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PAGE FIVE

Eid El Maulud: Governors, PDP, Wike, First Lady Preach Peace, Seek Nigeria’s Progress

Deji Elumoye, Chuks Okocha and Olawale Ajimotokan in Abuja

As Muslims across the world yesterday marked this year’s Eid El Maulud, some key political figures in Nigeria used the occasion to call for unity and tolerance.

Governors of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), the First Lady, Senator Oluremi Tinubu, and FCT Minister Nyesom Wike, in separate statements, urged Nigerians to embrace peace and

work collectively for the nation’s progress.

The PDP Governors’ Forum extended its warmest greetings and heartfelt wishes to Muslims in Nigeria and globally on this year’s Eid-El-Maulud,

In a statement by the Director of the forum, Emmanuel Agbo, the Governors said, “Today, we honor the birth of Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him), whose life and teachings continue to illuminate the path of compassion, justice,

and unity for millions around the world.”

“His message of peace, tolerance, and service to humanity resonates deeply across all faiths and cultures. As we reflect on his legacy, may we be inspired to strengthen the bonds of brotherhood, promote understanding, and work together toward a more harmonious society.

“Today, our country is at a crossroads as Nigerians get disconnected from the constituted services they deserve.

“As we inch daily to full-blown dictatorship with its attendant abuse of power, and citizens live in abject penury in the face of plenty, leadership is once again called to urgently address insecurity, our compromised judicial system, failed economic policies resulting in intolerable hunger, poverty and unemployment.

“Let this day be a reminder of the values we should uphold and share — public service with accountability, kindness without

expectation, humility, and the pursuit of truth to rebuild the faith of our citizens in our country.

“May your celebrations be filled with joy, prayer, and meaningful connection with loved ones”, the PDP Governors stated.

Similarly, the PDP rejoiced with Nigerians, particularly the Muslim Ummah, urging them to use the occasion to foster the much-needed national rebirth and reinforce their resolve against totalitarianism in our country.

In a statement by the National Publicity Secretary Debo Ologunagba, the party stated, “Eid-el Maulud, the celebration of the birth of the Holy Prophet Mohammed (SAW) comes as a demonstration of the supremacy of the Will of the Almighty Allah in the affairs of men. It also presents us as a nation, particularly leaders, the opportunity to retrace our steps and seek divine direction in all our activities as exemplified in the life and teachings of the Holy Prophet.”

TAMBUWAL: TINUBU, APC DESTABILISING OPPOSITION PARTIES, WARNS AGAINST ONE-PARTY STATE

with hunt and precursor of what to expect from the ruling party prior to 2027 elections. Former Vice President Atiku Abubakar condemned the developments in Kaduna, alleging that same was happening in Katsina, and other parts of the country, which he described as a dangerous assault on civic freedoms under Tinubu’s administration.

Also reacting to the development, the ADC and the League of Northern Democrats expressed concern over what they termed as the increasing use of law enforcement agencies to harass and intimidate opposition leaders, while criminal violence continues to devastate communities across the country.

The Kaduna State Police Command had invited El-Rufai and seven ADC leaders for questioning over alleged conspiracy, incitement, and other offences.

However, speaking yesterday on a national television, Tambuwal said the political environment under Tinubu has taken a

worrying turn, with clear signs that the ruling APC was bent on weakening opposition structures.

“You don’t need to be told, no matter the amount of denial by whoever, including President Bola Tinubu, that they are not involved in destabilisation efforts of opposition parties. It’s not correct. I am saying that they are involved. I am not suspecting; I am saying it.

“The signs are very clear. They are very ominous. The people in charge of government today in Nigeria are interested in a one-party state. It is clear, and it is not in the interest of democracy or in the interest of Nigeria. That is the path they are pursuing,” for former House of Representatives Speaker explained.

Tambuwal, who campaigned vigorously against Tinubu in the 2023 general elections, said he was not surprised by the current situation.

“I cannot say I am disappointed because I campaigned against him. I told Nigerians to be wary of voting for Bola Tinubu and the APC. I went throughout

the nooks and crannies of this country warning Nigerians, and today what we are seeing is what I expected,” he said.

On the recent police invitation to some opposition leaders after political clashes in Kaduna, Tambuwal defended the constitutional right of Nigerians to assemble freely.

“Let me start by referring to the constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, particularly Section 39(1) and Section 40. These provisions clearly provide for freedom of expression and freedom of assembly. In the instant case, we were not at a rally. We were there on a commiseration visit to our colleagues in Kaduna who were attacked by thugs. We did exactly that and left. There was no breach of the peace,” he explained.

