08111813022



## BBNaija Season 10 kicks off tonight



... as Showmax unveils star-studded reality TV feast

Big Brother Naija, Africa's most-loved reality show, returns for its 10th season tonight and Showmax will once again stream the show live to audiences across Africa. Set to premiere over two nights on Saturday, July 26, and Sunday, July 27, 2025, the new season promises 10 weeks of captivating drama, strategic gameplay, and unparalleled entertainment, culminating in the grand finale on Sunday, October 5, 2025.

Fans can enjoy the full BBNaija experience on Showmax, including the 24/7 live stream, daily highlight episodes, Sunday eviction shows, and other key moments throughout the season. Ebuka Obi-Uchendu is returning as host and will guide viewers through every twist and turn of the season. This 10th season also has the highest prize at stake – valued at a whopping N150 million. For a show that has launched the careers of some of Nigeria's biggest media personalities and shaped pop culture for nearly a decade, the stakes are higher than ever this season.

But BBNaija is just one part of the reality TV feast on Showmax this month. Hot on the heels of BBNaija is "Nelly & Ashanti: We Belong Together." The docuseries chronicles the rekindled romance between the early 2000s R&B power couple, reunited in 2023, married, and being parents since July 2024. Fans get an intimate view into studio sessions, parenting, and the delicate dance of balancing celebrity life with family.

Also streaming is Love Island: Beyond the Villa, which picks up where Love Island USA Season 6 left off. It follows fan favourites as they transition into life in Los Angeles, navigating influencer deals, evolving friendships, and romantic entanglements off-camera. More romance and drama await with Love Island USA Season 7, which begins streaming on Thursday, July 31. Seasons shift from island villas to paradise resorts in Bachelor in Paradise Season 10. This time set in Costa Rica, the series features contestants from The Bachelor, The Bachelorette, and The Golden Bachelor. With the first-ever cash prize and secret swipes, it promises bold connections and new drama.

The Real Housewives franchise continues to deliver multiple doses of glam and conflict.

## Fatimah Gimsay: Championing bold African storytelling

Nigerian screenwriter, director, and producer, Fatimah Binta Gimsay has made a significant impact on the African entertainment landscape with her growing body of work. With over five years of experience, Fatimah, the founder of Hello July Films, has progressed from writer and story researcher to Head Writer, contributing to over 40,000 minutes of primetime television.

Her writing credits include critically acclaimed titles such as Africa Magic's "Battleground," "Riona," and Season 5 of "MTV Shuga Naija." She has also served as script editor for the Africa Magic Viewers' Choice Awards (AMVCA)-winning "Slum King" and other notable series. Fatimah's creative influence extends behind the scenes, having worked as Story Editor and Head Writer for various projects.

Her background in Public Relations has enriched her storytelling approach. She has produced award-winning short films, including "Ijo" and "Fine Girl," known for their emotional depth and strong female voices.

Through Hello July Films, Fatimah supports the next generation of Nollywood storytellers via regular writing intensives and mentorship programs. Her latest project, "Lowkey Adults," is a Young Adult film developed in collaboration with rising star Susan Pwajok.

Speaking on her journey so far, the screen

writer said that working on TV series has been memorable. "The good thing is storytelling is a muscle, so the more you tell it, the more you build that muscle, and that's literally how it's evolved from project to project, keep exercising that muscle, keep repeating the formula until it becomes part of you," she said.

Fatimah's creative influence extends behind the scenes, having worked as Story Editor for 'Unscripted' and as head writer for 'Checkout', Africa Magic's first workplace dramedy.



Fatimah

## Uju Okoli: A Talented Nollywood Actress Shining Bright

Uju Okoli is one of Nigeria's finest actresses, known for her exceptional acting skills and ability to infuse depth into her roles. Since her debut in 2003, starring in the movie "No More War," she has steadily risen in the industry, starring in several films and television shows. Okoli has earned accolades and praise from fans and critics alike and has also ventured into directing movies.

Her talent and dedication have earned her a reputation as one of Nollywood's most sought-after actresses. Okoli's acting prowess has seen her star alongside Nollywood greats like Yul Edochie, Liz Benson, and Mercy Johnson. Okoli's excellent performance in movies is a testament to her burgeoning talent and future potential in the industry.

For her admirers, Okoli brings a kind of fresh energy to the screen, earning her the title of a true screen goddess.

Notably, she has maintained a controversy-free career, focusing on her craft rather than relying on her sex appeal for attention. Many see her as a promising talent who could follow in the footsteps of Genevieve Nnaji and Omotola Jalade-Ekeinde.

# IN THE HIGH COURT OF IMO STATE OF NIGERIA IN THE HIGH COURT OF MBAISE JUDICIAL DIVISION HOLDEN AT AHIAZU MBAISE

IN THE HIGH COURT OF IMO STATE OF NIGERIA  
IN THE HIGH COURT OF MBAISE JUDICIAL DIVISION  
HOLDEN AT AHIAZU MBAISE

BEFORE HIS LORDSHIP, HON. JUSTICE MIKE ONYEKACHI – J.  
THIS FRIDAY, THE 25<sup>TH</sup> DAY OF JULY, 2025.

BETWEEN

SUIT NO: HAM/156/2025

1. REGISTERED TRUSTEES OF NBM OF AFRICA  
2. CHIEF OLOROGUN ESE KAKOR  
3. IKECHI OPARA (NBM ZONAL COORDINATOR,  
MBAISE)

AND

1. BEMIGHO EYEYOIBO  
2. AKEEM ZIBIRI  
3. BARR. ISIMEME JESSE IRIOGBE  
4. HOPE ALIYU  
5. DR. ANTHONY ORUNKOYA ("AKA" TONY MASAKA)  
6. STATE SECURITY SERVICES,  
7. NIGERIA POLICE FORCE.

PLAINTIFFS/  
APPLICANTS }  
DEFENDANTS }

## ORDER OF THE COURT

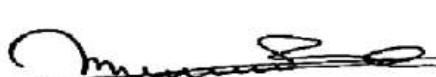
UPON this Motion Ex-Parte filed on the 24<sup>th</sup> day of July, 2025, brought pursuant to Section 6(6)(b) of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999 (as amended), Order 39 Rules 1(1) and (2) and 3(1) and (2) of the High Court of Imo State (Civil Procedure) Rules, 2017 Supported by an Affidavit of 15 Paragraphs and a Written Address AND AFTER HEARING EZEKWESIRI . U. NWAUWA ESQ. Counsel for the Plaintiffs/Applicants .

### THE HONOURABLE COURT ORDERS AS FOLLOWS:

1. THAT the application is granted as prayed, the 1<sup>ST</sup> – 5<sup>TH</sup> Defendants whether by themselves, their agents, loyalists, or any person acting under their instruction or authority are restrained from proceeding to conduct, organize, convene, or participate in any manner whatsoever in the planned parallel National Convention of the Neo Black Movement (NBM) of Africa in Ijebu-Ode, Ogun State or in any other part of Nigeria, on July 26, 2025 or on any other date(s) at all, pending the hearing and determination of the motion on notice for interlocutory injunction.

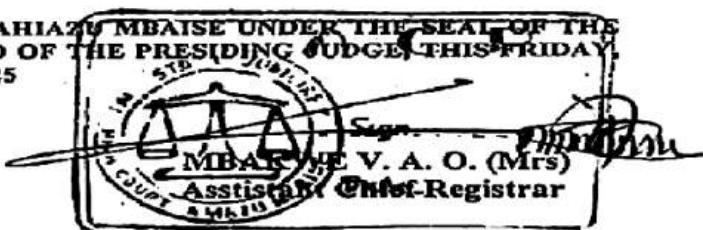
2. An Order directing the 6<sup>TH</sup> and 7<sup>TH</sup> Defendants to enforce the orders of this Honourable Court.

3. LEAVE is granted to the Plaintiffs/Applicants to serve the originating processes in this suit, the orders of interim injunction made by this Honourable Court, and all other processes in this suit, on the Defendants by substituted means, to wit; by publication in a national newspaper.

  
HON JUSTICE  
MIKE ONYEKACHI  
JUDGE

4. The return date of this Suit is fixed for the 30<sup>TH</sup> day of July, 2025 for HEARING OF THE MOTION ON NOTICE.

ISSUED AT HIGH COURT AHIAZU MBAISE UNDER THE SEAL OF THE COURT AND IN THE HAND OF THE PRESIDING JUDGE, THIS FRIDAY,  
THE 25<sup>TH</sup> DAY OF JULY, 2025



By Juliet Ebirim

juliet.ebirim@gmail.com

08137897935

# PEOPLES Places

## Ijeoma Ubosi celebrates milestone

Seasoned businesswoman, Ijeoma Ubosi, has made a name for herself in the cutthroat fashion industry. From modest beginnings, her luxury fashion brand, Kontessa, has blossomed into an empire. Last Friday, the visionary CEO hosted an elegant celebration to mark her company's 25th anniversary. The event which held in Victoria Island, Lagos, brought together high-profile dignitaries, fashion enthusiasts and clients, including former Governor of Anambra state and presidential aspirant, Peter Obi and his wife Margaret Obi, as well as Pastor Ituah Ighodalo.

The evening themed "25 Years of Style – Celebrating the Kontessa Legacy," began with a thanksgiving session and a ministration, followed by panel discussions moderated by Ifunaya Igwe, featuring Audrey Joe Ezigbo and Helen Ofili. This was followed by the introduction of the 25th Anniversary Kontessa Limited Edition Collection to an enthusiastic audience. The festivities featured awards presentation, raffle draw, a comedy interlude by Dan D'Humorous, and a symbolic cake-cutting ceremony. There were dynamic musical performances by the Loud Urban Choir and "Mr. P" of P-Square.

In her closing remarks, Ubosi emphasized that the celebration was not merely to reflect on past achievements but "a bold step into the next era of timeless style, excellence and innovation."

## How Prada Uzodimma is empowering next generation of lawyers



•Prada Uzodimma flanked by some PUSG beneficiaries

Amidst the customary pomp and flair of the Nigerian Law School's 2025 Call to Bar ceremony which held recently, a distinct group of 15 graduates stood out. They were beneficiaries of the Prada Uzodimma Law School (PUSG). Drawn from across Nigeria, this group represent a growing number of aspiring legal whose academic journeys were supported by the four-year-old initiative.

For Dr. Prada Uzodimma, founder of the PUSG, it was not just a ceremonial occasion, but milestone. Inspired by her experience as a law student who witnessed peers drop out due to hardship, she launched the scholarship in 2021 to prevent talented graduates from being derailed by tuition fees.

The initiative, which began by supporting five students in its inaugural year, has demonstrated significant expansion. In 2022, the program helped 10 individuals, a number that doubled to 15 in 2023. In an announcement earlier this year, it unveiled its largest cohort yet—20 scholars for the 2024 class, selected from diverse backgrounds, bringing the total number of beneficiaries to over 50, with 30 already practicing as lawyers.

As the 2023 cohorts kickstart their legal careers, Uzodimma has expressed her intention to further expand the program. "We are building a generation of lawyers who understand the value of opportunity and who will fight to extend that opportunity to others," she stated. The initiative has garnered recognition from prominent legal and government officials, including Professor Isa Hayatu Chiroma, Director General of the Nigerian Law School and former Attorney General Abubakar Malami, SAN.

## Owolabi Salis' remarkable exploits

New York-based lawyer and accountant, Owolabi Salis, recently added a remarkable milestone to his name, by becoming the first Nigerian to travel to space. He was one of six private astronauts aboard Blue Origin's NS-33 suborbital mission, a suborbital flight that crossed the Kármán Line, the internationally recognized boundary of space. Salis also holds the distinction of being the first Black African to visit both the Arctic and Antarctic in a single season.

Salis, who hails from Ikorodu, Lagos is a man of many hats. Beyond his recent explorations, he holds dual qualifications as an attorney and a chartered accountant, with professional licences in both the United States and Nigeria.

Committed to philanthropy and advocacy, he is the visionary behind the Niger Delta People Development organization. He established skill acquisition centers in Lagos and developed a mini-stadium and accommodation in Ikorodu.

Over the years, Salis has also been a recurring name in Lagos politics. Despite not being elected, he has maintained a focus on interventions for the underprivileged.

His contributions have been recognized by various institutions and he holds over 20 chieftaincy titles across Nigeria. Salis is also the author of "Equitocracy," a book about the principles of fairness and balance in democratic governance. He also shares family ties with late Professor Ayodele Awojobi.



•Ijeoma Ubosi

## Abiriba meets Haiti, as Ireke, Chrystelle wed in New Jersey

The Nigerian community in New Jersey recently witnessed a celebration of love, culture and unity as Christelle, a Haitian bride, said "I do" to her Nigerian groom, Ireke, in a heartwarming wedding ceremony that beautifully bridged two rich heritages.

The solemnization of holy matrimony took place at the St. Anthony's Catholic Church, New Jersey, where family, friends, and well-wishers gathered to celebrate the sacred union. Chrystelle was every bit the picture of happiness as she joined hands with her Abia State-born sweetheart, Ireke, from Abiriba Enachioken ancient kingdom.

The ceremony was followed by a fairytale-like reception at the Tide Estate, New Jersey. A truly multicultural affair, the event was a sensory delight that featured a seamless blend of African and Caribbean culture — vivid colors, intricate fashion and an abundance of traditional cuisine.

Anchored by MC Henry Asusu, DJs Ted Bounce and FreshyK brought the dancefloor to life, spinning an energetic mix that had guests dancing well into the evening.

## Nigerian Idol winner, Purp begins post-show journey with courtesy visit

Nigerian Idol Season 10 winner, Anu Agosa, popularly known as Purp recently paid a courtesy visit to Rite Foods Limited, expressing gratitude to the company and its flagship brand, Bigi, for their ongoing support of the music competition.

Joined by the show's runner-up, Raymu, Purp commended the brand's five-year sponsorship of the show, describing it as a platform that continues to unlock opportunities for aspiring talents across the country.

"This platform has changed my life," said the 25-year-old singer, who hails from Lagos. "From the early days in church choirs to theatre stages, I've always dreamt of moments like this.

Bigi didn't just sponsor a show, they sponsored dreams, and I'm deeply thankful."

Purp's journey to stardom is rooted in a strong musical background, shaped by gospel influences and a mother who led church choirs. Her performances throughout the season earned her not only the winning title but also a prize package including a brand-new SUV, 30 million in cash, a DStv Explora with a one-year premium subscription, and a recording contract.

Rite Foods' Managing Director and CEO, Seleem Adegunwa, welcomed Purp and reiterated the company's dedication to supporting youth empowerment and creative growth.

"We believe in platforms that reflect our values of innovation, excellence, and accountability. Nigerian Idol is one of such platforms and we're proud to be nurturing tomorrow's icons," Adegunwa stated.

He applauded Purp's discipline and artistry, urging her to stay grounded and focused as her professional music career begins. "You've inspired a generation," he said. "Now the real journey begins, and you will always have us rooting for you."



•Nigerian Idol Season 10 winner, Purp

•Owolabi Salis

## Five reasons why Nigeria can beat Morocco to win a 10th title

Nigeria will take on hosts Morocco in the final of the CAF Women's Africa Cup of Nations 2024 at the Olympic Stadium in Rabat.

For the Atlas Lionesses, it's a second consecutive appearance in the women's football final as they look to go one better than 2022, when they fell short against South Africa on home soil. Now, they stand just one win away from their first-ever continental title.

Nigeria, on the other hand, return to the final for a record 10th time, seeking redemption after a rare stumble in the last edition, where they finished fourth. The Super Falcons have dominated African women's football for decades, lifting the trophy nine times out of 12.

Today, they'll look to make it two digits and the signs suggest they're ready.

Here are five reasons why Nigeria can claim a record-extending 10th Women's Africa Cup of Nations crown against Morocco:

### Nigeria's defensive wall can't be broken

At WAFCON 2024, the Super Falcons have struck a rare balance between resolute defending and clinical finishing, a combination that has made them title favourites heading into today's final.

Remarkably, Nigeria have not conceded a single goal from open play across five matches. The only breach of their defence came via a penalty against South Africa.

Central to that solidity is the experienced backline of Michelle Alozie, Osinachi Ohale, Oluwatosin Demehin and Ashleigh Plumptre; a unit that has started four of five matches and grown into a formidable, well-drilled force.

Shielding them in midfield are Halimatu Ayinde, a tireless engine, and captain Rasheedat Ajibade, whose energy and discipline have added another layer of protection.

### Nigeria's unrivalled WAFCON pedigree

When it comes to the Women's Africa Cup of Nations, no team boast a record quite like Nigeria. The Super Falcons have reached the final a record nine times — and have won every single one.

That perfect record underscores a winning mentality forged on the biggest stages. This team don't just play in finals, they thrive in them.

While Morocco are making only their second-ever WAFCON final appearance, Nigeria's résumé is unmatched: nine WAFCON titles, nine FIFA Women's World Cup appearances and four Olympic Games campaigns.

Experience matters in high-pressure situations and Nigeria have it in abundance. In contrast, Morocco's home advantage proved insufficient in 2022, when they lost the final to a more seasoned South African side.

Now, against a Nigeria team steeped in success and unshaken

The stage is set for a thrilling finale to the 2024 CAF Women's Africa Cup of Nations (WAFCON) football tournament, as nine-time champions Nigeria face host nation Morocco today at the Stade Olympique in Rabat.

Yet her teammates have risen to the occasion. Captain Rasheedat Ajibade and forward Esther Okoronkwo have led the charge, while unexpected heroes have emerged in key moments like Michelle Alozie against South Africa in the last round.

That unpredictability is now one of Nigeria's greatest strengths and a key reason they are one step away from lifting a historic 10th WAFCON title.

### Morocco's defensive frailty

While Morocco head into today's final as the tournament's joint-top scorers with 11 goals, questions remain over their defensive solidity.

The Atlas Lionesses have conceded six goals in five matches at WAFCON 2024, managing just one clean sheet along the way. It is a concerning stat heading into a clash with Nigeria's dynamic attack.

Spanish coach Jorge Vilda, who led his home nation to World Cup glory in 2023, has opted for consistency in his back line, naming the same defensive quartet in every match. However, finding the right midfield balance to shield that defence has proven more difficult.

### Nigeria's experience vs Morocco's momentum

Nigeria enter the final chasing a historic 10th WAFCON title. Remarkably, the Super Falcons have never lost in a final, winning all nine they've contested. Their experience on the continental stage is unmatched: nine WAFCON titles, nine FIFA Women's World Cup

# WAFCON 2024: Mission X in sight as Super Falcons confront Morocco today



appearances and four Olympic Games campaigns.

In contrast, this is only Morocco's second final appearance, but the Atlas Lionesses have enjoyed a meteoric rise in recent years. After finishing runners-up in 2022 and qualifying for their first-ever Women's World Cup in 2023, they are determined to claim their first continental title, spurred on by a passionate home crowd in Rabat.

### Nigeria: Tactical balance and attacking depth

Coach Justine Madugu's side has found an ideal blend of discipline and flair. Defensively, Nigeria have conceded just once in five games, a penalty in the semi-final against South Africa. The back four of Michelle Alozie, Osinachi Ohale, Oluwatosin Demehin and Ashleigh Plumptre have formed one of the tournament's most consistent units.

In midfield, Halimatu Ayinde and captain Rasheedat Ajibade have provided tireless running, tactical intelligence and attacking drive. Ajibade, in particular, has stepped up as both creator and scorer.

Nigeria's 11 goals have come from eight different players, the most diverse goal-scoring record in the tournament.

And they have done all that without

a significant contribution from Asisat Oshoala, a six-time African Women's Footballer of the Year. The forward has played just 110 minutes and scored one goal, but she remains a potential game-changer for the Super Falcons.

### Morocco: Fluid attack, fragile defence

Under Jorge Vilda, Morocco have been one of the most exciting attacking teams, leading the tournament with a joint-high 11 goals. Midfield duo Ghizlane Chebbak and Yasmin Mrabet have scored seven of those, combining technical brilliance with clinical finishing.

But their offensive strength has come at a cost. The Atlas Lionesses have conceded six goals and kept just one

clean sheet. Their defensive unit has remained unchanged through five games, but midfield gaps have made them vulnerable — something Nigeria will be eager to exploit.

### Head-to-head between Nigeria and Morocco

This will be the fourth meeting between Morocco and Nigeria at the WAFCON. Their first two encounters came in 1998 and 2000, with Nigeria emphatically defeating the North Africans 8-0 and 6-0, respectively.

Those remained Morocco's only appearances at the tournament until 2022, when they hosted the competition. By then, a transformative Women's Football Strategy had propelled them to the brink of glory.

In that 2022 semi-final, Morocco stunned Nigeria in a dramatic match that saw the Super Falcons reduced to nine players after two red cards.

The game was eventually decided on penalties, with the hosts emerging victorious.

Today's clash offers Morocco a chance to level the head-to-head and for Nigeria to reaffirm their status as the undisputed queens of African football.



rising to the occasion.

And in today's final against Morocco, Oshoala could be Justine Madugu's ace in the pack, the game-changing option who has been waiting in the wings all tournament, ready to strike when it matters most.

### Head-to-head at WAFCON:

**Games:** 3  
Nigeria wins: 2  
Morocco wins: 1

### Road to the final

**Morocco**  
Group Stage  
Morocco 2 - 2 Zambia  
DR Congo 2 - 4 Morocco  
Morocco 1 - 0 Senegal  
**Quarter-final**  
Morocco 3 - 1 Mali  
**Semi-final**  
Morocco 1 - 1 (4-2 pen) Ghana

**Nigeria**  
Group Stage  
Nigeria 2 - 0 Tunisia  
Botswana 0 - 1 Nigeria  
Nigeria 0 - 0 Algeria  
**Quarter-final**  
Nigeria 5 - 0 Zambia  
**Semi-final**  
Nigeria 2 - 1 South Africa

by big crowds, history could repeat itself.

Today in Rabat, expect the Super Falcons to be calm, focused and composed — qualities that often prove decisive on nights like this. And when the pressure mounts, few teams are better equipped to handle it than Nigeria.

### Asisat Oshoala

Asisat Oshoala may not have had the tournament many expected, at least not yet. A proven match-winner with experience on the biggest stages, from the UEFA Women's Champions League to the FIFA Women's World Cup, the 30-year-old forward has a knack for

sparingly at WAFCON 2024, playing just 110 of Nigeria's 410 minutes. She has started only once and remained on the bench in two of five matches. Her sole goal came in the group-stage win over Tunisia.

But with a player of Oshoala's calibre, form and minutes rarely tell the full story.

A proven match-winner with experience on the biggest stages, from the UEFA Women's Champions League to the FIFA Women's World Cup, the 30-year-old forward has a knack for

## Race for top goalscorer award - full list

The 2024 CAF Women's Africa Cup of Nations has brought together the continent's finest football talent for Africa's premier women's tournament, taking place in Morocco from 5 to 26 July across six stadiums.

Among the stars lighting up the tournament are Zambia's prolific duo Barbra Banda and Rachael Kundanjanji, Nigeria's sharpshooter Asisat Oshoala, South Africa's veteran forward Jermaine Seoposenwe, and Morocco's own midfield maestro Ghizlane Chebbak.

As the competition heats up, so does the race for the Golden Boot.

### WAFCON 2024 top goalscorers chart

#### Position

Name	Country	Goals
1 Ghizlane Chebbak	Morocco	4
2 Nguenar Ndiaye	Senegal	4
3 Barbra Banda	Zambia	3
3 Ibtissam Jraidi	Morocco	3
3 Rachael Kundanjanji	Zambia	3
3 Chinwendu Ihezuo	Nigeria	3

### Twanyanyukwa to officiate CAF WAFCON final

Antsino of Namibia will referee the TotalEnergies CAF Women's Africa Cup of Nations (WAFCON), Morocco 2024 Final.

Antsino, who has been one of the standout performers among match officials during the tournament, will make history as the first Namibian to officiate a WAFCON final. Her steady leadership, consistency, and

calm control of matches have earned her the ultimate honour.

"I didn't expect this at all; I'm still in shock. But with God, all things are possible," says Antsino. "WAFCON is a major competition, and expectations are high. We have to go in with the mindset that the whole continent is watching and give our absolute best."

Nigerian technical crew. They have tailored their approach to suit each opponent throughout the tournament.

Nigeria will face a rapidly rising Moroccan side in the final. The match will take place at Rabat's 60,000-capacity Prince Moulay Abdellah Stadium. It is scheduled for 9 pm local time on Saturday.

No Retreat, No surrender, says Coach Madugu



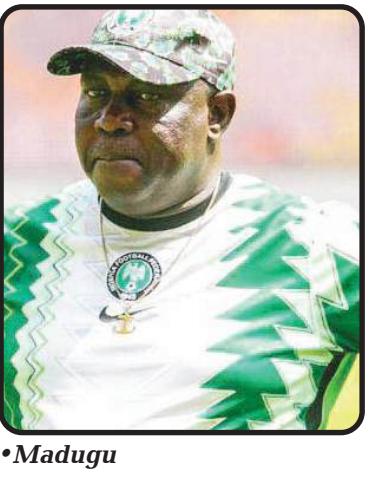
•Ihezuo

The Falcons secured a victory over a resilient Banya Banya side. They won 2-1 on Tuesday night. The game was decided by a stunning last-gasp cross-cum-shot from defender Michelle Alozie.

The result marked another tactical triumph for the

team. Nigerian technical crew. They have tailored their approach to suit each opponent throughout the tournament.

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## Ikpeba teams up with Betja Foundation to give back to society through football challenge

By Pius Ayinor

Not every individual from the top professional sports circuit remembers the community that they emerged from. Some even disconnect completely from their immediate families, but some never forget the place of their first steps.

Ex-Super Eagles attacker and a former African Footballer of the Year (1997), Victor Ikpeba, is one of those who have a place in their hearts to make society and communities better than they met them. And he is doing this through the annual Victor Ikpeba Football Challenge.

The Prince of Monaco, as he is fondly called, is reaching out to the Delta and Lagos State communities — two states that played roles in his football career as a teenager.

When he was looking for a community to help in the Lagos area, he settled for the Fijah community in Surulere with the help of the late journalist, Dapo Sotunmi. Since the first edition was held five years ago, the people in that zone have kept June 12 free — the day the competition is held. And they have good stories to tell about the competition.

Jude Aluede was born and bred in the community and has been a part of the growth. He says, "Since its inception in 2021, the Victor Ikpeba Challenge has galvanised the Ode Odan community from just a quiet suburb in Surulere to a bubbling one through sports. The exposure granted the youths by Ikpeba and his friends through the annual

sporting event can never be overemphasised. The community looks forward to meeting with their footballing heroes every year to showcase their talents as they, too, hope to make it to the big stage one day."

June 12 is a remarkable political date in Nigeria, but it is also the birthday of the former Monaco star.

"Yes, it's his birthday, but you can see that everyone is happy. That is what happens. There is no better way to honour a community than this. This is what gives me joy. God has blessed me through football, and I desire to touch many lives also through football. You can never estimate what a competition like this can do for these young ones watching on the side. We watched events like this, saw a few celebrities play and got inspired."

"This is the aim: to get these young ones inspired and even the entire community to grow."

Talking about growth, Ikpeba has had to do a facelift at the playground every year for the event to be able to hold. He has been able to make the community hold their elected leaders to account for their jobs.

The grand finale kicked off with the third-place match between Rivers United and Remo Stars. Rivers United came out the winners, securing a 3-0 victory to claim the bronze medal.

But the highlight of the evening was the much-anticipated final match between Ikorodu FC and Smart City FC. In a stunning start, Ikorodu FC scored less than one minute into the game, just 31 seconds after kickoff. The early goal turned out to be the winner.

Despite several attempts from Smart City FC, Ikorodu FC held their ground to emerge as champions of the 2025 tournament.

The event was attended by top dignitaries, including representatives of the Lagos State Government, senior sports officials, club executives, representatives of MTN, and corporate executives. Among those present were Ben Akabueze, Director-General of the Budget Office of the Federation; Hon. Sola Giwa, Special Adviser to the Lagos State Governor on Transportation; Damilare Orimoloye, Senior Special Assistant on Sports to the Lagos State Governor; Sola Aiyepetu, former Chairman of the Lagos State Sports Commission; and Lekan Salami, Chairman of Shooting Stars. A top official of MTN said the organisation's presence reinforced its commitment to grassroots football and youth development. From branded activations to fan engagement zones at the stadium, the brand played a key role in amplifying the tournament experience for attendees.

# Saturday Vanguard

# Sports

## Five reasons why Nigeria can beat Morocco to win a 10th title

Nigeria will take on hosts Morocco in the final of the CAF Women's Africa Cup of Nations 2024 at the Olympic Stadium in Rabat.

For the Atlas Lionesses, it's a second consecutive appearance in the women's football final as they look to go one better than 2022, when they fell short against South Africa on home soil. Now, they stand just one win away from their first-ever continental title.

Nigeria, on the other hand, return to the final for a record 10th time, seeking redemption after a rare stumble in the last edition, where they finished fourth. The Super Falcons have dominated African women's football for decades, lifting the trophy nine times out of 12.

Today, they'll look to make it double digits and the signs suggest they're ready.

Here are five reasons why Nigeria can claim a record-extending 10th Women's Africa Cup of Nations crown against Morocco:

### Nigeria's defensive wall can't be broken

At WAFCON 2024, the Super Falcons have struck a rare balance between resolute defending and clinical finishing, a combination that has made them title favourites heading into today's final.

Remarkably, Nigeria have not conceded a single goal from open play across five matches. The only breach of their defence came via a penalty against South Africa.

Central to that solidity is the experienced backline of Michelle Alozie, Osinachi Ohale, Oluwatosin Demehin and Ashleigh Plumptre; a unit that has started four of five matches and grown into a formidable, well-drilled force.

Shielding them in midfield are Halimatu Ayinde, a tireless engine, and captain Rasheedat Ajibade, whose energy and discipline have added another layer of protection.

The old football adage says 'attack wins games, defence wins titles', and for Nigeria, that's proving true. If they are to lift a record-extending 10th WAFCON trophy today, their defensive backbone could be the deciding factor.

Nigeria's attacking firepower

If Nigeria's defence has been rock solid, their attack has been just as impressive, and far less predictable.

Justine Madugu's side are the joint-highest scorers at WAFCON 2024, netting 11 goals in five matches. Only final opponents Morocco (11) have matched that feat. But what sets the Super Falcons apart is the sheer variety of their threats.

Eight different players have found the back of the net for Nigeria — more than any other team in the tournament — highlighting the team's attacking depth and tactical flexibility. Whether it's a midfielder, defender or forward, someone always steps up.

Six-time African Women's

Footballer of the Year Asisat Oshoala arrived in Morocco as the headline act but has had a quiet tournament by her standards, scoring only once — in the group-stage opener against Tunisia.

Yet her teammates have risen to the occasion. Captain Rasheedat Ajibade and forward Esther Okoronkwo have led the charge, while unexpected heroes have emerged in key moments like Michelle Alozie against South Africa in the last round.

That unpredictability is now one of Nigeria's greatest strengths and a key reason they are one step away from lifting a historic 10th WAFCON title.

### Morocco's defensive frailty

While Morocco head into today's final as the tournament's joint-top scorers with 11 goals, questions remain over their defensive solidity.

The Atlas Lionesses have conceded six goals in five matches at WAFCON 2024, managing just one clean sheet along the way. It is a concerning stat heading into a clash with Nigeria's dynamic attack.

Spanish coach Jorge Vilda, who led his home nation to World Cup glory in 2023, has opted for consistency in his back line, naming the same defensive quartet in every match. However, finding the right midfield balance to shield that defence has proven more difficult.

Captain Ghizlane Chebbak and Yasmin Mrabet have been Vilda's go-to pairing in midfield, and while they've contributed seven of Morocco's 12 goals between them, their forward-thinking style has at times left the defence exposed.

That imbalance may present an opportunity for Nigeria. With pace, depth and attacking threats across the pitch, the Super Falcons are well positioned to capitalise on Morocco's lack of midfield protection and that could be the key to unlocking their 10th WAFCON title.

### Nigeria's unrivalled WAFCON pedigree

When it comes to the Women's Africa Cup of Nations, no team boast a record quite like Nigeria. The Super Falcons have reached the final a record nine times — and have won every single one.

That perfect record underscores a winning mentality forged on the biggest stages. This team don't just play in finals, they thrive in them.

While Morocco are making only their second-ever WAFCON final appearance, Nigeria's résumé is unmatched: nine WAFCON titles, nine FIFA Women's World Cup appearances and four Olympic Games campaigns.

Experience matters in high-pressure situations and Nigeria have it in abundance. In contrast, Morocco's home advantage proved insufficient in 2022, when they lost the final to a more seasoned South African side.

Now, against a Nigeria team steeped in success and unshaken

The stage is set for a thrilling finale to the 2024 CAF Women's Africa Cup of Nations (WAFCON) football tournament, as nine-time champions Nigeria face host nation Morocco today at the Stade Olympique in Rabat.

Nigeria left it late to beat defending champions South Africa 2-1 to secure their place in today's final, while Morocco overcame Ghana 4-2 on penalties after a gruelling semi-final in Rabat ended 1-1 after extra-time.

The final is a rematch of the dramatic 2022 semi-final, where Morocco stunned Nigeria on penalties to reach their first-ever WAFCON final.

The two sides meet again, with the stakes higher; with the trophy on the line.

### Nigeria's experience vs Morocco's momentum

Nigeria enter the final chasing a historic 10th WAFCON title. Remarkably, the Super Falcons have never lost in a final, winning all nine they've contested. Their experience on the continental stage is unmatched: nine WAFCON titles, nine FIFA Women's World Cup

## WAFCON 2024 in sight as Super Falcons confront Morocco



appearances and four Olympic Games campaigns.

In contrast, this is only Morocco's second final appearance, but the Atlas Lionesses have enjoyed a meteoric rise in recent years.

After finishing runners-up in 2022 and qualifying for their first-ever Women's World Cup in 2023, they are determined to claim their first continental title, spurred on by a passionate home crowd in Rabat.

### Nigeria: Tactical balance and attacking depth

Coach Justine Madugu's side has found an ideal blend

of discipline and flair. Defensively, Nigeria have conceded just once in five games, a penalty in the semi-final against South Africa. The back four of Michelle Alozie, Osinachi Ohale, Oluwatosin Demehin and Ashleigh Plumptre have formed one of the tournament's most consistent units.

In midfield, Halimatu Ayinde and captain Rasheedat Ajibade have provided tireless running, tactical intelligence and attacking drive. Ajibade, in particular, has stepped up as both creator and scorer.

Nigeria's 11 goals have come from eight different players, the most diverse goal-scoring record in the tournament.

And they have done all that without



rising to the occasion.

And in today's final against Morocco, Oshoala could be Justine Madugu's ace in the pack, the game-changing option who has been waiting in the wings all tournament, ready to strike when it matters most.

### Head-to-head at WAFCON:

**Games: 3**  
Nigeria wins: 2  
Morocco wins: 1

### Road to the final

#### Morocco

#### Group Stage

Morocco	2	-	2	Zambia
DR Congo	2	-	4	Morocco
Morocco	1	-	0	Senegal

#### Quarter-final

Morocco	3	-	1	Mali
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#### Semi-final

Morocco	1	-	1	(4-2 pen) Ghana
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#### Nigeria

#### Group Stage

Nigeria	2	-	0	Tunisia
Botswana	0	-	1	Nigeria
Nigeria	0	-	0	Algeria

#### Quarter-final

Nigeria	5	-	0	Zambia
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#### Semi-final

Nigeria	2	-	1	South Africa
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sparingly at WAFCON 2024, playing just 110 of Nigeria's 410 minutes. She has started only once and remained on the bench in two of five matches. Her sole goal came in the group-stage win over Tunisia.

But with a player of Oshoala's calibre, form and minutes rarely tell the full story.

A proven match-winner with experience on the biggest stages; from the UEFA Women's Champions League to the FIFA Women's World Cup; the 30-year-old forward has a knack for

# 4: Mission X Super Falcons occo today



a significant contribution from Asisat Oshoala, a six-time African Women's Footballer of the Year. The forward has played just 110 minutes and scored one goal, but she remains a potential game-changer for the Super Falcons.

#### Morocco: Fluid attack, fragile defence

Under Jorge Vilda, Morocco have been one of the most exciting attacking teams, leading the tournament with a joint-high 11 goals. Midfield duo Ghizlane Chebbak and Yasmin Mrabet have scored seven of those, combining technical brilliance with clinical finishing.

But their offensive strength has come at a cost. The Atlas Lionesses have conceded six goals and kept just one

clean sheet. Their defensive unit has remained unchanged through five games, but midfield gaps have made them vulnerable — something Nigeria will be eager to exploit.

#### Head-to-head between Nigeria and Morocco

This will be the fourth meeting between Morocco and Nigeria at the WAFCON. Their first two encounters came in 1998 and 2000, with Nigeria emphatically defeating the North Africans 8-0 and 6-0, respectively.

Those remained Morocco's only appearances at the

tournament until 2022, when they hosted the competition. By then, a transformative Women's Football Strategy had propelled them to the brink of glory.

In that 2022 semi-final, Morocco stunned Nigeria in a dramatic match that saw the Super Falcons reduced to nine players after two red cards. The game was eventually decided on penalties, with the hosts emerging victorious.

Today's clash offers Morocco a chance to level the head-to-head and for Nigeria to reaffirm their status as the undisputed queens of African football.

## Race for top goalscorer award - full list



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## Ikorodu FC 're 2025 Eko International Cup champions

... As MTN celebrates grassroots football

The 2025 edition of the Eko International Cup came to a thrilling close last Sunday, July 20th 2025, at the Mobolaji Johnson Arena (formerly Onikan Stadium), as fans witnessed an action-packed championship match that brought the tournament to a memorable end.

The grand finale kicked off with the third-place match between Rivers United and Remo Stars. Rivers United came out the winners, securing a 3-0 victory to claim the bronze medal.

But the highlight of the evening was the much-anticipated final match between Ikorodu FC and Smart City FC. In a stunning start, Ikorodu FC scored less than one minute into the game, just 31 seconds after kickoff. The early goal turned out to be the winner.

Despite several attempts from Smart City FC, Ikorodu FC held their ground to emerge as champions of the 2025 tournament.

The event was attended by top dignitaries, including representatives of the Lagos State Government, senior sports officials, club executives, representatives of MTN, and corporate executives. Among those present were Ben Akabueze, Director-General of the Budget Office of the Federation; Hon. Sola Giwa, Special Adviser to the Lagos State Governor on Transportation; Damilare Orimoloye, Senior Special Assistant on Sports to the Lagos State Governor; Sola Aiyepeku, former Chairman of the Lagos State Sports Commission; and Hon. Lekan Salami, Chairman of Shooting Stars. A top official of MTN said the organisation's presence reinforced its commitment to grassroots football and youth development. From branded activations to fan engagement zones at the stadium, the brand played a key role in amplifying the tournament experience for attendees.

## No Retreat, No surrender, says Coach Madugu

Nigeria's Super Falcons have their eyes firmly on the prize as face host nation Morocco in today's final of the 13th Women's Africa Cup of Nations (WAFCON).

Assistant coach Justine Madugu declares that the nine-time champions are

determined to reclaim their continental crown.

On Wednesday, as the Falcons departed Casablanca for Rabat, Madugu spoke. Rabat is the venue of the highly anticipated showdown. Madugu stressed that there will be no room for complacency. This follows their hard-earned semi-final victory over reigning champions South Africa.

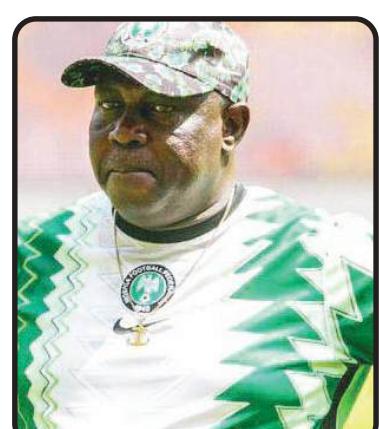
"We thank God for making it to the final," Madugu said. "I want to assure you that we are not going to relent or take our eyes off the ball. Our focus is on lifting the trophy in Rabat on Saturday."

The Falcons secured a victory over a resilient Banya Banya side. They won 2-1 on Tuesday night. The game was decided by a stunning last-gasp cross-cum-shot from defender Michelle Alozie.

The result marked another tactical triumph for the

Nigerian technical crew. They have tailored their approach to suit each opponent throughout the tournament.

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•Madugu

### WAFCON 2024 top goalscorers chart

#### Position

Name	Country	Goals
1 Ghizlaine Chebbak	Morocco	4
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3 Barbra Banda	Zambia	3
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3 Chinwendu Ihezuo	Nigeria	3



BY FRED IWENJORA

# Sonny Okosun still lives in us —Widow

## • His last words

Widow of one of Nigeria's and Africa's greatest musicians Sonny Okosun has shared events of his last days on planet earth.

Okosun died from complications from Colon cancer May 24, 2008 at a hospital in the United states.

Until his death, Okosun, with his band Ozziddi, churned out numerous albums and also produced several others including Onyeka Onwenu and Yvonne Maha and a host of others.

Let's count the albums; Papas land, Fire in soweto, mother and child, Togetherness, Tire ni Oluwa, no more wars, Holy War, etc..etc

Okosun was one of the highest selling artistes of E M I, Nigeria noted as one of African musicians who helped liberate southern Africa through music.

**FRED IWENJORA** met up with Okosun's widow Pastor (Princess) Florence Okosun at a memorial event in his honor held at his Lagos home.

Pastor Florence Okosun is General Overseer of House of Prayer, the church founded by Sonny Okosun later in his life

Here she speaks on how life has been without her love.

She also talks about his last days.

**17 years just passed just like that....how does it feel without Papa?**

I want to start by appreciating God Almighty who has been with us and sustained us in the past 17 years of his passing. The past 17 years is like

yesterday.

I have lived with the belief that he has travelled and will soon be back. I keep living in denial. The most important thing is that all through the 17 years, we are sustained by the good legacy he left behind for us his family. His fans not only in Nigeria, Africa and the world at large whom he touched with his love, his music and his message of love are what strengthen us and keep us going and we are not

giving up. He still lives in us.

On a personal note, Sonny Okosun is still very much alive to me. He is forever in my heart and I will never, never forget the love we shared together.

**You just spoke on the supernatural realm....On a physical level, you must be missing something big...**

I miss his love which is number one. Everywhere Sonny Okosun went around the world, we never lacked communication. I never lacked that relationship and companionship. He treated me like a queen. He knew that I came from a royal family and never treated me differently. To him I was a Princess so he spared nothing to treat me as one. He never gave up on me. His love for me never faded till the last

day. I miss him so much. He lives on in my heart and all around me.

**Was it music that brought you together?**

Not so but it helped solidify our marriage. Our families were known to each other even before our marriage. I liked music but never sang for public. When I was younger, I sang in the choir and that was all. But when God called him to serve him, he became my ministry. I got devoted to help him anchor on his calling. I had to be there for him. I took care of his needs, interceded for him and stayed in the gap for him so that he would be able to function very well and better as a man of God.

**His last days must have been tough....he was gravely ill....how did you navigate those tortuous last days?**

Yes he was ill. I did not originally know the magnitude or gravity of his ailment until I was forced to join him in the US.

The last days were tough and emotionally demanding to say the least.

On the day of his passing on May 24, 2008, I was told that he had only few hours before he passed away in my arms.

His last command was that I should read Psalm 118, his favorite Psalm with him.

While I was reading it for him, he said he was thirsty

and demanded for water. But the doctors said I should not give him water. With a touch of regret in his face, he asked me to continue to read Psalm 118. I went on and on until he slipped away.

**Did you see his death coming so soon?**

I did but I lived in denial. Like they do abroad, I was informed that the situation was bad. On the day he walked into the hospital, a doctor called me for a briefing, adding that he had few hours of life and that we were losing him soon. Rest is history.

What about the children? Some wonder why none is involved in music.

I wonder as well. They are all doing well by God's special grace.

The first daughter toyed with music earlier in life but later suspended that thought. She followed her love for other things. And she's doing well. They all remain very fond of their father, they believe in him and still treasure him forever.



•Sonny Okosun

•Florence Okosun



# Chief Barr. Andrew Oru – A Beacon of Integrity, Leadership, and Legacy

By Ekundayo Abimbola



Chief Barrister Andrew Oru is not only a renowned legal luminary but also a deeply respected community leader whose name has become synonymous with service, integrity, and transformation.

As both the National and Global President of the University of Nigeria, Nsukka Alumni Association, Chief Oru has exemplified uncommon vision and dedication. Under his stewardship, the Association was redefined—not just as a network of graduates but as a powerful catalyst for institutional development, social responsibility, and national dialogue. His leadership has built bridges across generations, inspired global engagement, and strengthened the fabric of alumni solidarity.

A passionate advocate for justice and a fearless voice for accountability, Chief Oru's professional journey reflects a profound commitment to ethical standards in public and private life. His contributions go far beyond courtrooms and committee rooms—they extend into classrooms, boardrooms, and communities, where his influence continues to uplift and inspire.

This honorary doctorate (Honoris Causa) is more than a ceremonial accolade; it is a rightful recognition of a lifetime dedicated to excellence, advocacy, and purposeful impact. It acknowledges his unwavering commitment to the advancement of the University of Nigeria and celebrates his role as a torchbearer for educational empowerment and institutional progress.

Chief Andrew Oru stands as a shining example of what it means to serve with honor, to lead with vision, and to build with heart. His legacy is not only etched in awards or titles but in the countless lives he has touched and the enduring values he champions.

In this interview with The Vanguard, Chief Andrew Oru spoke about his upbringing, the core values he inherited from his family, his remarkable accomplishments and enduring legacies, amongst sundry issues. Excerpts...

**Can you please give us an insight into what shaped your orientation about life?**

First and foremost, I was raised by educated parents—not businesspeople, but technocrats and educationists. In those days, children of teachers were known for discipline and strong moral upbringing, and that was the environment I grew up in. I was also raised in a devout Christian home, deeply rooted in values such as integrity, respect, and community ethics.

As a child, I was a bit precocious—rascally, but attentive. I was curious and often knew more than my peers, largely due to my close bond with my father who took me along to important places and engagements. That exposure accelerated my development and gave me early insight into life's purpose.

At one point, I even aspired to become a Catholic seminarian and priest. My father was a Knight of the Catholic Church, and my mother was the President of the Catholic Women Organisation for the entire Lagos Ecclesiastical Province—which included Ogun, Oyo, Ondo, Osun, and Ekiti States. She was also politically inclined and a highly respected woman. So I grew up in an environment steeped in honesty, integrity, and a deep sense of uprightness.

My guiding principle has always been that integrity is the one

currency you must never devalue. Over time, I came to understand that integrity means treating others as you want to be treated, respecting your neighbors, being honest, polite, and compassionate.

In 1997, my family was honored with the "Family of the Year" award in Delta State, which spoke volumes about the values we lived by.

**How were the days of your childhood different from the present day?**

I lost my parents as a full-grown adult. By then, my character was fully formed. I've always resisted oppression, spoken out for others, and never allowed bullying in my presence. Though I don't refer to myself as an activist, I am deeply compassionate. It's often hard for me to hold back tears when I see others suffering.

My first priority in life is to survive with dignity, and in doing so, ensure others survive with me. That drive to support those around me has been central to who I am.

**Can you tell us what contributions you made to the University of Nigeria that led to this award?**

To list my achievements might sound immodest, but I understand how the University of Nigeria operates—they are frugal with their awards and uphold a very high standard. It's never about how much you give materially; it's about your character, impact, and commitment to societal progress.

I began supporting the University's Alumni Association long before I officially became active. In 2012, I attended my first Lagos branch meeting, which happened to be an election day. To my surprise, all the candidates for the presidency stepped down, and I was elected unopposed. That gesture was deeply humbling.

Later, I was elected as the Global President of the Alumni Association in an election I never intended to contest. Some members bought the nomination form on my behalf. Despite the high-profile competition—including judges, ambassadors, and business leaders—I won by a significant margin. I saw this as a divine mandate.

At the time, the Association lacked a clear constitution. In my acceptance speech on December 4, 2013, I promised to draft one within four months. By April 4, 2014, a new constitution had been signed into law. I also built the Alumni Centre, equipped the office with resources like printers and copiers, and supported the University with infrastructure such as a dedicated conference room for senate committees.

Additionally, I chaired the Fundraising and Implementation Committee of the West African University Games, supplied medical equipment to the school clinic, and contributed to other strategic developments.

**What does this award mean to you?**

The award is profoundly meaningful. Interestingly, it was first offered to me in 2016 while I was still serving as the National President of the Alumni Association. I declined it at the time because I felt it would be inappropriate to receive an award while performing an official function at the convocation. I offered the slot to Mr. Austin Avuru, then Chairman of Seplat Oil.

Now that I've accepted it, I see it not just as an honor but as a responsibility. It makes me a permanent ambassador of the institution. Everywhere I go, I must represent the University of Nigeria with character and integrity. I will strive to uphold that standard.

**How do you think this award will impact the Nigerian university system?**

I believe it sends a strong message about the power of selflessness. This was not an award I lobbied for—you can't even apply for it at the University of Nigeria. It shows that integrity, consistency, and quiet service are noticed and rewarded.

It's a lesson for anyone in a position of visibility: live in a way that inspires respect, not regret. Don't be boastful or offensive. Be compassionate and community-minded. I strive to live this way, and I hope the university system benefits from the example.

**What values have distinguished you from others?**

Life is a long-distance race. Whatever you take from society, return in multiplied form. Honesty is key. If you've taken ten pieces from a group of eleven, you've deprived someone. That's injustice. If you're in a position to take, ensure you're also in a position to give back—generously and responsibly.

I believe it is honesty, prudence, and accountability that distinguish me.

**How did social vices like cultism, drug abuse, and fraud affect your generation—and what can be done today?**

These issues are a reflection of failed leadership. In my time, there were pockets of violence and drug use, but they were hidden and frowned upon. Cultism then was more about fraternity and social identity—not the criminality we see today.

Today's vices stem from frustration—unemployment, poor governance, a failing educational system. People seek shortcuts to wealth and success. Religion, which should be a compass, has been commercialized. Churches now celebrate wealth regardless of how it was acquired.

Universities are grossly underfunded. Some rely almost entirely on alumni support. Professors earn less than ward councillors—an absurdity. The educational system needs urgent reform and investment.

**Can you share your political experience with us?**

I once reluctantly ran for Senate after the passing of the incumbent in my district. During a press briefing, I openly declared that I would "sanitize the red chamber" because, in my view, many of the senators were enriching themselves unethically.

That statement reached Senator David Mark, then Senate President, who reportedly told President Goodluck Jonathan that I was coming to disrupt the system. The President then directed the Governor to support someone else—ironically, a friend of mine.

It became clear that the political elite was not ready for someone who would challenge the status quo.

**What must be done to get the right leadership for Nigeria?**

The problem isn't that Nigeria corrupts leaders. The same system produced Obasanjo and Goodluck Jonathan. The real issue is a lack of willpower to do the right thing.

We must come together and ask what is truly best for us. Reorienting leadership starts with demanding accountability from those we elect and ensuring that integrity is a non-negotiable standard.

**How do we re-orientate the younger generation?**

The electoral system must be overhauled. Unfortunately, the very people who can effect change are those benefitting from its flaws. Yet with perseverance, change is possible.

Religious institutions must also play their part. They should educate congregants on civic duties, challenge corruption, and speak truth to power. If senators are booed in churches over poor performance, they'll get the message.

Look at what happened in 2023—BVAS worked briefly and gave a glimpse of real electoral change before it was manipulated. If the president truly admits that the system failed and works to correct it—like the late Yar'Adua once did—it would be a turning point.

**What about the 1999 Constitution, often described as a fraud?**

In 2017, I filed a lawsuit at the Federal High Court alongside Chief Andrew Oru, challenging the legitimacy of the 1999 Constitution. We sued the government, arguing that the constitution was a military document handed down by General Abdulsalam Abubakar without public input or legitimacy. It remains a significant flaw in our national foundation.

**Do you believe Nigeria can survive as a united nation?**

Yes, I remain optimistic. If the President truly prioritizes national survival over political survival, Nigeria will flourish. He must act with courage and vision, not just in economic matters but across all sectors. We need systemic reforms—not symbolic ones.

**Do you think the Church has compromised?**

Yes, it has. The Church is part of the larger societal decay. Its silence in the face of injustice has contributed to our moral erosion. Unless spiritual institutions reclaim their prophetic voice, the rot will continue.

**What should the university community expect from you going forward?**

This award is not the end—it's a beginning. It has refocused my attention on the University. There are projects I once envisioned but couldn't complete due to distractions. Now, with renewed commitment and God's help, I intend to revisit and fulfill those responsibilities. The institution, its students, and its stakeholders can expect strong collaboration and continued support.



## CHIDI NOBIS-ELENDU & COMPANY (NELCISCA ATTORNEYS)

ENUGU: Plot 39, House 6, Nobis Elendu Close, New Haven East Ext., Phase 2, New Haven, Enugu -Nigeria

ABUJA: 11A Pope John Paul II Street, Maitama, FCT, Abuja.

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### Congratulatory Message To A Friend In A Million: The Great Chief Andrew Oru

It is with immense joy and admiration that I, on behalf of the Nobis-Elendu Dynasty and the Management and Staffers of Nelcisca Attorneys LL. P, do hereby extend my profound felicitations and warmest congratulations to you, Chief Barr. Andrew Ovikuroma Oru, on the conferral of the prestigious Honorary Doctorate Degree by one of the greatest citadels of learning, the prestigious University of Nigeria, Nsukka, during her 54th Convocation Ceremony.

This outstanding recognition is not only a celebration of your lifelong dedication to the legal profession but also a well-deserved acknowledgment of your unwavering commitment to justice, nation-building, and the service of humanity. It is, indeed, an eloquent testament of your remarkable journey in the field of social and humanitarian works – a journey that has been marked by excellence, resilience, valuable impact, and consistency of purpose and which continues to be a source of inspiration and emulation to both the legal community and society at large.

As a respected legal luminary, public intellectual, and advocate for the people, you have consistently demonstrated brilliance in thought and action, distinction in your service, and honour in leadership. It is only fitting that such a reputable institution as the University of Nigeria has chosen to celebrate you in this grand manner.

This honorary doctorate is yet another jewel in your already glowing crown, and a testimony to the enduring legacy you are building—not just as a lawyer, but as a patriotic Nigerian and a compassionate statesman. May this honour open even greater doors of influence for you, and may your light continue to shine brightly for generations to come.

With sincere admiration and best wishes, I remain, yours very truly,

*Chidi Nobis Elendu*

Ozonma (Sir) Chidi Nobis-Elendu, KSJ, LL. M, MCIArb, JP, NP

(Dike Oha Aguata & Odenigbo Umuchu)



The University of Nigeria Alumni Association (UNAA)  
Congratulates her Global Leader



*congratulations*

We write on behalf of the Urhobo Progress Union Worldwide, to heartily congratulate you, on your Nomination for an Honorary Degree Award, by your Alma Mata, the prestigious University of Nigeria, Nsukka.

No doubt, the University may have taken into consideration your numerous contributions, as an academic, and a full-fledged member of your University Alumni Association, particularly as her one-time President.

On our own part, the Urhobo Nation is grateful to you, for the milestone achievements and honours, that you have brought to our Urhobo Nation in particular, and Nigeria as a whole.

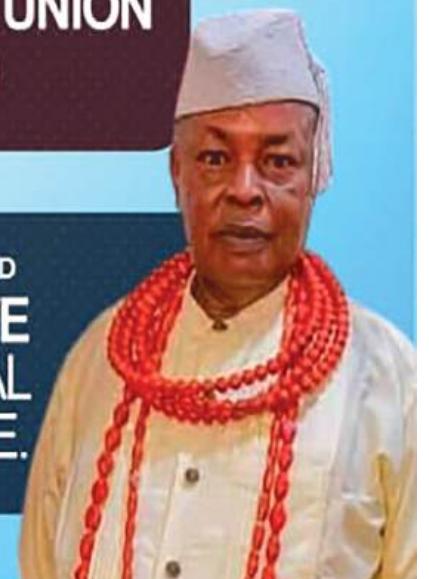
For these and many others, the Urhobo Progress Union, considers you a worthy Ambassador to behold!

Please accept our hearty congratulations, while we remain,

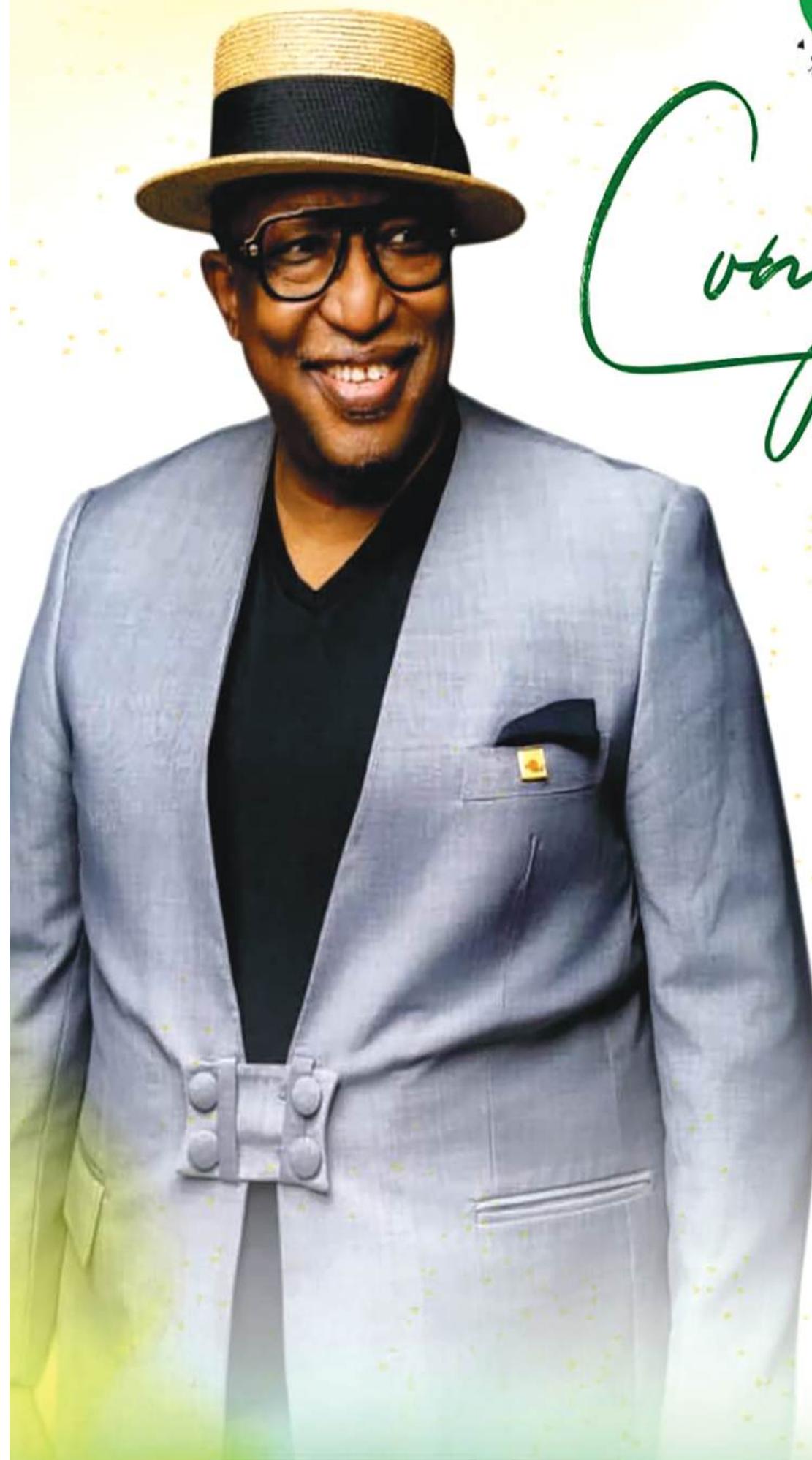
Yours sincerely,

**URHOBO PROGRESS UNION  
(WORLDWIDE)**

S I G N E D  
**CHIEF (BARR) ESE GAM OWE**  
**PRESIDENT GENERAL**  
**(U.P.U) WORLDWIDE.**



The University of Nigeria Alumni  
Association (UNAA)  
Congratulates her Global Leader



*congratulations*

The Global/National President,  
National Officers and all  
members of the University of  
Nigeria Alumni Association  
congratulates you our  
Global Leader,  
**CHIEF BARR  
ANDREW ORU**  
on the conferment/award of  
an HONORARY DOCTORATE  
DEGREE by the University of  
Nigeria Nsukka during her  
54th convocation ceremony.  
This we believe is in recogni-  
tion of your selfless and  
outstanding service to the  
university and humanity  
at large.  
This is sure a call to higher  
duty.

SIGNED: QUEEN LINDA AGUA-ONYEKWELU, Ph.D  
GLOBAL PRESIDENT, UNIVERSITY OF NIGERIA ALUMNI ASSOCIATION.





**Congratulations**

Big congratulations to you  
**CHIEF ANDREW .O. ORU**  
on your Honorary Doctor-  
ate from the University of  
Nigeria, Nsukka!  
This is such a well-deserved  
honor and a beautiful  
recognition of all the incred-  
ible things you've done and  
continue to do. It's truly  
inspiring to see your hard  
work, impact, and dedica-  
tion being celebrated in  
such a grand way.  
Here's to even greater  
achievements ahead!

SIGNED: MR SHEYI MONEY  
MANAGING DIRECTOR  
NEMBE CRUDE OIL EXPORT TERMINAL LIMITED



Ejovi  
Offshore

# Congratulations

The Management and Staff of Ejovi Offshore Ltd. joyfully extend their warmest congratulations to Chief Andrew Oru Emeritus President University of Nigeria Alumni Association on his well-deserved nomination for and receipt of a prestigious Honorary Degree from the University of Nigeria, Nsukka.

This esteemed award recognizes Chief Oru's distinguished personality and his excellent contributions to various fields of human endeavor. As a great alumnus and former President of the University of Nigeria Alumni Association, Chief Oru is a most deserving recipient of this honor.

We join the University of Nigeria in celebrating Chief Andrew Oru's outstanding achievements and dedication.

**Congratulations, Chief Andrew Oru!**

S I G N E D

**Chief Johnbull O. Ejovi**  
Chairman  
Ejovi Group



Congratulations

ON YOUR WELL-DESERVED

# HONOUR

With immense pride in your outstanding achievements, I, on behalf of my family, warmly congratulate you on your conferment of a Doctor Degree in Law (Honoris Causa) by the prestigious University of Nigeria, Nsukka, UNN.

This distinguished recognition is an eloquent testimony of your invaluable contributions to community development and outstanding achievements in the legal profession. As an incurable renowned advocate for social justice, your passion, excellent human relations and matchless impacts continue to inspire all around you.

This milestone, among your many accolades, is yet another stepping stone to even greater accomplishments. I am proud of you, celebrate you and wish you continued success in the years ahead.

Once again, congratulations!

**CHIEF BARR  
ANDREW ORU**



Signed:

**Hon. Chief Solomon Urhoboyovwe Ahwinahwi**  
The Izomo 1 of Agbarho Kingdom  
The Ogbia of Olomu Kingdom  
Former Member, House of Representatives



# HEARTIEST Congra tulations

With profound admiration, I extend my highest felicitations to  
**CHIEF BARRISTER ANDREW ORU**  
on the conferral of an Honorary Doctorate by the venerable  
University of Nigeria, Nsukka, at its 54th Convocation  
Ceremony.

This distinction transcends mere accolade—it is a luminous testament to your lifelong devotion to jurisprudence, your steadfast pursuit of justice, and your unwavering service to humanity. Your journey, defined by intellectual rigor, moral courage, and transformative impact, stands as an enduring beacon for the legal fraternity and our nation.

As a jurist of exceptional insight and a statesman of uncommon integrity, you have consistently fused brilliance with principle, elevating the law beyond precedent into the realm of legacy. That Nigeria's premier university has chosen to honor you in this manner affirms what we have long known: your contributions are not merely professional, but profoundly national.

This doctorate is not an addition to your legacy—it is a radiant new facet of it. May it amplify your voice, deepen your influence, and illuminate the path for generations who will follow in your footsteps.

With deepest respect and warmest regards,

SIGNED

**Anthony George-Ikoli(SAN)**

For: George Ikoli & Okagbue;  
Legal Practitioners.





# HEARTY Congra tulations

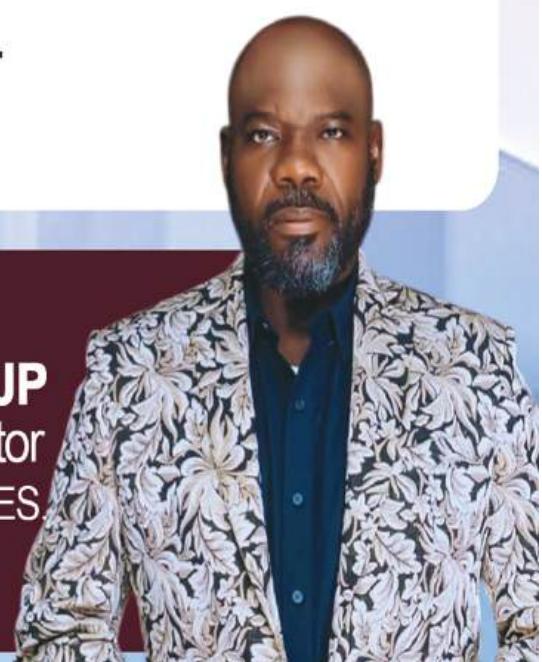
We are greatly honoured to join many others to congratulate you on your well-deserved honorary award conferred on you by the prestigious institution (University of Nigeria, Nsukka).

It is indeed a testament and recognition of your unwavering commitment to humanity and society growth; it shows that God's plan is fulfilled in you.

We humbly urge you to continue in your good works and do sincerely believe very many more of this kind from other reputable and well known-establishments are on the way to you.

Once again, accept our hearty congratulation.

**CHIEF ERNEST NIKORO JP**  
Managing Director  
KEVNEST INTEGRATED SERVICES





ON BEHALF OF  
**GOVERNMENT COLLEGE UGHELLI  
OLD BOYS ASSOCIATION  
(GCUOBA WORLDWIDE)**  
REG. NO - CAC/IT/NO 76786

*We congratulate*

**Chief Barr. Andrew Oru  
GCUOBA**

On the occasion of the

**Conferment of Honourary  
Doctorate Degree**

on you by the  
**UNIVERSITY OF NIGERIA, NSUKKA,**

On Saturday, 26th July, 2025.

It is a well-deserved honour coming in recognition of your selfless service to your Alma-Mater and humanity.

There is no doubt that your commitment to cultivated ideals and excellence imbibed in Government College Ughelli in your younger years always remained a guiding principle by which you served meritoriously as National President of the University of Nigeria, Nsukka.

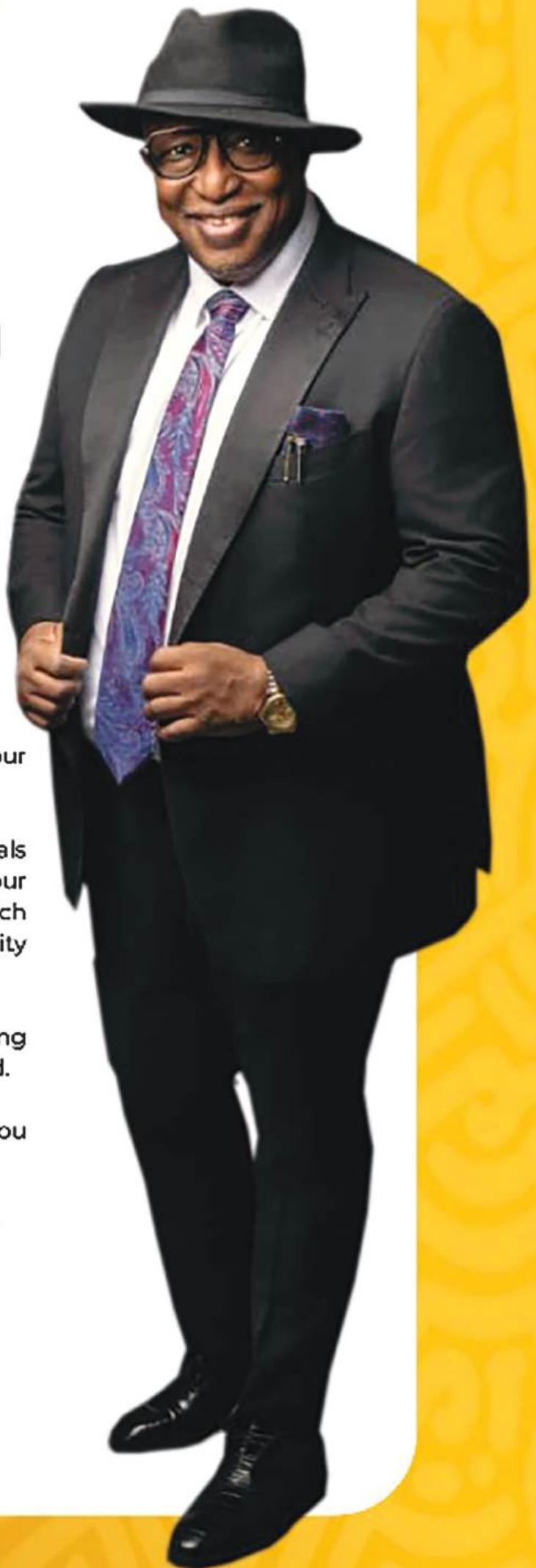
We rejoice with you on this occasion while earnestly looking forward to more of such laurels in your kitty in the years ahead.

May Almighty God continue to guide and protect you as you celebrate.

**Once again, CONGRATULATIONS.**

**Pst. Wilson Egbodje**  
Secretary - General

**Olorogun Albert Akpomudje, SAN**  
President - General Worldwide





# HEARTY Congra tulations

On behalf of good people of Ughelli Kingdom and Ughelli North in general, **His Royal Majesty Evang. Prof. W.O Ocharisi IIJP+ (APS) Ovie of Ughelli Kingdom.**

I wish to felicitate with you, **CHIEF ANDREW ORU** on your well-deserved prestigious nomination for the award of an honorary degree by the highly esteem University of Nigeria, Nsukka. This award has made we, the good people of Ughelli North very proud and it is a testament of your unwavering commitment, selfless leadership and remarkable contribution to education, alumni development and national service.

Your role as a former president of the University of Nigeria alumni association continue to stand as legacy of excellence and dedication to nation building. As an illustrious son of Ughelli Kingdom, we want to join you in celebrating this great honour.

Please accept our hearty congratulations

**HIS ROYAL MAJESTY  
EVANG.PROF.  
W.O OHARISI IIJP+(APS)  
THE OVIE OF THE  
UGHELI KINGDOM**



THE PALACE OF THE GREAT UGHELI KINGDOM, UGHELI, DELTA STATE



# Congratulations

On behalf of the entire people of Effurun-Otor Kingdom and Ughelli South in general, I, His Royal Majesty

**Dr. Avverotakpo Michael Eyareya (JP) RDN, King Eyareya II**, the Oroworere of Effurun-Otor Kingdom, wish to congratulate you **Chief Andrew Oru** on your prestigious nomination for the award of an Honourary Degree by the highly esteem University of Nigeria, Nsukka.

This award did not come to us as a surprise due to your track record of unwavering commitment, selfless leadership and remarkable contribution to education, Alumni development and national service. Your role as a former president of the University of Nigeria alumni Associations continue to stand as a legacy of excellency and dedication to nation building. We the people of Effurun-Otor kingdom want to join you in celebrating this great honour as an illustrious son of Effurun-Otor Kingdom. We are very proud to have you as one of our great sons. Please accept our heartily congratulations as a kingdom while we remain.

Yours sincerely,



**Dr. Avverotakpo Michael Eyareya (JP)  
RDN, King Eyareya II**




**OFFICE OF THE VICE PRESIDENT NATIONAL AFFAIRS**

On behalf of the entire leadership and teeming members of the National Association of Nigerian Students (NANS), I, Comr. Digbopho Tenyo, the Vice President, National Affairs, extend my heartfelt congratulations to you, **Chief Andrew Oru**, on your prestigious nomination for the award of an Honorary Degree by the highly esteemed University of Nigeria, Nsukka.

This recognition is a clear testament to your unwavering commitment, selfless leadership, and remarkable contributions to education, alumni development, and national service. Your role as a former President of the University of Nigeria Alumni Association continue to stand as a legacy of excellence and dedication to nation building.

You have remained a source of inspiration to Nigerian students and young leaders across the country, and your achievements serve as a reminder that hard work, patriotism, and service do not go unnoticed.

NANS, therefore, joins the University community and all well-meaning Nigerians in celebrating this worthy nomination. We wish you continued success as you keep flying the flag of excellence.

NANS  
Congratulations once again, Sir.



Secretariat: Odiete.  
Students Union Government Complex,  
Delta State University Abraka.

08164597607  
Education is a right, not a privilege

## URHOBO YOUTH LEADER'S ASSOCIATION (UYLA)

**MOTTO: UNITED WE STAND AND DIVIDED WE FALL**

**OFFICE:**  
Don-Chisel Hotel  
No. 28 Oguname Town  
Along Okpare Owor Road,  
Olomu, Ughelli.



On behalf of the entire leadership and members of the Urhobo youth leaders Association worldwide, extend our heartfelt congratulations to you on the prestigious nomination for an award of honorary Degree by the highly rated university of Nigeria Nsukka.

The recognition did not come to us as a surprise, it is a clear testament of your immense contribution, commitment, selfless leadership and remarkable advancement towards Education upliftment, Alumni development and National service to your people.

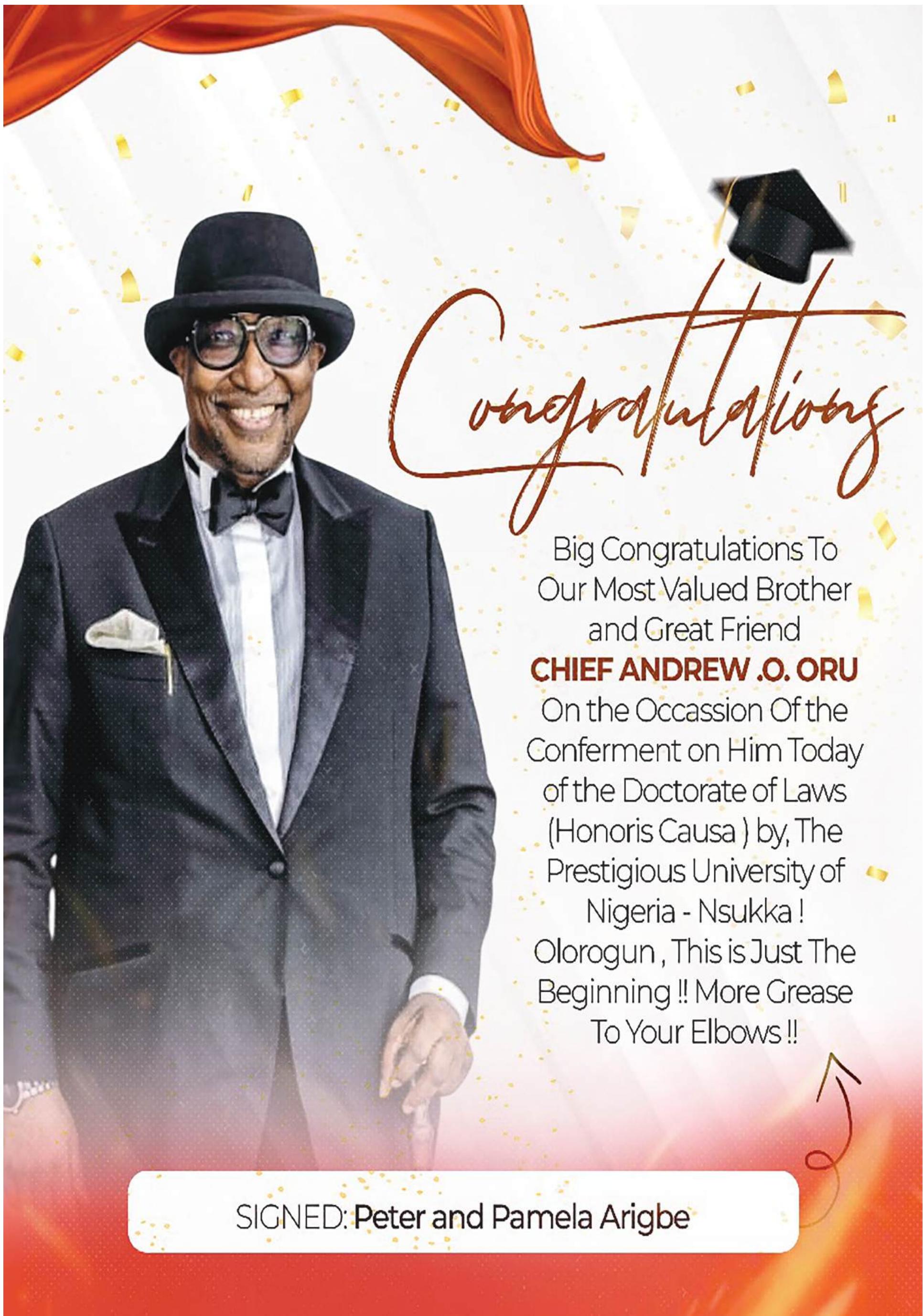
The legacy you left behind as a former president of the University of Nigeria Alumni Association speaks volumes for you in nation building. You are a source of inspiration to the younger generation across the length and breadth of our Nation, and your achievements serve as a reminder that hard work, dedication and patriotism are noticed in our society today. We, join you, the University community, family members, friends, well wishes in celebrating this great honor done you.

Your nomination is a pride to every Urhobo youths and leaders.  
Wishing many more wins.

**Chief Andrew Oru**

Amb. Chief Samuel Onoriode Oghotomo  
National President  
08035452466

Chief Atiti Augustine Ogheneovo (PhD)  
National Secretary  
08033944179



The other day in church, a Priest recounted an experience he had as a young Seminarian. Although it happened many years ago, it was an experience that has obviously stayed with him and has probably helped in shaping his priesthood. He had come to visit his parents in Lagos from his seminary in Ibadan during an Open Day. For reasons, many of us who had once stayed in a boarding school can identify with, he felt reluctant to leave home. Seconds turned into minutes and minutes into hours until he found himself running late. He then wished he could grow wings and fly because he knew the punishment awaiting late comers – again, many of us can identify with this. He sat in front of a commercial bus and begged the driver to step on the gas. The driver, being young and daring, obliged. They sped merrily along until the first check point. The driver fumbled for some change and he was passed. The Seminarian in his anxiety, however felt the process took too long and he requested for 'the settlement money'. He thus became the 'conductor' and 'settler' at other check points. The contradiction in a Seminarian bribing Police Officers on the road never crossed his mind all this while.

All he thought about was the exigency of the moment – again, many can identify with this in our journey of life. All went well and he began to feel he could beat the clock. They were nearing the final check point after all. Then he saw a longer than usual queue ahead and his anxiety returned. When it got to their turn, he offered the usual 'egunje'. The inspecting Officer refused and insisted on seeing the vehicle papers. He increased the amount. The Officer still refused and instead, ordered them to pack. Everyone was upset including the colleagues of the Officer who felt he was being unnecessarily officious while denying them due gratification. Everyone grumbled, loudly. But the Officer stood his ground unperturbed. It turned out the papers were not complete and this led to a longer wait with their anger dissolving into pleas. At the end, the Seminarian was late and was duly punished. But he learnt a more important lesson in the narrative

The death of President Muhammadu Buhari penultimate Sunday has unarguably upended political permutations over the 2027 political succession, putting Atiku Abubakar in an unprecedentedly favoured position.

Though Buhari was not expected to be on the ballot, his image was largely expected to weigh seriously on the options open to his followers. The myth of the 12 million votes around Buhari had, however, been substantially eroded with the delivery of just five million of such votes to Tinubu in 2023.

Even more, questions over the Buhari political persona had also arisen upon continuing examination of his not so palatable credentials as a civilian president.

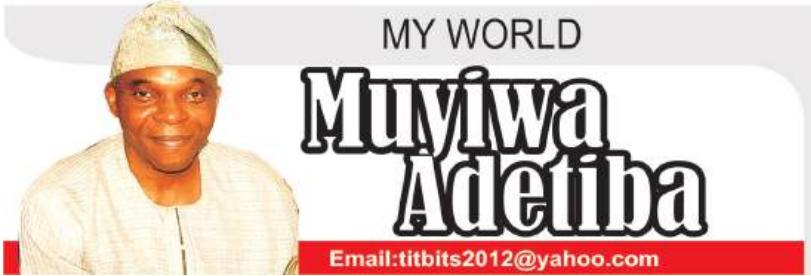
Irrespective of Buhari's diminished political clout at the point of his death, Buhari was still expected to weigh significantly for the ruling All Progressives Congress, APC, in the North. His help was very much needed, given the equally appalling credentials of his successor, President Bola Tinubu, so far in governance.

It is in the face of that void that Nigeria's most persistent presidential marathoner, Atiku Abubakar, is now expected to draw from. Indeed, since he commenced his quest in 1993, Atiku has perhaps faced no brighter prospects as he does in 2027. The incumbent who came to power with just about 38% of the votes two years ago is bogged down by about the most challenging economic indices that have made even some of his political choristers to have a rethink.

Even the Nollywood community, which backed Tinubu on account of his historic support for the showbiz community, has seen several recants.

However, Atiku's prospects are challenged by some formidable challenges, the first of which is the lethargy among many Nigerians over his long presidential marathon.

What does Atiku want? Though this correspondent from close quarters has observed Atiku to be about the best prepared presidential candidate in recent Nigerian history, many are suggesting that he should rather step aside and play



MY WORLD

Muyiwa Adeiba

Email: titbits2012@yahoo.com

## Those the country needs in a new political party

of a Police Officer who insisted on due process and a man of God who tried to circumvent the process. This Priest might have forgotten many of the things he learnt at the seminary to date but he has not forgotten what he learnt on that day. The day the practicality of Christianity, or simply being a good Citizen, was played out in a most unlikely place, by a most unlikely person.

How many of us can identify with this story? How many of us have not allowed the exigencies of the times to blunt our sense of what is proper? What is upright? Many of us have dulled our conscience as a result of where we work and what we do. Many of us prefer to swim with the current because it is convenient and besides, 'everybody is doing it'. Worse, many of us, like the colleagues of this Police Officer, are actually impatient and often antagonistic towards those who try to do the right thing. 'His own is too much' we often say to that one person in our office, our estate, our family, who dares to swim against the current by insisting on the proper process no matter how long it takes. It is lonely,

vulnerable and dangerous to insist on swimming against the current in Nigeria just as it is easy to doubt one's sanity where everybody else is mad. But that is what the Holy Book expects of us when it asks us to be sheep among wolves. But hypocrites that we are, we prefer to be wolves in sheep clothing. Or sheep when people are watching and wolves when it is just us.

There were probably a few politicians in church as this Priest was expatiating on the theme of being sheep among wolves and in the process, described politicians as wolves among sheep; ravenous wolves devouring any form of sacredness, of uprightness in the polity. My gaze however, went to a particular politician who was sitting not too far from me. He has been a Parliamentarian, a Minister and a two term Governor. He is now one of the moving spirits of the new coalition. Just as he was

one of the moving spirits of the current party in power. I wondered what must be going through his mind.



The economic interest of the country must take precedence over sectional and private interests. Many in this coalition have had their chance and fluffed it

Can he in honesty claim to have kept his head when all politicians around him were losing theirs? Has he always tried to do the proper thing if it meant swimming against the current? Could his over two decades of being engaged by different government hierarchies be said to be in service to his community, his State, his country and to humanity? Or were they in search of power, relevance and self-gratification? Unfortunately, I see him, as many in that coalition, as villains who are now pretending to be victims; wolves who now want the rest of us to see them as sheep.

Nigeria does need a new mainstream political party. Urgently. But it has to be based on ideology. It has to be made of people who genuinely want to fight the corrupt system. It has to be driven by patriotism and a steadfast desire to lift people out of poverty. It has to be a movement of people who are ready to give merit its place and not another 'emilokan'. The economic interest of the country must take precedence over sectional and private interests. Many in this coalition have had their chance and fluffed it. They have moved from party to party with nothing but power and relevance as their motivation. They are like the proverbial old wine in a new skin; neither the skin, nor the wine is compatible. They are in the main, wolves in sheep clothing with no difference between them and those currently in power. None of those who now claim to be fighting for the masses left power until they found themselves out of favour. None tried to change the system from within. For them to now say 'we are hungry' is mocking the rest of us.

I tried to avoid eye contact with this politician so I didn't look his way. But I guess he must have squirmed in his seat a bit during the homily if he had any conscience left. No one who has been in power in any shape or form in the last two decades can absolve himself from the rot the country is wallowing in. None should therefore aspire to lead the new party the country seeks.



POLITICAL NOTES

Emmanuel Aziken

Tel: 08052201189  
Email: aziken@gwg.ng

## Can Atiku be trusted as President?

the role of agodfather.

As early as 2002, Atiku had through a private NGO, the National Democratic Project, NDP, steered by Dr Usman Bugaje, compiled a blueprint on the Nigerian question. That blueprint pertained to various issues concerning Nigeria. Remarkably, the NDP was housed in a building on Samora Machel Street, Asokoro, Abuja, nearly opposite the residence of the famed but deceased PDP leader, Chief Anthony Anenih.

According to one source, Anenih had, one night, while President Olusegun Obasanjo was still in power, taken the president to the NDP office, suggesting that it was Atiku's campaign office for the 2003 election.

Whatever, Atiku's marathon through several presidential runs has so far yielded nothing. The attempt in 2023, which was another good opportunity, was destroyed by the emergence of Peter Obi and the Obidient Movement.

Ahead of the 2027 election, political strategists across the country are weighing the chances of two of the most

viable presidential candidates who can damage Tinubu.

While Obi is obviously about the most popular with a likeability coefficient far above Atiku and other oppositionists across the country, the problem with Obi is his inability to protect his votes. Just like 2023, his rivals, it is feared, could ride roughshod over him even in his Southeast and South-South base.

The Edo State APC chairman, Jarret Tenebe, and the state commissioner for information, made a Freudian Slip at the beginning of this week when they justified the restriction on Obi's movement when they claimed at various occasions that he was too popular in the state and causing stampedes during his visits.

However, just as in 2023, Obi's capacity to protect his votes is arguable. It is a fact that is causing many within his inner circle to contemplate him running as a vice-presidential candidate to Atiku in 2027.

Atiku it is claimed, is in pole position among the Northern political elites to tap into what is left of the Buhari machine. Should Atiku run with Obi and the mass of the North vote for him, he, unlike Obi has the potential of protecting his votes against whatever infringements may be committed by rival political parties. It is



Atiku's prospects are challenged by some formidable challenges, the first of which is the lethargy among many Nigerians over his long presidential marathon

assumption that is making many around Obi reconsider in their frenzied desperation to stop a second term for President Tinubu.

The Atiku camp in this direction is believed to have long offered Obi that he, Atiku, would serve one term during which they would push for a constitutional amendment to provide for a single five-year term.

His proposal is different from Obi's offer of serving a single four-year term under existing constitutional provisions.

While some strategic players around Obi are said to be inclining towards Atiku, the mass of the Obidient family is forswearing such a proposal. Obi or nothing is their chant.

Obi himself is said to be confused, a situation that is now propping up other possible Southern options like Rotimi Amaechi for the Atiku camp.

But why should Atiku not sit it out and crown Obi or someone else as president? According to some strategists, the Northern electorate will not die for a Southern candidate if his votes are taken away from him. They recall the case of MKO Abiola who, even though he won in the North, was abandoned during the struggle.

So, with the option of Atiku increasingly becoming probable as a viable candidate, the question is, can this presidential marathoner be trusted on his words for one term?

It is a question that worries many who have scrutinised the Atiku persona. They point to the sense of entitlement that Atiku carries. Atiku has, in the last few years, been withdrawing more and more into a Northern, if not Fulani, agenda against this once-famed nationalistic tendencies.

With Ibo and Yoruba wives, many from across the country were able to feel comfortable around Atiku. But as one strategist told your correspondent earlier this week, as Atiku grows older, he begins to incline more to his home. That is the fear. That is, should the opposition coalesce around Atiku to tackle the APC, will power ever return to the South if they succeed? Can Atiku be trusted on his word?

I cherish good news. I look forward to good and heartwarming news. It in this regard that I was jubilating earlier in the week when I read two major good news items from my state, Delta. One, the approval of Otovwodo flyover on the East-West Road in Ughelli North Local Government Area, by the Delta State Governor, Elder Sheriff Oborevwori and the Delta State Executive Council. Many lives have been lost at this critical junction that links Ughelli North in Delta Central Senatorial District to Isoko North Local Government Area in Delta South Senatorial District. The overtime accidents became rampant with increased traffic to Asaba, the state capital. Deltans from at least 10 local government areas use that route to Asaba. The federal government should have done the flyover during the reconstruction of the East-West Road, but didn't. The Delta State Government approved this flyover and another critical flyover at Uromi Junction in Agbor, headquarters of Ika South LGA. I have been agitating for the construction of the Otovwodo flyover for many years. My hometown, Eghwu (Ewhu), is off the East West Road, so I am forced to pass through Otovwodo junction when going to Ewhu with trepidation. Some articulated vehicles pass through the junction as if it is part of the less busy portion of the East-West Road, thereby endangering the lives of other road users. The second good news is putting a bite on the Delta State Electricity Power Sector Bill, 2024, which Governor Oborevwori signed into law some time ago. According to the Delta State Commissioner for Economic Planning, Mr. Sonny Ekedayen, "we now have a clear pathway towards providing reliable and steady electricity supply to Deltans at competitive prices." The Commissioner further said that the state government had adopted a mini-grid model that will allow multiple independent operators to provide end-to-end electricity services in various locations across Delta State. The Delta State Government embarked on such a project in the past but it was abandoned. One thing you must give to the current administration is that no project gets abandoned. In fact, uncompleted and abandoned projects by the past administrations have either been completed, work is going on or there are plans to resurrect them. I said in a previous article that this power project is a game changer. There is currently an

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## DELTA STATE: What is good is good and what is bad is bad

army of unemployed young men and women in Delta State. Some of them want to engage in useful economic activities. Stable and affordable electricity supply is just what some of them need. The other critical factor is making Delta State safer. We need improvement in security. This will naturally attract more investors and make our people go back to their farms unhindered.

I commend Gov. Oborevwori while awaiting these projects to commence. Some people would say, "why you dey thank am? Nor be in work?" Definitely. That is why he ran for the governorship. He is only doing what he was elected to do. But you know in Urhobo land, when someone comes from his own farm or work, you greet him/her "doooh" which can mean welcome or you have done well. That's all I am doing. But if I may ask, what about his predecessors who should have done some of the projects being done in the state but didn't or abandoned them? What about the federal government that should have constructed the Otovwodo flyover but didn't? Criticise when necessary, but also acknowledge even if you don't want to praise people for doing jobs they

applied for.

This brings me to the local government areas. During my last visit to Delta, I saw that the state government was doing a lot. Even in my Ewhu Kingdom, work has gone far on the Orere bridge, although I consider the pace of work slow. The state footprints are in many local governments, although a lot of grumbling is still going on. What are local government area chairmen doing? Your humongous monthly allocations can do a lot for our people. This is no time to put your light under the table. Showcase your activities. You are closest to our people. Are there still pupils in your primary schools sitting on the floor? Do they study in classrooms with leaky roofs? What is the state of your primary health care facilities? Deltans' lives matter. Can your primary health facilities provide basic services or stabilize a patient in a critical condition before being transferred to a state government hospital nearby? If not, you are failing. Local governments must complement the state government.

I have not been to a Delta State government hospital recently, but I learnt that the government is upgrading infrastructure and providing equipment. Ekedayen also said new hospital



**One thing you must give to the current administration is that no project gets abandoned**

equipment will be purchased. But youths in Udu Local Government Area protested recently about the alleged neglect of their local government. The videos of the Udu General Hospital I saw do not look good. The premises were flooded. The commissioner for health, Dr. Joseph Onaejeme, needs to look into it. I will try to visit a state government hospital the next time I am in Delta. In Lagos, the state government hospitals have gone far in terms of infrastructure and equipment. That is where my family uses for dental related-matters. The Nigerian factor is there among the staff, but the equipment and dentists are good.

**EWHU GRAMMAR SCHOOL** Let me go back to my hometown. Ewhu Grammar School is the only government secondary school in the town. There are some challenges which need to be sorted out. An ICT centre was put in place by the Nigerian Content and Development Monitoring Board and facilitated by the immediate past Deputy President of the Senate, HE Ovie Omo-Agege. A few computers in the centre and all the batteries powering the inverters need attention. I urge our current senator, Okakure Ede Dafinone's office to sort out the matter. It is minor, I was told. To our commissioner for Secondary Education, Mrs. Rose Ezewu, the science laboratories are outdated. The old students, I learnt, volunteered to intervene, but work has stopped. Please intervene because the science students are greatly affected. Let them resume the new session with upgraded laboratories. Also, water is a problem. The school has a borehole, and generator, but buying fuel continuously is a challenge. It needs a solar system to be installed to power the pumping machines and save the school money to continuously buy fuel. They also need a new water tank. Also, some classrooms in the school do not have doors and windows while the ceilings are broken. Finally, there is a teachers' shortage. Those posted there do not stay due to lack of accommodation for teachers. The solution is to build teachers' quarters or post only indigenes to the school. Ewhu has the manpower. Just recruit more indigenes.

**NB: I am not representing or writing on behalf of any constituted authority in Ewhu. I am writing as a concerned Ewhu son on behalf of some other concerned Ewhu sons. I could have gone the official route, but the Ewhu people who sent me need to know that I delivered their messages.**

There are books and there are books. In this age of Fast Cash, many Nigerians do not read especially when all they need to drive big cars and drink exotic wine is paint all sorts of obnoxious deals with the Yahoo brush. There is trouble waiting for everyone.

I am glad Offiong Esua took pains to put his experience in writing. He is not poor and did not make money by shortchanging others. Yes, this man lives in the United States and has worked hard for all his money, both at home and abroad.

His book, 'Trenchant Focus' is trending. What stands him out is that although his family background helped in the beginning, Esua did not let that turn him into a new kid on the fast lane. America can ruin spoilt kids who enjoyed the best of life before landing into an independent environment.

He penned his father's influence. "I did not spend all my monthly allowance emanating from Dad's Private Banking International Account in New York. He would later purchase a brand new Nissan 200 SX for me from Tom Gray Nissan, Houston. That was my prefatory start in the United States. I had a nice cash liquidity and functional cushion of sorts, within my first twelve months, in Houston."

Some others blessed with monthly pay from dad would sit back, paint the town red and end up broke. Esua did not dare that. He was making extra cash serving at Lancaster Hotel, where at the end of everyday, an extra 100 dollars boosted his account. And just as he earned, the young man saved regularly.

Ever willing to make more money, Esua did extra jobs right from his undergraduate days at the University of Houston to post graduate studies at the University of Houston - Clear Lake. Today, you find him in Real Estate, Security and numerous investments even after retiring from the Texas Department of Criminal Justice.

Making money drew questionable attention. A top official of Chase Bank

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## ESUA : Trenchantly focused

thought the Nigerian was into drugs. The book opens up: "So I asked to meet with her. At the meeting, she was direct and non-plussed, retorting that I had the nerve to launder drug proceeds through the bank.

"Alas! It hit me - she thought I was a drug dealer. Also, I was very sure, she was not oblivious to the fact that I received a monthly stipend from my father's Chase Private Banking International Account in New York. What threw her for the loop were my incessant daily cash deposits. Unbeknownst to her, I bussed tables at Lancaster Hotel."

From those savings, Esua did not relent. He spent 20 years at the Department of Criminal Justice and retired as a Senior District Parole Officer. And his eyes were always at home to invest. Real Estate gained much, especially in Lagos. This is detailed in 'Trenchant Focus'.

"I purchased four contiguous plots in Ajah, Lagos, several years ago. Today, the course way is the gateway and route to the Dangote Refinery and a proposed airport. The fenced lots are today valued at 500,000 dollars."

By dint of hard work, life can only get better. Retired but not tired, Esua still goes

out daily in search of daily bread. He is a Front Desk boss at three high rise complexes in the Galleria area of Houston. And his bank account tells the story.

"I have been able to accrete a six-figure bank saving at the Chase Bank in Houston, Texas, of 205,000 dollars in cash of which 71,000 dollars is the current cash value, from a 104,000 dollars interest-bearing account and have gotten a 70,000 dollars lump sum payment on retirement from the Parole Division of the Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ).

Some may argue that Dr. Eyo Esua buttered his son's bread. Yes, to some extent. There have been cases of children of billionaires who squandered their father's wealth. The truth is that Offiong did not rely entirely on what was given him by the family. However, he acknowledges that support.

"The truth is that stellar maturation in any field of endeavour starts with one step. Even the high-flying apotheosis of wealth - the Rothschilds, Vanderbilts, Carnegies - had a progenitor who was actionable and performative in the early going. Wealth, riches and material success,

are not the sole preserves of any privileged medley."

In a way, I liken Esua to Gen. Emeka Ojukwu. Both men were close to their fathers, spent time in Lagos and attended universities abroad. They veered off the courses they were admitted and pursued Masters degrees. Ojukwu abandoned Law for History at Oxford. Esua dumped Architecture at Houston.

The book reveals more. "I got admission to the School of Architecture at the University of Houston. I passed to the Second year. But to the consternation of my father, a medical doctor, I changed my major. Cutting clipboard to make building models and the obligation time mandated in the design studio did not help with my itinerant persona. At times, I wonder if I should have stuck with it. But deep down, I think I was more validated in the hustle."

Ojukwu was Igbo and bore Emeka. Esua is married to an Igbo woman and has a son named Emeka. Ojukwu was an Army officer. Esua's father, a medical doctor, was an Army officer. Ojukwu's half brother, Tom Bigger, died in battle as an Army officer. Esua's brother, Eyo, retired from the Army as a Colonel.

Ojukwu spoke fluent Yoruba. Esua does not only speak Yoruba, his mother was Yoruba, daughter of Justice Olumuyiwa Jibowu, the first Nigerian High Court judge. Sir Louis Ojukwu lived in Lagos, presiding over many corporate organisations. Dr. Eyo Esua, operated from Lagos, as proprietor of Ada Hospital.

I have enjoyed every bit of 'Trenchant Focus'. It is on Amazon. I am going to ask Esua for one big favour. Copies of the book should be donated to schools in Calabar, his home State, Abeokuta, his maternal home and Enugu, the land of his wife.

The bottom line is that people should believe in themselves and not rely entirely on manner from parents. Esua comes from a well-to-do family. He attaches so much importance to that name. His grandfather, Eyo Esua, conducted elections in Nigeria in the first Republic. The old man refused to dance naked, like the present INEC.

## While he moves on, she must mourn forever

They buried her on a Saturday. His girlfriend even attended the burial. By Sunday, he was being advised to "be strong," "start eating well," and "not let himself go." One week later, the jokes about "finding someone to help him around the house" had already begun. And before the one-year anniversary of her death, he was remarried.

Let's flip the coin or turn the tables, the expectations would shift drastically. She, the widow, would have been told to stay low, to cover her hair, cut her hair in some cultures to "respect the memory of her husband." She even has a mourning uniform she's required to wear for the next one year. Any sign of laughter, joy, or lipstick within the first year would have been labeled *disrespectful*. Remarrying? A taboo. Society would accuse her of having "moved on too fast," or even having a hand in the death of her husband, even if she was only trying to move at all.

The first time he laughed again, people smiled and said, "He's healing,



he is a strong man."

The first time she laughed again, people whispered, "She didn't love him enough."

That's the world widows live in.

She had barely returned from burying her husband when someone advised her to "dress more modestly now."

Her phone was silent, her home was full of watchers, not comforters.

Meanwhile, across the street, a widower received cooked meals and prospects of remarriage by the third week.

Death does not treat men and women differently. But society does.

And nowhere is that more obvious than in how we let widowers breathe and force widows to suffocate.

This isn't just culture. This is imbalance dressed in the garment of tradition. And no, it isn't love that compels the widower to remarry quickly. It is permission, social, spiritual, and systemic permission.

Our societies have always been generous to men in grief. His loneliness is urgent, his needs valid, his healing prioritized. The widow, on the other hand, is often asked to perform her grief, to wear her sorrow like a permanent badge. Her loneliness is seen as endurance. Her needs? A nuisance.

We wrap the widower in prayers and second chances. We wrap the widow in silence and suspicion.

Our foremothers were forced to stay back and "keep the home," sometimes even denied inheritance or pushed into levirate marriages. Many spent decades nursing children and carrying the weight of legacies they didn't choose. And even today, in urban cities with smart-phones and hashtags, women still hide their desires, their longing, their right to start over for fear of being labeled impatient, indecent, or insensitive.

Why does a man remarry after one year and earn congratulations while a woman remarrying after three is asked if she ever truly loved her husband?

Why do in-laws turn from mourners to moral police? Why do friends and

church members become monitors of how she walks, who she talks to, and what time she gets home? Why does widowhood become a prison while widower-hood is a pathway to pity and promotion?

A society that makes it easier for men to grieve and start over, while forcing women to wallow and wither, is not preserving culture it is preserving cruelty.

When a man loses his wife, people gather to comfort him. When a woman loses her husband, people gather to monitor her.

He is allowed to feel lonely, she is expected to feel grateful for ever having been loved.

His healing is a necessity. Hers is a scandal.

The widow is expected to cry in silence. The widower is allowed to laugh again in public with praise.

We grieve with him. We judge her.

Widowhood is not just loss it is surveillance, suspicion, and social sentencing.

Her ring becomes a shackle, his ring becomes a memory.

In the name of tradition, we have asked women to bury themselves beside their husbands while still breathing.

He's 'moving on.' She's 'disgracing the family.'

The funeral ends for the widower. But for the widow, it's just beginning.

Let's stop pretending this is culture.

It's not. It's convenience.

Convenient for patriarchy.

Convenient for tradition that only controls women.

And it ends now, not because widows need our pity but because they deserve our respect.

A man's grief is treated like a wound to be bandaged.

A woman's grief is treated like a curse to be endured.

It's time we buried these double standards and finally let women live after loss.

Grief should not come with a gender tag.

Healing should not come with shame.

Let's build a world where women are not punished for surviving what almost killed them.

Let the widow live again proudly, fully.

Tinubu's government has become a propaganda factory. A government obsessed with spectacle over substance and relentlessly pursuing self-congratulation. A governance style that prioritises the trivial over the transformative. Tinubu's government is devoted to celebrating small, often inconsequential achievements while the nation is racked by hunger, insecurity, and economic stagnation. From commissioning incomplete roads to extracting political capital from funerals, Tinubu's leadership appears trapped in superficiality. This penchant for gestures and gimmicks masks a troubling failure to check the nation's drift.

Tinubu now thinks a funeral is a project. He had to order Shettima to go and bring back President Buhari's corpse from London. There are better ways to appease the hungry folks in the North whose lives bandits have made miserable. After the funeral, Tinubu congratulated Shettima for carrying out a sombre task as if he had won an Olympic gold. A Muslim funeral, traditionally austere and devoid of fanfare, was transformed into a platform for political theatre. The idle senate, ever eager to please, has praised Tinubu for delivering a beautiful burial. The burial of Buhari has become the fourth mainland bridge. If the government could, it would have named the funeral after Tinubu. That is the extent of the self-obsession.

This fixation on frivolity is not new. Before Buhari died, Tinubu was in St Lucia for 8 days. He visited community colleges which were on holiday. He addressed the parliament of a poor population half the size of Surulere. He collected awards and disbursed scholarships to the people. He couldn't say he was looking for foreign investors, so he said he was reestablishing historical and cultural linkages. The rationale for the visit stretched credulity. With a retinue of ministers and aides, all quartered in five-star beach hotels, gulping our scarce foreign exchange in estacades, Tinubu frolicked. He astounded Gilbert Chagour's St Lucia. The St Lucia Times, a local newspaper, wondered how much of the financial burden of the visit would be borne by the peasants of the tiny island. That was the first time a president of a substantial country would visit the inconsequential island. And this president sat there for eight whole days, looking for people to meet and greet to justify the trip. Nigerians will never be told the cost of that trip.

From St. Lucia, Tinubu jetted to Brazil for a two-day BRICS summit as an observer. The conference lasted two days.



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## Tinubu: Too Supercilious, Often Superficial and Too Selfish

After the conference, Tinubu vanished. He couldn't be bothered. Nigerians were left to speculate whether he had returned to St. Lucia, decamped to France, or simply gone off the grid. The president of the largest Black nation on Earth, unaccounted for. Once he learnt of Buhari's imminent death, he resurfaced. He dashed to an airport in Brazil, went through a column of what looked like a hurriedly assembled Boys Brigade unit furiously beating their band, and headed for Abuja. This pattern of absence and disengagement underscores a presidency that seems detached from the urgency of Nigeria's crises. If Buhari hadn't died, Tinubu might have stayed longer outside Nigeria.

Tinubu's elaborate celebration of small things illustrates this disconnect. Before his St. Lucia sojourn, he commissioned a 30-kilometre stretch of a 700-kilometre road. The length of the completed portion remains in dispute. Why the rush to inaugurate a project that has barely started? The answer lies in a broader pattern of superficial governance. In Abuja, Tinubu and FCT Minister Wike made a habit of commissioning small streets, one at a time. If Tinubu had built Abuja, he might have spent a century commissioning it.



This pattern of absence and disengagement underscores a presidency that seems detached from the urgency of Nigeria's crises

The amplification of minor feats isn't just a sign of emptiness, it's dubious.

Funerals are now projects, meanwhile, when bandits massacre communities, Tinubu doesn't show up.

His condolence and funeral appearances are reserved for royals and political heavyweights, whose deaths carry perceived political capital. Politicians don't attend the funerals of the poor. However, mass burials of innocent people killed by terrorists because the state is derelict in its duties should attract presidential attention. But even in optics, Tinubu's government is tone deaf.

At the recent funeral prayers for the departed Awujale, Tinubu declared that his presidential victory 'completed the history of the Yoruba'. Often, understanding the president can prove more difficult than solving a riddle. That statement is as grandiose as it is divisive. By its most benign interpretation, this ethnic framing raises questions about the extent to which his

leadership prioritises Yoruba interests. Tinubu has engaged in relentless concentration of power in the hands of the Yoruba and the arbitrary award of multi-trillion-dollar contracts to his business partners. It's

difficult to estimate how much this ethnic conception of his victory has affected Tinubu's warped evolution.

At the recent National Executive Committee meeting of the All Progressives Congress (APC), Tinubu's priorities were laid bare. It didn't include the widespread insecurity ravaging the land. He urged governors to secure land from Wike for a new APC party headquarters. His party members rose and sang what has become the international anthem of sycophancy. He milked it. Perhaps that will be another building named after him. The focus is on a new office for a political party. Not a world-class hospital. The government can foot the bill for extended stays at the London Clinic. A government out of touch with reality. A world-class hospital, equipped to treat leaders locally, would spare Tinubu frequent trips to France and save Nigeria the embarrassment of repatriating former leaders' remains from London. Yet, the audience cheered. The entire political class is complicit in this superficial agenda.

Only as an afterthought did Tinubu address the widespread hunger ravaging the country. His solution? "Wet the grass"—a euphemism for handouts. Perhaps only fearful of the anger that comes from hunger. After two years in office, Tinubu has failed to curb insecurity, boost food production, or stabilise the economy.

His administration imports food from India after removing subsidies for ordinary citizens. The only subsidies permitted are those that cushion the lavish lifestyles of political officeholders. Tinubu knows that handouts, like buckets of water thrown at a raging bushfire, cannot address the structural issues of power shortages, insecurity, and declining industrial output. Without comprehensive policies to tackle these root causes, Tinubu's gestures are as fleeting as they are ineffective. But perhaps Tinubu is the master strategist. He can make an omelette without eggs.

Tinubu's albatross is his ego and the sycophancy that surrounds him. Tinubu seeks and encourages his deification. This culture of adulation stifles accountability and emboldens a leadership style that prioritises personal glory over public good. Until Tinubu shifts his focus from self-congratulation and political conquests to substantive governance, the country will remain trapped in a cycle of unfulfilled promises and squandered. Nigerians deserve a president who confronts the nation's challenges with depth, urgency, and inclusivity—not one who revels in small victories and empty gestures. Nigeria deserves a purposeful political class.

There are moments in politics that feel less like routine appointments and more like course corrections, moments that suggest a return to substance over show. The emergence of Professor Nentawe Goshwe Yilwatda as the new National Chairman of the All Progressives Congress (APC) is one of those rare moments. It is not just a political move, it is a statement. A statement that vision, competence, and integrity are still valuable currency in Nigerian leadership.

This is a man whose track record does not need embellishment. For those of us who have worked with him, who have watched him turn crumbling systems into functional structures, watched him lead without noise and innovate without ego this appointment is not surprising. It is overdue. Professor Yilwatda represents a different kind of politics, one rooted in intellect, guided by service, and powered by results.

In a country where leadership is often a complex chessboard of power play, political maneuvering, and public skepticism, it is rare and refreshing even to find a man whose journey inspires confidence before he even takes the reins. The All Progressives Congress (APC), Nigeria's ruling party, has turned a page in its history with the emergence of Professor Nentawe Goshwe Yilwatda as its new National Chairman. This is not just a change in leadership, it is the start of a recalibration.

Professor Yilwatda is not your typical political actor. He is an academic, a digital systems engineer, a public servant with integrity, and most importantly, a leader with the technical mind of a reformer and the grassroots heart of a nation-builder. His appointment signals a quiet but profound message to Nigerians that competence, character, and clarity of vision still count.

Born on August 8, 1968, in Dungung, Kanke Local Government Area of Plateau State, Professor Yilwatda's story is one rooted in faith, discipline, and ambition. The son of a devout Christian family, his late parents, Reverend and Mrs. Toma Yilwatda, he grew up with values that blended moral strength with intellectual rigor. He pursued his primary education at LGED Primary School in Dungung and earned his GCE O-Levels from Boys' Secondary School, Gindiri, in 1986. But it was in the complex world of circuits, algorithms, and digital systems that he truly found his calling.

Graduating with a B.Eng. in Electrical/Electronic Engineering from the Federal University of Agriculture, Makurdi in 1992, he went on to secure a Master's and then a PhD in Digital Systems Engineering from ATBU Bauchi and the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, respectively. He also undertook international training in e-governance at the United Nations University in Macau, a move that would define much of his later professional trajectory.

It was at the Federal University of Agriculture, Makurdi where I had the distinct pleasure of calling him a colleague that Professor Yilwatda's visionary prowess became most evident. As Director of the ICT Directorate for over 12 years, he did not just maintain systems, he revolutionized them. From digitizing academic processes to implementing resilient IT infrastructure, his work transformed how we understood the role of technology in public institutions. He wasn't just building software, he was engineering institutional change. To watch him work was to witness precision, passion, and purpose. He had the rare ability to distill complex technological frameworks into practical solutions that met local needs. From renewable energy projects to community microgrids and cold-chain

## Things you didn't know about the new APC chairman



systems for rural sustainability Professor Yilwatda was always steps ahead, always thinking impact.

His consulting roles with organizations like the UN, World Bank, and UNDP weren't just ceremonial. They were practical extensions of his belief that technology, when purposefully deployed, could change lives. Projects like PAWA 774, which aimed to bring power solutions to underserved Nigerian communities, are testament to his belief in the power of innovation for inclusive development.

Something about Professor Nentawe Goshwe Yilwatda's rise doesn't feel accidental, it feels earned. It feels like destiny meeting preparation, like competence finally being given a stage. In a time when political appointments are often steeped in controversy and compromise, the emergence of Nentawe as the National Chairman of the All Progressives Congress (APC) cuts through the noise like a breath of

fresh air. This is a man whose journey has been defined by vision, discipline, and quiet excellence. And now, he's been handed the kind of role that could redefine the trajectory of Nigeria's ruling party.

I say this not just as a citizen or observer, but also as someone who has worked with him. As his colleague at the Federal University of Agriculture, Makurdi, I saw firsthand what it meant to lead with intellect, strategy, and unwavering integrity. What he did with the ICT Directorate was nothing short of revolutionary. So when I say the APC is in capable hands, I say it with conviction born from experience.

In 2017, President Muhammadu Buhari appointed Professor Yilwatda as the Resident Electoral Commissioner (REC) for Benue State, a period that proved to be a masterclass in electoral integrity. He was not merely a referee in the political game, he was an institutional reformer. He championed access to voting for Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) and persons with disabilities, and was instrumental in pushing for technological transparency in the electoral process. Under his leadership, the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) in Benue became a model of inclusivity and transparency. He brought order, credibility, and courage to an often-contentious process. These are qualities Nigeria desperately needs at the helm of its ruling party.

In 2023, Professor Yilwatda ran as the APC gubernatorial candidate for Plateau State. It was a closely contested election. He lost to Caleb Muttwang of the PDP by a margin of just 4%, a testament to his wide appeal and the potency of his campaign. Many others would have retreated, but not him. He followed the legal path, exhausting every avenue with dignity.

Even after the Supreme Court upheld the PDP's victory, he remained gracious, principled, and committed to the democratic process. He also served as the State Coordinator for the Tinubu-Shettima presidential campaign in Plateau State, helping to deliver key strategic outcomes

during a heated electoral season. This shows a man who not only understands electoral systems but also knows how to mobilize grassroots support in real-time political contexts.

The APC has been at a crossroads juggling internal dissent, managing national discontent, and grappling with the challenge of delivering on its mandate. What the party needs now is a Chairman who is not beholden to the stale politics of patronage and power for its own sake. What it needs is a technocrat with moral clarity and the ability to design systems, unite factions, and ignite trust. And in Professor Yilwatda, it has just that.

As someone who watched his work in the ICT Directorate at the Federal University of Agriculture, Makurdi, I can confidently say this: If he applies the same strategic foresight, calm resolve, and innovation mindset that he brought to the university to the APC, then the party is in for a renaissance. He listens, he plans, and more importantly he delivers.

Professor Yilwatda's emergence offers the APC a rare opportunity to return to first principle, to rebuild trust, foster discipline, and chart a sustainable ideological path. His tenure could become a case study in how academic brilliance, public service ethics, and political leadership can coalesce into transformative party stewardship.

Nigeria may be bruised, but it is not broken. And neither is the APC. Under Professor Nentawe Goshwe Yilwatda, there is now a glimmer a strong one of reform, restoration, and redemption. This, indeed, may be the political breakthrough the party and the nation have long awaited.

When I served as a collation officer under Professor Yilwatda while he was Benue's REC. What I saw was not just a brilliant mind but also a man of quiet, principled stubbornness. With him at the helm of APC, I believe a new kind of leadership is possible.

Not all leadership comes with noise. Some come with clarity, competence, and quiet strength. In Prof. Nentawe Yilwatda, the APC may have just found its compass.

That said, Professor Yilwatda steps into this role with challenges that should not be overlooked. His background, steeped in academia and technocratic service, may be seen by some as lacking the kind of street-level political muscle often required to navigate the complex, sometimes unruly internal dynamics of a major political party. The APC, like many Nigerian political machines, is layered with power blocs, competing interests, and ideological gaps. Steering such a ship requires not just competence, but calculated toughness. There may also be doubts about whether his calm and methodical nature can withstand the pressure of high-stakes political firefighting. But if anything, it is this very blend of quiet firmness and intellectual clarity that could disrupt the old order and set a new tone for party discipline, strategic thinking, and national political discourse.

For those who assume Professor Yilwatda's calm demeanor means he lacks the grit for political leadership, they simply haven't met the version of him that stands his ground when it matters. Beneath that gentlemanly exterior is a firm, principled resolve, a kind of righteous stubbornness that doesn't flinch under pressure. I witnessed it firsthand during my time as a collation officer under his leadership while he served as Resident Electoral Commissioner. He was fair, but immovable. Respectful, yet unshakably firm. That rare blend of gentleness and steel is exactly what the APC and indeed Nigeria needs at this moment.

With him, the party is not just in safe hand, it is in steady, visionary hands.

## After NEC, to reclaim relevance

By Luminous Jannamike, Abuja

BASED on decisions taken at the 101st National Executive Committee (NEC) meeting, the People's Democratic Party (PDP) has chosen Ibadan, Oyo State, as the venue for its 2025 Elective National Convention, an event that could reshape the party's role in Nigeria's political future.

For PDP members, state chairmen, youth leaders, and party elders, this is a high-stakes gathering where strategies to counter defections and take on the All Progressives Congress (APC) will be tested.

The decision to host the convention in the South, along with growing calls for a southern presidential candidate, signals a bold push to unify the party and restore its influence.

But as internal divisions deepen, many party members, from Lagos to Kano, are asking: can Ibadan bring unity, or will it further expose the cracks?

### A Party Hit by Defections

The PDP is navigating a turbulent political phase. The defection of former

## PDP banks on Ibadan convention

Vice President Atiku Abubakar to the African Democratic Congress (ADC), along with former Senate President David Mark, has shaken its support base in the North.

In the South, Nyesom Wike's alignment with the APC and his faction of former governors have further weakened party cohesion. These departures have left PDP leaders, from ward level to executives in states, searching for a way to rebuild the party's strength against the APC's dominance.

Choosing Ibadan for the 2025 convention is a calculated attempt to rally southern supporters and respond to complaints of northern dominance.

Chief Olabode George, a former Deputy National Chairman of the party, stressed the need for unity.

"We have had crises in the past, and this is not the first time. But I believe that those who still love this party can come together and resolve our differences," he said.

For many southern members, this is a chance to push for power rotation. But some in the North are wary of being sidelined in leadership decisions.

With Governor Seyi Makinde of Oyo State playing a central role in hosting the

convention, his influence in the South is growing. This places him at the heart of internal power plays involving Wike's dwindling camp and northern leaders like Governor Bala Mohammed of Bauchi State. Across the country, PDP members see the Ibadan convention as a decisive test of unity and strategy.

### Rebuilding Strategy

The PDP is entering the convention with a multi-pronged approach aimed at addressing internal concerns.

At the centre is the push for a southern presidential candidate, seen as a way to rebuild trust in southern states like Lagos, Rivers, and Anambra.

A state chairman from the South-South, speaking exclusively to Saturday Vanguard, explained the sentiment.

"Our members are frustrated by the party's bias towards the North since 2011. The Ibadan convention is our chance to show what the South can offer."

"In 2027, a southern candidate could help us unite and challenge President Tinubu. If we present a northern candidate, Tinubu might use it to gain sympathy and win southern votes," he warned.

While many southern members share this view, some in the North are concerned about losing ground.

A party elder from Kano told Saturday

Vanguard after the 101st NEC meeting of the party in Abuja: "The North has always been the PDP's backbone. If the Ibadan convention leans too much to the South, we could alienate our core base. Unity must come first."

Acting National Chairman Umar Damagum faces the tough job of balancing these regional interests to keep the party together. The PDP's longstanding tradition of zoning remains a sensitive issue.

To address defections, Damagum has instructed the party's legal team to go after lawmakers who retained their seats after decamping to the APC or ADC.

In places like Delta and Akwa Ibom, where defections have hit the party hard this year, this move is seen as necessary. Party loyalists in Delta welcomed it as a firm stand against betrayal and a way to regain legislative strength.

Chief George also pointed to the constitutional backing for the legal fight.

"Section 109(1)(g) of the 1999 Constitution says a member of a House of Assembly shall vacate his seat if he defects from the party that sponsored him before the end of the term," he stated.

The PDP is also countering talk of a merger between the ADC and other opposition parties. Damagum has dismissed it, insisting that defectors are returning.

Continues on [www.vanguardngr.com](http://www.vanguardngr.com)

The news of a new Nigerian Consulate in Houston has sent waves of excitement across the US, particularly among Nigerians who have long endured the hassle of traveling to cities like Atlanta, Georgia, New York or Washington DC for consular services.

No longer will they need to incur extra costs for accommodation and transportation or take time off work to access these essential services.

The new development is a welcome relief, and the majority of Nigerians who can now access the new consulate are overjoyed, anticipating a more streamlined, enhanced and efficient Consular services.

For far too long, Nigerians in Houston and some other states in the US have faced the difficult choice of either traveling over 689 miles to Atlanta or returning to Nigeria for matters of simple passport renewal, passport replacement and other needed Consular services.

Both options were costly and inconvenient, with the chaotic and stressful conditions of relying on private groups that offer inadequate Consular services at exorbitant fees.

However, the news of a new Nigerian Consulate in Houston,

## Nigerians in Texas, surrounding states, to benefit from new Houston Consulate

has brought them a sense of relief and hope, as many seem excited over the prospect of having a dedicated consulate that will alleviate the dissatisfaction challenges they face countless times.

With the new consulate in view, following the recent meeting between Mayor Pro Tem Martha Castex-Tatum, representing, Mayor John Whitmire and Chairman/CEO, Nigerians in Diaspora Commission, Hon. Abike Dabiri-Erewa, where both parties discussed enhancing trade, diaspora engagement, and consular representation for the large Nigerian population in the city, Nigerians have breathed a sign of relief, finally escaping inconvenient and costly options.

Consular Hub also gathered from the report

from the Nigerian Community in the state, that the new development is a significant improvement in assessing Consular services for Nigerians.

Coming with promises of less wait times, increased efficiency, faster visa processing, enhanced accessibility, and stronger representation, that will ultimately benefit the growing Nigerian population, enabling them to engage more effectively with local authorities and businesses.

While it also garnered widespread acclaim from Nigerians in other parts of the US, with many, praising the productive and forward-looking meeting between key officials, which is set on further strengthening Nigeria-US diplomatic ties, some others reported that the proposed establishment of a

Nigerian Consulate in Houston is long overdue, saying the absence of a Consulate in the state that harbours a large population of Nigerians, has caused significant frustration and anxiety to a number of Nigerians seeking Consular services in Houston and surrounding states.

The consensus however, is that the new Consulate will unlock economic opportunities, facilitating easier interactions and collaborations between governments and citizens of both countries.

### NIGERIANS IN THE US REACT

"This is a game-changer for us. No more traveling to Atlanta for passport renewal or replacement. We will finally have a convenient and accessible Consulate in Houston" says Becky Adebayo, a Nigerian

student. For Mr. Charles Onuegbu, the new Consulate will boost trade and economic relations.

He said, "Direct flights between Nigeria and Houston will boost trade relations. This is a great opportunity for Nigerian businesses and entrepreneurs."

"Faster and more efficient visa processing will make a huge difference for Nigerians traveling to the US and for US citizens traveling to Nigeria", notes Kenneth Ibeachu, a Nigerian Professional.

A Nigerian doctor in

Atlanta, speaking on condition of anonymity, welcomes the new consulate in Houston but emphasises the importance of a crisis support system to assist Nigerians in emergencies, providing peace of mind and ensuring the consulate is equipped to handle urgent situations.

According to him, "This is long overdue. Nigerians in Houston and a few other states in the US have long yearned for a local point of contact for Consular/Passport services.

RC: 8356819

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# Healthy Living

By Shola Ogundipe

## Breakthrough discovery offers new hope for early detection of pancreatic cancer

Stories by Sola Ogundipe

In a new discovery that could reshape global cancer diagnosis and treatment, scientists at the University of California - San Diego have identified a key biological marker linked to the early development of pancreatic cancer, one of the world's most lethal malignancies.

The new study, published in *Cell Reports*, reveals that cellular stress and inflammation—often triggered by environmental factors or chemotherapy—activate a protein called STAT3. This activation, in turn, boosts another protein, Integrin  $\alpha$ 3 (ITGB3), which accelerates the growth and spread of pancreatic ductal adenocarcinoma (PDAC) - the most common and aggressive form of pancreatic cancer, responsible for the majority of deaths tied to the disease.

When researchers used drugs to block STAT3 in genetically engineered mice, the tumors grew more slowly, were less aggressive, and showed reduced potential to spread. Scientists dubbed the interaction between STAT3 and ITGB3 the "STRESS UP" gene



signature, noting it could become a crucial tool for spotting precancerous activity and predicting tumor behavior—long before symptoms appear.

Globally, pancreatic cancer remains a stubborn medical challenge. The World Health Organization estimates that over 460,000 people die from pancreatic cancer every year and in many countries, the disease is diagnosed in its advanced stages due to vague symptoms like abdominal or back pain, weight loss, jaundice, and digestive changes.

By the time patients seek help, the cancer has often progressed to stage three or four, when treatment is far less effective. The five-year

global survival rate is around 10 percent, and for late-stage diagnoses, it drops to 3 percent.

Pancreatic cancer also presents treatment difficulties due to its resistance to chemotherapy and the location of the pancreas deep within the abdomen, which limits surgical options. While surgery, radiation, and chemotherapy remain standard approaches, these are often palliative rather than curative, especially in late-stage cases. Increasingly, targeted therapies and immunotherapy are showing promise, but early detection remains the ultimate key to improving survival rates.

"If we can identify the STRESS UP signal early in patients, we might be able to prevent tumors from forming altogether—especially with drugs already on the market that are known to block STAT3," said Dr. David Cheresh, Lead Researcher and Pathologist on the UC San Diego team.

## Covid-19 pandemic aged your brain faster even if you never got sick — Study

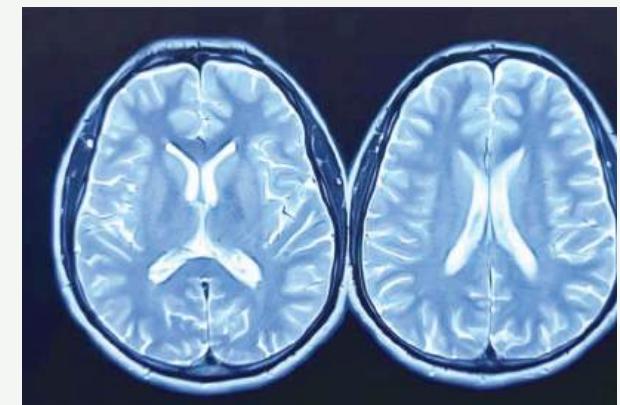
A new study, led by experts at the University of Nottingham, has found that the Covid-19 pandemic may have accelerated people's brain health, even if they were never infected with the virus.

The findings of this new study, which are published in *Nature Communications*, showed that people who lived through the Covid-19 pandemic showed signs of faster brain aging over time than those scanned entirely before it. The changes were most noticeable in older individuals, in men, and in people from more disadvantaged backgrounds.

Only participants who were infected by Covid-19 between their scans showed a drop in certain cognitive abilities, such as mental flexibility and processing speed. This may suggest that the pandemic's brain aging effect, on its own (without infection) may not cause symptoms. Also, the authors highlight that the observed brain aging may be reversible.

The study was led by a team of experts from the University's School of Medicine and was supported by the National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR) Nottingham Biomedical Research Centre and the Medical Research Council (MRC) DEMISTIFI programme.

Dr Ali-Reza Mohammadi-Nejad led the study, he said: "What surprised me most was that even people who hadn't had Covid showed significant increases in brain aging rates. It really shows how much the experience of the pandemic itself, everything from isolation to uncertainty, may have affected our brain health."



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## Why should you be uncomfortable because she doesn't want marriage?

"SHOW me a single woman over the age of 35 and I'll show you somebody who has been held that she's too fussy more times than she'll care to remember," so said Stella in her reaction to an earlier write-up on happy spinsters. In her reaction to Kate Bolick's controversial book titled *Spinster: Making A Life Of One's Own*, Stella completely disagreed with Taiwo's view on the said write-up where she moaned it was no fun being a spinster. She continued: "In the bizarre and baffling world of human relationships, being choosy about the person you want to spend your life with is considered a bad thing. You can be fussy about your choice of sofa, or where to go on holiday but when it comes to the single most important decision you'll ever make in your life, the message seems to be just settle down. Anything is better than nothing as long as you don't end up on the shelf."

"I clearly recall in my mid 30s (when I was just perching on the shelf but not beyond rescue) dating a man I had doubts about. He was nice enough but wasn't much fun and seldom made me laugh. I lost count of the number of friends and relatives who urged me to ignore the fact that he was little dull because 'I was getting on in life and he had a good job'. 'You've got your friends to have fun with. He'll get snapped up if you let him go' was the consensus. Well, I did let him



go and they were right – he was snapped up. I wondered then if I would later regret some of the decisions I made about boyfriends. Now at 49 years old, I can say I don't."

"I'm glad and rather proud that I didn't allow myself to feel pressured or panicked into being with somebody who didn't feel right, as so many of my friends did. In fact, the very same women who urged me to be less fussy are now the ones who tell me how much they envy my life. They're the ones stuck at home with moody teenagers who are not likely to leave home until they're 30, and a boring, lazy husband

they don't seem to even like, let alone love. I have freedom, a good amount of ~~disposable~~ income and only myself to please.

"According to statistics, about one in four women in urban areas will be single by the time they hit 40. It's crazy to think it's because none had the opportunity to marry. Today's modern, self-supporting woman doesn't

feel the need to get married out of duty, fear or social pressure. Like all the unmarried women I know, I'm not anti-married, I'm asked most often whether I worry about growing old alone with no children to look after me. Yes I do. But having children doesn't mean they will be on hand to take care of you as I've recently witnessed with one elderly neighbour who hasn't seen nor heard of her son, an only child, since her stroke last year. A lot of friends who gave their blood and sweat for their children's foreign education now have children who sneer at coming back home for anything – except maybe quickly come home for their

parent's funeral then leg it back as quickly as they could.

"The good news is that once you are over 45, the pep talks about being too fussy tail off. The bad news is, this is when the pity kicks in. Yet all my spinster friend in their 40s and 50s are strong, feisty women who are still as proudly fussy as they ever were. Sadly, some people just can't seem to make their peace with the idea that a woman can be unmarried and happy. But as I look at friends trapped in miserable marriages, I rather feel the joke is on them," she concluded.

"As a little girl, I dreamed of a white wedding dress. It wasn't until I actually ordered one, 30 years later, that I realised the truth – I didn't want to be anyone's wife," said Mandy, a 45 year old solicitor. "As soon as he made one silly mistake, I called off my wedding ten years ago in what I now realise was an act of self-sabotage. Since then, every failed attempt at a romantic relationship has only confirmed the suspicion I had then – for me, marriage would be like forcing a round peg into a square hole".

Reacting to Kate Bolick's engrossing memoir, she said: "I am more convinced than ever that being unmarried by choice is a growing and legitimate trend. When the author eulogises the 'extravagant pleasures' of being alone, she speaks for so many women who are solo not because we've been

passed over by men – but because we have passed men over. We are capable, high-earning women who are opting for a life alone because we prefer it. Alone, not lonely. There's difference. The other day, I woke up, got myself a cup of coffee before driving to my office. When I got home, I had a lovely takeaway that I popped into the oven which I watered down with a good wine. After dinner, I went through a brief or two before making a cup of herbal tea. I then slipped between the crisp sheets of my king-sized bed with my giant teddy beside me. Perfection.

"If you ask me how that same day would have passed with any of my last three ex-boyfriends, my answer would be somewhat tedious, very stressfully, and with hidden fears of frustration. I would have been drawn into a dozen logistical nightmares over accommodating his life before I could even think about mine. He would have wanted a far more complicated dinner than a take-away. Pounded Yam maybe – and I hate that stuff. We would have then watched a boring programme until the early hours, too bored and fed up with each other to even try to have sex. Now, I ask you, what's in it for me to live like that?

"I suppose, you would say, companionship or the joy of children.

## SM&Es & Entrepreneurship

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### Fidelity Bank empowers SMEs with business management systems

Stories by Moses Nosike

Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) have been encouraged to adopt digital tools to enhance their operations and drive sustainable growth. This call was made during the Fidelity SME Empowerment Program 2025, held at the bank's SME Hub in Gbagada, Lagos.

The event, which drew a large turnout of entrepreneurs and stakeholders, marked the official launch of Fidelity Bank's initiative to equip 100 growth-ready SMEs with ERPRev-enabled POS systems and business support tools—at no cost to the beneficiaries.

Dr. Nneka Onyeali-Ikpe, Managing Director/CEO of Fidelity Bank Plc, represented by Mr. Stanley Amuchie,

Executive Director/Chief Operations and Information Officer, emphasized the bank's commitment to SME development.

"At Fidelity Bank, we believe SMEs are not just the backbone of our economy—they are the architects of innovation, resilience, and inclusive growth. Through the Fidelity SME Empowerment Program (FSEP), we are providing 100 entrepreneurs with the tools, training, and support they need to thrive in today's digital economy."

Through the initiative, benefiting businesses will receive: a fully-installed POS desktop system, ERPRev business software, receipt printer and barcode scanner, inventory data input support, financial and bookkeeping training, branding and onboarding support, six months of post-installation monitoring, and a free Fidelity POS with instant settlement. The three-day program features high-impact trainings,

masterclasses, and networking opportunities designed to spark innovation, build partnerships, and unlock new markets.

In addition, Mrs. Adaonah Kene-Uyawune, CEO of Manmark, a business management a strategic partner to Fidelity Bank said, "This digital transformation initiative is a game changer. It replaces manual bookkeeping with a unified system that simplifies accounting, inventory, HR, and profitability tracking. These tools are not handouts and they are instruments for long-term business success."

According to the Nigerian Bureau of Statistics, SMEs make up 96% of all businesses in the country, employ over 80% of the workforce, and contribute nearly 50% to the national GDP. Despite their critical role in the economy, many still rely on manual processes that hinder efficiency and limit access to finance.

Fidelity Bank's intervention is therefore both timely and strategic, providing SMEs with the digital tools and support they need to streamline operations, improve transparency, and unlock new growth opportunities.

Ken-Uyawune encouraged the beneficiaries to make the most of this opportunity. "This digital tool is more than a convenience, it's a strategic asset that will enhance your accountability, improve your operations, and position you to access credit more easily. Let us all embrace digitalization as a pathway to sustainable growth and economic empowerment".

Ranked among the best banks in Nigeria, Fidelity Bank Plc is a full-fledged Commercial Deposit Money Bank serving over 9.1 million customers through digital banking channels, its 255 business offices in Nigeria and United Kingdom subsidiary, FidBank UK Limited.

### Film Lab Africa rewards Nigerian youths after training

In pursuit of talent development, skill and youth empowerment for job creation, self-reliant, Film Lab Africa reality TV show has concluded a 25 day training exercise for 48 contestants qualified for the training.

At the end of the training in Lagos contestants confessed being happy and excited as a result of the quality of training they received which will boost their careers.

In a media chat, winner of the maiden edition, Film Lab Africa reality TV show, Crown Udia, aka Crownly, a scriptwriter, interior decorator from Akwa Ibom said, "The journey had transformed him and given him the confidence to face bigger challenges in the future. 'Initially, I wasn't sure the show was real, but I decided to give it a trial'".

Crown said, I've always believed that the sky is big enough for every bird to fly. Coming here has impacted me positively. I've learnt more on how to be disciplined and focused, and I now leave this house a changed person."

When asked if he was confident to win, Crown said that every contestant



hoped to win, I maintained strong faith from the beginning. "Winning was a dream come true and a stepping stone toward greatness". Crown who won Toyota Camry further said that he plans to use his prize to further develop himself and give back to the community. 1st Runner-Up, Ojeikere Ohiostimuan, aka D Consultant is an entrepreneur and director from Edo state, said, "Serving as the first Head of House

leading 48 fellow contestants in the early days of the show, my strength in leadership skills. It wasn't easy, but it taught me a lot about responsibility, patience and accommodating others. I'm proud that I made it this far and that I'm someone my community can look up to. I'm going back home a better man."

In addition, 2nd Runner-Up, Elo Obokia, aka Eno, from Delta State, said, "My experience is life-changing. I'm a beauty therapist and actress, I considered myself a winner despite not taking the top prize. 25 days in the house was a beautiful one. I've seen a lot of growth in my career and character. Continues on [www.vanguardngr.com](http://www.vanguardngr.com)



L-R: Governor, American Society of Civil Engineers, (ASCE) Region 10, Engr Rasheed Hassan; Executive Director, American Society of Civil Engineers, Thomas W. Smith III; President, (ASCE) Dr Feniosky Pena-Mora; President (ASCE) Nigeria Section, Engr Austin Odibi; National Chairman, Nigerian Institution of Civil Engineers (NICE) Engr, Tokunbo Ajanaku at the recently concluded conference held by ASCE in Lagos.

### ASCE, experts, policymakers, others advocate holistic approach to sustainable infrastructure

Considering the role of sustainable infrastructure globally, The American Society of Civil Engineers Nigeria International Section, (ASCE) its stakeholders, gathered at the 2025 sustainable infrastructure conference organised by ASCE in Lagos, to discuss ways developing countries of African especially Nigeria can align its policies towards sustainable infrastructure for national development.

On the theme: "Integrated Approaches To Sustainable Infrastructure, Planning and Delivery", President, ASCE Nigeria Section, Engr. Austin Odibi, said, "We are especially proud to host this event at a time when the call for sustainable, inclusive, and integrated infrastructure systems has never been more urgent. As civil engineers, we are duty-bound to lead the conversation and the action required to deliver lasting solutions for our communities".

According to him, this conference is not just a meeting, it is a mission. "It is

an opportunity to chart a path forward that emphasizes collaboration, innovation, and resilience. Together, let us explore how integrated approaches can transform infrastructure delivery in Nigeria and align our efforts with global best practices".

In addition, 2025 President, American Society of Civil Engineers, Dr. Feniosky Pena-Mora, said, "This conference provides a platform to share knowledge, foster collaboration, and explore practical strategies that can bridge the gap from theory to implementation, from aspirational frameworks to impactful outcomes".

He said further that the theme of the conference reflects an understanding that infrastructure cannot be viewed in isolation. "Roads, bridges, energy grids, water systems, and buildings must be planned not only as individual projects but as interconnected components of broader social, environmental, and economic systems".

### PMI Global Summit Series Africa 2025 unveils speaker lineup to drive 'Africa on Purpose'

Against Africa's growing wave of infrastructure investment and innovation, the Project Management Institute (PMI) is convening the continent's most influential voices at the Global Summit Series Africa, driving urgent, collective action to redefine how projects deliver impact and value. Hosted at the Kigali Convention Centre in Rwanda between 19 to 21 August, the Summit is designed for senior project professionals, C-suite executives, government officials, development partners, and emerging project talent committed to driving transformation across Africa.

As Africa contends with intersecting challenges, from climate change and infrastructure gaps to job creation, digital transformation, and artificial intelligence, there is a critical need to recalibrate how projects are initiated, managed, and delivered across the continent. Project success can no longer be measured solely by timelines or budgets met. In today's context,

success must also be evaluated by how well a project enhances resilience, drives inclusive growth, unlocks sustainable innovation, and creates lasting social value.

"Africa's project economy remains vibrant yet vulnerable," says George Asamani, MD, PMI Sub-Saharan Africa. "The African Development Bank estimates the continent needs up to \$170 billion annually to close its infrastructure gap, with a financing shortfall of as much as \$108 billion. With so much at stake, project management can't be an afterthought; it's key to delivery. As countries advance infrastructure, digital, and social programmes, the demand for skilled professionals is more urgent than ever."

"The Global Summit Series Africa responds to this urgency. This is not just a moment to gather, it's a moment to grow and guide. It is where knowledge meets practice and where bold voices converge to ask and answer: How can Africa execute differently?"

## CHANGE OF NAME

PRINCE	FLORENCE	ONWE
I, FORMERLY KNOWN AS OTU PRINCE NOW WISH TO BE KNOWN AND ADDRESSED AS FULUDU PRINCE OJIS ALL FORMER DOCUMENTS REMAIN VALID GENERAL PUBLIC TAKE NOTE.	I, was formerly known called and addressed as MISS. ODIGILI FLORENCE. Now wish to be known called and addressed as MRS. OSHARE FLORENCE. All former documents remain valid general public should please take note.	In my BVN and account details , my name was wrongly captured as ONWE UCHENNA instead of ONWE UCHENA FRIDAY, my true and correct name is ONWE UCHENNA FRIDAY, all former documents remain valid general public please take note.
AHMED	CHINWENDU	WISDOM
My name was wrongly arranged as OLATUNJI ALIU, AHMED on my documents instead of my correct name as AHMED OLATUNJI, ALIU. All former documents remain valid, general public take note.	I formerly known and addressed as MISS LOUIS CHINWENDU JUDICIA, now wish to be known and addressed as MRS. OBINNA CHINWENDU JUDICIA. All former documents remain valid. General public pls take note.	In my National identification number (NIN) details , my name was wrongly captured as GABRIEL WISDOM CHUKWUWENDU instead of UTAGBA WISDOM CHUKWUWENDU.my true and correct name is UTAGBA WISDOM CHUKWUWENDU, all former documents remain valid general public please take note.
ORIGHOYE	BOB	OLISE
I, formerly known as HESSE ORIGHOYE RUTH, now wish to be known and addressed as AJAGBWA ORIGHOYE RUTH. All former documents remain valid. Relevant Authorities and the general public please take note.	Formerly known called and addressed as BOB STEPHEN OKON. Now wish to be known called and addressed as BOB STEPHEN. All former documents remain valid, general public should please take note.	In my BVN details, my name was wrongly captured as OLISE ISIOMA instead of OLISE ISIOMA JENNIFER, my true and correct name is OLISE ISIOMA JENNIFER. All former documents remain valid general public please take note.
OSADEBAMWEN	IZIYON	KELLY
I, formerly known as MISS OGEBEBOR OSADEBAMWEN now wish to be known called and addressed as MRS EIKHOR OSADEBAMWEN. All former documents remain valid. Concerned Authorities and General public take note.	Formerly known called and addressed as IZIYON JOSEPH. Now wish to be known called and addressed as IZIYON JOSEPH ESEGBORIA. All former documents remain valid, general public should please take note.	I, formerly known as WILLIAMS KELLY now wish to be known as ERAFE OGHENEKPAROBO KELLY all former documents remain valid, general public take note.
RUTH	VERA	BLESSING
I, RUTH JOHN, as it appears on my Drivers License, Neco Certificate, and other documents, wish to add KASSIM to my name. I now wish to be known and addressed as KASSIM RUTH JOHN. All former documents remain valid. General public, Bank, and Embassy should please take note.	During my BVN/ account registration, my name was wrongly captured as: Vera adamas Oritseweyimmi, instead of: adanas Oritseweyimmi vera, but now wish to be known, called and addressed as: Adanas Oritseweyimmi Vera, general public take note.	I, formerly known as EYO BLESSING now wish to be known as JAMES BLESSING, all former documents remain valid, general public take note.
HOPE	HABIBAT	VIVIAN
I, formerly known and addressed as OGBUIKE HOPE, now wish to be known and addressed as OWA-CHINEDUM HOPE. All documents remain valid. General public take note.	I formerly known and addressed as SHAIBU BLESSING HABIBAT, now wish to be known and addressed as FAYEUN HABIBAT BLESSING. All documents bearing my former name remain valid general public should take note.	Formerly MISS OBANEKI VIVIAN IRELUMIE now wish to be known as MRS. EBOSELE AMOS VIVIAN IRUALOMI. All former documents remain valid, general public take note.
EZENWA	ELOHO	EFUA
I, formerly known and addressed as Ezenwa Uzoma, now wish to be known and addressed as Ezenwa Uzoma Nelson. All documents remain valid. Banks and the general public take note.	I, formerly known, called and addressed as AREH ELOHO FLORENCE, now wish to be known, called and addressed as EMIAKUMOR ELOHO FLORENCE. All former documents remain valid, General public please take note.	I, formerly known as Miss EFUA OLIVIA OKO-OBOHO now wish to be known and addressed as Mrs EFUA OLIVIA AWOLOLA, All former documents remain valid. Concerned Authorities and General Public take note.
DIVINE	EVE	MUNIRAT
That, in the NECO (SSCE) result of June/July 2002, my name was wrongly captured as ODIVWRI DIVINE, the correct name is ODIVWRI DIVINE ORHERHE. All former documents remain valid. The general public should please take note.	That on my Bvn/ Account platform details, I used the name MOSES EVE ERHIME. I now wish to be known called and addressed as. ESEREKEMABONE EVE ERHIME. All former documents remain valid, general public should take note.	I, formerly known as Yusuf Munirat Abubakar, now wish to be known as Yakub Munirat Abubakar. All former documents remain valid, general public take note.
BIANCA	OKPAMEJEFA	HAPPINESS
I, formerly known and addressed as Miss ENABULE EBI BIANCA OSASUMWEN, now wish to be known and addressed as Mrs ANUKWU BIANCA OSASUMWEN. All documents remain valid. General public take note.	I, formerly known as OKPAMEJEFA MICHEAL, now wish to be known and addressed as OKPAMEJEFA IDEDEKO MICHEAL. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.	I formerly known and addressed as MISS OKOYE HAPPINESS ONYINYE wish to be known and addressed as MRS OZOEMENA HAPPINESS ONYINYE. All former documents remain valid. The general public should please take note.
ADEBIMPE	TEMILADE	HOPE
I, formally known and referred to as *Adebimpe Oluwatosin "Mosanya" now wish to be known and addressed as *Adebimpe Oluwatosin "MacGregor". All documents, referring to the said person, remain valid and the General Public should kindly take adequate notice of the change of name.	I, formerly known as ADESINA ADESEWA TEMILADE, now wish to be known and addressed as OLAGUNJU NAFISAT TEMILADE. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.	I, Formerly known as WILLIAMS HOPE now wish to be known as WILLIAM HOPE all former documents remain valid, general public take note.
OKAFOR	ESTHER	JULIET
I, Formerly Known Called And Addressed As Okafor Loveth Chiamaka, Now Wish To Be Known Call And Address As Okonkwo, Okafor Loveth Chiamaka. All Former Documents Remain Valid. General Public Please Take Note.	I, formerly known as MISS UTORO ESTHER ESEOGHENE, now wish to be known and addressed as MRS OVOKE-DANIEL ESTHER ESEOGHENE. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.	I, Formerly known as THANKGOD JULIET now wish to be known as THANKGOD JULIET MAKARAVA all former documents remain valid, general public take note.
JACQUILINE	EZEMARK	FELIX
I, formerly known and addressed as MISS EBEKE JACQUILINE OGECHI now wish to be known and addressed as MRS MBANASO JACQUILINE OGECHI. All former documents remain valid. The general public should please take note.	I, formerly known as GERADLIN OGUNEME CHISOM, now wish to be known and addressed as EZEMARK JACINTA OGUNEME. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.	I, formerly known as TEGA OBUS , now wish to be known as FELIX OGHENEOGAGA. All former documents remain valid, general public take note.
AKPOBOME	IRENE	EGOLE
I formerly known and addressed as MISS ONOWOTU AKPOBOME LYDIA, now wish to be known and addressed as MRS. OTOR AKPOBOME LYDIA, all former documents remain valid, Authorities Concerned and general public take note.	I, formerly known and addressed as MISS ELIUDE IRENE CHIAMAKA, now wish to be known and addressed as MRS AGWUNOBI IRENE CHIAMAKA. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.	The names EGOLE OGHENEMARO ABLE and EGOLE MARO as seen in my BVN refer to one and same me. I now wish to be known as EGOLE OGHENEMARO ABLE. All former documents remain valid. General public please take note.
YETUNDE	OTANILOGBE	PROMISE
I formerly known and addressed as BELLO YETUNDE SIKIRAT, now wish to be known and addressed as IBUOYE YETUNDE SARAH, all former documents remain valid, Authorities Concerned and general public take note.	I, formerly known and addressed as miss Edeaghe Otaniogbe Paulina, now wish to be known and addressed as Mrs Ukiru Otaniogbe Paulina. All former documents remain valid, general public please take note.	I, formerly known and addressed as MISS. ONYEAGHALA PROMISE UGOCHI, now wish to be known and addressed as MRS. IMEZE PROMISE UGOCHI. All former documents remain valid. General public please take note.
AGBAJOR	BETTY	EDAFE
I, formerly known and addressed as AMATESIRO AGBAJOR, Now wish to be known and addressed as AMA AGBAJOR. All former documents remain valid, general public take note.	I, formerly known and addressed as miss Ovienria Betty, now to be known, and addressed as Mrs Ejemah Betty. All former documents remain valid, general public please take note.	I, formerly known and addressed as EDAFE CHIDERA GODSWILL. Now wish to be Known, called and addressed as EDAFE GODSWILL CHIDERA. All former documents remain valid. Concerned Authorities and General public should please take note.
PEACE	EKOR	FRANCIS
That during opening of my account/Bvn Registration platform, I used the name CHARIS CHIOMA AZUKA. That I now wish to be known called and addressed as AZUKA PEACE ONYEKA. All former documents remain valid, general public should please take note.	I, formerly known and addressed as miss Imolare Ekor Success, now wish to be known and addressed as Mrs Okhuoya Ekor Success. all former documents remain valid, general public please take note.	This is to confirm that EZEANI FRANCIS FABROS and EZEALA FRANCIS FABROS is one and same person. Now wish to be Known, called and addressed as EZEALA FRANCIS FABROS. All former documents remain valid. Concerned Authorities and General public should please take note.
KASARACHI	JOANNA	CHRISTIANA
That I was formerly known called and addressed as Miss. EZEKIEL BLESSING KASARACHI. Now wish to be known called and addressed as Mrs. OKPARAOYIBO KASARACHI BLESSING. All former documents remain valid, general public should please take note.	I, formerly known and addressed as miss Osagiede Enowonghomwenia Joanna, Now i wish to be known and addressed as Mrs. Omoruyi Enowonghomwenia Joanna all former documents remain valid for general public please take note.	I, formerly known and addressed as MISS. OLAITAN CHRISTIANA MORONKE. Now wish to be Known, called and addressed as MRS. AKINWUMI CHRISTIANA MORONKE. All former documents remain valid. Concerned Authorities and General public should take note.

# YILWATDA: How Ex-INEC REC, Tinubu's 'disaster manager' took over APC

• *Implications of his emergence*

By Omeiza Ajayi



• Yilwada

development partners like the European Union, UNICEF, the World Bank, and TECHVILE USA. His expertise in merging technology with governance has made him a sought-after expert in digital innovation and policy development.

In 2017, he was appointed a Resident Electoral Commissioner with the Independent National Electoral Commission INEC, where he championed reforms to the Electoral Act,

Professor Yilwada's appointment comes at a critical time for the APC, with analysts suggesting his background in "disaster management" might be instrumental in addressing the party's current challenges and preventing further shifts in public support towards the opposition ADC.

## Background

Born on August 8, 1968, in Dungung, Kanke Local Government Area, Plateau State, Professor Yilwada has a distinguished academic career.

He holds a first degree from the Federal University of Agriculture, Makurdi, a master's degree from ATBU, Bauchi, and a doctorate in Electronic and Computer Engineering from the University of Nigeria, Nsukka.

He served for over 26 years at the Federal University of Agriculture, Makurdi, where he was the pioneer Director of ICT leading significant digital reforms.

Beyond academia, Professor Yilwada has contributed significantly to Nigeria's digital transformation, consulting for international organizations and global

Continues on [www.vanguardngr.com](http://www.vanguardngr.com)

## PTDF screens 931 masters, PhD students for 2025 overseas scholarship

Laolu Elijah, Ibadan

THE management of the Petroleum Technology Development Fund, PDTF said yesterday that a total of 931 PhD and Masters degree candidates have been screened for the 2025/26 Overseas Scholarship Scheme.

This was disclosed by Mr Masud Mohammed, the staff of the PTDF and Team Lead for the 2025/26 Overseas Scholarship

Scheme (OSS) award (South West) which held at the University of Ibadan. Speaking with newsmen during the screening exercise for the shortlisted candidates, he said, "for MSc, we had 749 candidates while we had 182 for the PhD candidates.

Our assessment as a team is that the quality of the candidates that have been shortlisted is high and they are the best of the best candidates we have had so far. The award is part of the cardinal activities of PTDF which is in line with the mandate of the Fund".

On the sustainability of the transparency and integrity of the selection process, he said, "Some mechanisms have been put in place to ensure the integrity, transparency and fairness of the process. We invited the Federal Character Commission to oversee and participate in

how we go about the process of the interview. The whole process has been automated, so you can see the results of the candidates real time. So, it's not an analogue process.

"So far, the process has been smooth. Though, we cannot say there are no challenges, the challenges are not significant to hamper the process. The challenge we have is that some candidates are coming late for the interview. That would only drag the schedule we have. Notwithstanding, it will not deter us in ensuring that the last of the candidates is interviewed. This

exercise has very well aligned with the renewed hope agenda of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu in terms of human capacity development for Nigerians. Our agenda in PTDF is to develop human capacity especially in the oil and gas industry in the country.



## Ogun State scores again...and more

The African Athletics U-18/U-20 Championship 2025 ended last Sunday in Abeokuta.

I am surprised that the airwaves have not been awash with encomiums for Ogun State, that accepted to host the international event at the 'last minute' and still managed to put up what became a spectacular championship.

The international event came and went. Absent were any of the common hitches, shoddy arrangements, poor equipment, poor facilities, incompetency, poor organisation, and so on, that would often smear many international sports programs in Nigeria.

The best part of the championship was the peaceful and very friendly atmosphere around the Arena where all the events took place. During the day, everything ran smoothly, almost on automation. At night, the environment explodes into incomparable social and commercial mayhem.

The conduct of the spectators, mostly the citizens of the State, should be material for a case study. My only interpretation is that the city's laid-back nature and the cultural sophistication of the people, impacted the conduct of the people. They go about their business and activities without need for any enforcement by security and other agents. This positively impacted the quality of organisation, and added to the feel-good factor that permeated

the whole Arena.

To score high, twice in a row, in organising two massive sports events within the space of a few weeks speaks volumes about a 'new' Ogun State. There is a new spirit and confidence in Ogun State that must be nurtured. It may become a new destination-of-choice for the hosting of national and international sports events in Nigeria. Its proximity without the usual asphyxiating challenges associated with the megacity is added advantage.

Some of Ogun State's sports facilities in Abeokuta are now first-class. The experience garnered in organising the last two major events (the National Sports festival and the African Junior Athletics Championship) are a big plus, going into the future.

The peaceful, safe, hospitable and friendly atmosphere in the State, and the disciplined conduct of the people that makes the issue of hooliganism around sport almost non-existent in the State, have made the State very attractive for sports events. Security operatives lounge and hang around the venues without needing to do much!

The only things left for the State to do to nail its place as an authentic new hub for sports is to deliberately start to create and organise big sports events in events that have facilities within the MKO Abiola Arena, on a regular basis. This will sustain the people's interest, drive the emerging new commercial consciousness and activities, and meaningfully engage all



the new facilities for developmental as well as commercial sports purposes.

The State must NOT now take its eyes off regular maintenance of the facilities, and must invest in human capital development through training and re-training programs for its sports administrators.

The success of the African Athletics Junior championship is a testimony that Ogun State has turned the corner in its sports development. There is growing confidence that it will continue to play host to more major sports events in Nigeria in the years to come.

**The success of the African Athletics Junior championship is a testimony that Ogun State has turned the corner in its sports development**

### WAFU U-20 competition in Ghana

I was following the WAFU B U-20 football championship that just ended in Accra, Ghana, two days ago. 5 West African countries participated over 12 days of matches.

My interest was ignited because my colleague, former international football player, Dr. Felix Owolabi, MON, was picked by the Regional body, now headed by new-President of WAFU, Ibrahim Garba Gusau, as a member of the technical team to the event.

That is a giant step. Recognizing that ex-players can contribute to technical football matters is a big deal. So, I took note.

My second interest was that Burkina Faso participated in the competition.

I was wondering why Burkina Faso is contesting in WAFU when the country has withdrawn its membership of ECOWAS?

Is sport immune from the vagaries of politics? When the matter is sport, are political matters sheathed?

Or is this the soft-power of sport at play?

I am thinking. This is confirmation that the idea of ECOWAS Friendship Games should not be disregarded.

All the 15 countries in ECOWAS, including the embittered ones (Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger) will participate. Wounds will be slowly healed, and ECOWAS can be united again sooner than later.

### The Night of Tributes!

On Monday night, at the historic National monument in Lagos, the 'NIIA Diplomacy Wall of Fame' erected by Airpeace, tributes shall be paid to 5 late Nigerian Sports heroes - Christian Chukwu, MFR; Peter Rufai, MON; Charles Bassey MON; Moses Effiong, MON; and Obisia Nwakpa.

Sports fans, family, friends and stakeholders shall congregate in honour of these departed heroes. A galaxy of gospel musicians will provide celestial music to send them on their way to their Creator.

The event is being sponsored by Airpeace.

All roads will lead to the Auditorium of the Nigeria Institute of International Affairs, 13/15 Kofo Abayomi St. Victoria Island, Lagos, from 6:00 to 9:00pm.

## D'Tigers: NBBF unveils 17-man provisional list for 2025 AfroBasket

The Nigeria Basketball Federation has named a 17-man provisional roster for the D'Tigers ahead of the 2025 FIBA Men's AfroBasket, scheduled to take place in Angola from August 12 to 24.

D'Tigers, will be aiming to win their second continental title as they prepare to compete in the tournament, which will be held across two Angolan cities, Luanda and Moçamedes.

The list, released on Thursday,

### Hulk Hogan's desperate final moments revealed

PARAMEDICS and first responders frantically worked for 30 minutes as they tried to save wrestling icon Hulk Hogan before his death.

Hogan, 71, died on Thursday, plunging the sports entertainment world into mourning.

Current and former WWE stars paid tribute to Hogan, whose real name was Terry Bollea, and hailed him for being a trailblazer.

Sources close to Hogan's family claimed he was in bad health in the weeks leading up to his death.

One told The Mail he experienced

a shortness of breath, lost a lot of weight, and was on oxygen.

And, just three days ago, Lummy, a host on Bubba The Love Sponge podcast, claimed Hogan couldn't speak and wasn't doing well.

"His trachea or whatever was damaged and he's having problems and it does not look good. It does not look at all," he said.

Tragic details about Hogan's final moments have now emerged.

Clearwater cops and fire crews were called to his \$11.5 million estate just after 9:50am on Thursday, according to People.

He received CPR and crews were still working on him at 10:28am.

Hogan, who suffered a cardiac arrest, was taken to the hospital where he was declared dead.

At a press conference, Clearwater cops said Hogan had experienced a "serious medical related issue."

includes just one NBA player: Josh Okogie, recently signed by the Houston Rockets. He will be joined by Nwamu Ike, Caleb Agada, Wesley Iwundu, Ugochukwu Simon, Mike Nuga, Stanley Okoye, Deviné Eke, Folabomi Fayemi, and Emmanuel Omogbo.

Other invitees include Talib Zanna, Christian Mekowulu, Martins Igbanu, Kaodirichi Akobundu-Ehiogu, Peter Olisemeka, and Tonye Jekiri.

Notable omissions from the preliminary squad include Precious Achiuwa, Gabe Vincent, Jordan Nwora, Chima Moneke, and Chimezie Metu, who is currently sidelined by injury. The team's training camp is expected to open next week, with the possibility of more players being added to the roster.

D'Tigers have been drawn into Group B, where they will face two-time defending champions Tunisia, alongside Madagascar and Cameroon. Nigeria will open their campaign against Madagascar, followed by a clash with Tunisia, before wrapping up the group stage against Cameroon.



D'Tigers

## Saturday Vanguard Sports

As the countdown to the 2024 African Nations Championship (CHAN) continues, Senegalese star Libasse Gueye has issued a bold warning to Nigeria and other contenders, declaring his side's intention to defend the title they won two years ago.

After a turbulent stint in Spain where contractual issues disrupted his

### Manu Garba returns as Golden Eaglets' coach, Aduku takes over Falconets

The Nigeria Football Federation (NFF) has confirmed the reappointment of Manu Garba as the head coach of the U17 boys national team, the Golden Eaglets.

The decision was ratified by the Federation's Executive Committee following a recommendation from its Technical and Development Sub-Committee. Garba, a seasoned tactician, previously led the Golden Eaglets to a historic triumph at the 2013 FIFA U17 World Cup in the United Arab Emirates.

Garba returns to the role with a wealth of experience, having guided the team to multiple global tournaments.



## CHAN 2024: We're coming to retain our trophy — Senegal star

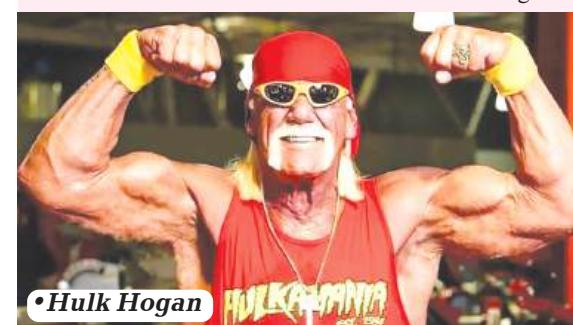
progress, Gueye chose to return home to rebuild his career, gain consistent playing time, and reestablish himself on the African football scene.

The local national team is at a very good level. We selected the best players in the league, and the group

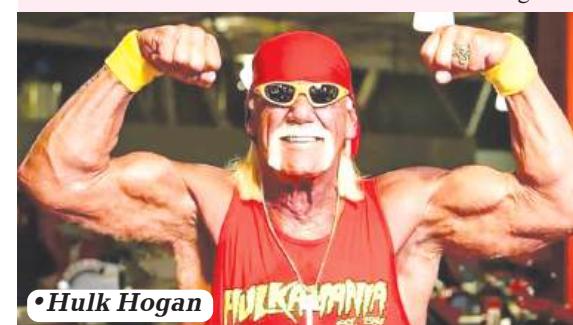
### Chelsea slam £100m price tag on Jackson

Chelsea value Nicolas Jackson at between £80m and £100m, with Manchester United among Premier League clubs keeping an eye on him. The 24-year-old is also subject to interest from clubs in Europe and Saudi Arabia; however, Chelsea are under no pressure to sell as he has eight years left on his contract.

If the Senegal international was to leave, the £79m Liverpool are paying for Hugo Ekitike would be used as a benchmark for any potential deal. Jackson's Chelsea future was plunged into uncertainty after he played a bit-part role in his side's Club World Cup-winning campaign.



Hulk Hogan



D'Tigers

**2025**  
**Afrobasket (men)**  
**D'Tigers: NBBF**  
**unveils 17-man**  
**provisional list for**



**TODAY'S MATCHES**

**EPL Series:**  
Everton v Bournemouth 9 pm  
**Women's Africa Cup of Nations**  
Morocco v Nigeria 9 pm

**Result:**  
Women's Africa Cup of Nations  
Ghana 1(4) S/Africa 1(2)



**WAFCON 2024 Final:  
Morocco v Nigeria**  
**Mission X in sight as  
Super Falcons confront  
Morocco today**

**DETAILS  
INSIDE**



**Ghana claim 2024  
WAFCON bronze, beat South  
Africa 4-3 (penalties)**

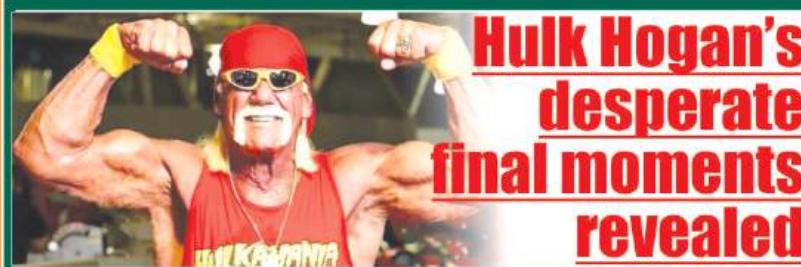
Ghana clinched third place at the 2024 Women's Africa Cup of Nations (WAFCON) after defeating South Africa 4-2 on penalties following a 1-1 draw at the Stade Larbi Zaoui in Casablanca.

The result preserves Ghana's perfect record in third-place playoffs, marking their fourth consecutive victory in such matches at the tournament.

South Africa took the lead just before halftime through Nonhlaphela Mthandi, but Ghana drew level in the second half after an own goal gifted them an equaliser.

In the shootout, the Black Queens held their nerve, with Alice Kusi, Josephine Bonsu, Jennifer Cudjoe, and Nancy Amoh all converting their spot kicks. Chantelle Boye-Hlorkah was the only Ghanaian to miss. South Africa, on the other hand, failed to convert three of their five attempts.

It was Ghana's third consecutive penalty shootout in the tournament. They edged Algeria in the quarterfinals, lost to hosts Morocco in the semi-finals, and finished on a high with a win against Banyana Banyana.



**Hulk Hogan's  
desperate  
final moments  
revealed**



**Gyokeres  
to wear  
Thierry Henry's  
iconic shirt  
number**

ACROSS	DOWN
1 Italian City and Municipality(9)	1 Hausa Word for "Two"(3)
6 Greek Alphabet(3)	2 Belgian Resort City and Municipality(3)
8 Insect(3)	3 Organ of Sight(3)
9 France "Les Bleus" Centre-Back and Bayern Munich Defender, Dayot_(9)	4 Chilean River(3)
13 Former Liberian President, Mr. Samuel_(3)	5 The Fourth President of the International Criminal Court of Justice (ICC), Justice Chile_(4,5)
14 Town and Local Government Area in Lagos State(3)	6 South African Local Municipality and Mountain Range(9)
15 Indonesian Mountain or Summit(9)	7 Local Government Area in Ekiti State(5,4)
19 Greek Alphabet(3)	10 Container(3)
20 Replacement(3)	11 Former Super Eagles Midfielder, Sunday_(3)
21 English River(3)	12 English Village and Civil Parish(3)
22 Indian Religion(3)	15 Former Super Eagles Goalkeeper, Dele_(9)
23 Sprite(3)	16 Israeli Capital City(9)
24 Akwa-Ibom State Capital(3)	17 American Incorporated Town, Village and County(9)
25 Former Minister of Education, Mr. Wada_(3)	18 Chairman(5)
26 American City(9)	21 English River(3)
30 Commercial City in Abia State(3)	28 Apprehend(3)
31 Solidify(3)	29 Organ of Hearing(3)
32 German Hill(9)	33 Lump(3)
37 Former Super Falcons Skipper, Onome_(3)	34 Trap(3)
38 Objective(3)	35 Norwegian Village(3)
39 Inspector-General of Police, Mr. Kayode_(9)	36 This West African Ethnic Group is located in Benin Republic, Nigeria and Togo(3)



SOLUTION ON PAGE 7