While stressing that police invitations should not be ignored, he urged caution.

“I am a lawyer of 32 years standing, a Life Bencher, a parliamentarian of 12 years, and now a Senator. I am a law-abiding

citizen. Whoever is invited by a constitutional authority should appear.

“I would advise my friends to attend to the invitation of the police. But the police must be circumspect. They should not give the impression that they are suppressing opposition voices,” Tambuwal said.

Tambuwal also addressed his ongoing investigation by the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) over alleged cash withdrawals of N189 billion.

“That is not correct. N189 billion in seven years would mean our government withdrew N2.25 billion every month in cash. Where are the resources? How much was Sokoto’s allocation? Up till when I left office, we never owed salaries, pensions, or gratuities. This matter is still under investigation, and I will honour the EFCC invitation. But to me, it is politically induced,” he said.

Turning to his past political relationships, the Senator rejected claims that he had betrayed former

allies such as Nyesom Wike.

“I have never betrayed anybody. Betrayal is when you have an understanding with someone and you go against that understanding. In 2022, I was also running for President. My friend Wike was in the race too. When I stepped down for Atiku Abubakar, it was not betrayal. It was about principle and about the country. Personally, Wike is my friend. But when it comes to leadership, I will support Atiku over Wike any day,” he insisted.

Tambuwal also addressed his past alliance with Tinubu that helped him become Speaker of the House of Representatives in 2011.

“We engaged Bola Tinubu several times. Initially, he directed the ACN caucus to support Mulikat Akande-Adeola. But when they ran the numbers, he saw I was going to win. He then shifted support to me. It was a matter of political calculation. But that does not bind me forever. Today, I will not support Tinubu,” he said.

The former governor also renewed his call for the creation of state police, saying the current centralised system has failed to guarantee security.

“It is very frustrating when a governor cannot give instructions to either the Commissioner of Police or the Brigade Commander until he clears from Abuja. That is the reality. During my time in Sokoto, we provided over 600 vehicles to security agencies, monthly allowances, and operational support. Yet, we could not direct them to act against bandits without clearance. That is why state police is necessary,” Tambuwal explained.

The former governor confirmed his commitment to a broad opposition coalition aimed at unseating Tinubu in 2027.

“I am fully involved in a lawful and democratic process that will, by the grace of God, send this government out of office. With the help of Nigerians, we will achieve that. Tinubu can be defeated. This idea of his invincibility is rubbish,” he declared.

SILENT KILLER: EXPERTS SOUND THE ALARM ON HYPERTENSION SURGE

yesterday, Lagos-based Cardiologist, Dr. Trevor Ovoh, noted a sharp rise in cases over the past few years, saying, “There has been a clear spike in hypertension in Nigeria.

“In my clinic alone, I now see nearly twice as many patients with dangerously high blood pressure compared to just three years ago. It is no longer unusual for me to attend to multiple new hypertension cases in a single day, including younger adults in their 20s and 30s, which was rare a few years back.”

He described the rising prevalence of hypertension as, “a ticking time bomb” for Nigeria’s healthcare system. He explained that many patients present late with complications such as stroke, kidney failure, or heart attack, conditions that are costlier and

difficult to manage than early intervention.

“In my practice, I see too many patients who have lived with high blood pressure for years without knowing it,” Ovoh said. “By the time they come to the hospital, the damage has already been done. This is why regular screening and early detection must become part of our culture. A simple blood pressure check can save lives, but unfortunately, many Nigerians do not take it seriously until it is too late.”

He added that prevention requires a shift in both policy and lifestyle. “We need stronger public health campaigns, affordable access to medications, and greater investment in primary healthcare,” he stressed.

“But equally important, individuals must make conscious

choices to eat healthier, exercise, manage stress, and avoid excessive alcohol and tobacco. Hypertension is largely preventable, and if we act early, we can reduce the burden on families and the healthcare system.”

Also speaking, Mental Health Specialist and Executive Director of ‘Life After Abuse Foundation’, Halima Layeni, noted that, “Hypertension is not just a cardiovascular problem. Stress, anxiety, depression, and emotional exhaustion are powerful drivers. Without tackling the mental health dimension, we cannot fully address the crisis.”

Data indicates that the prevalence of hypertension in Nigeria has surged dramatically, increasing by more than 500 per cent from 4.3 million cases in 1995 to 27.5 million in 2020.

Experts attributed this rise to lifestyle changes, urbanisation, diets high in salt and processed foods, obesity, smoking, alcohol consumption, poor sleep, and chronic stress. Poverty, low health literacy, and limited access to healthcare services further worsen the situation, leaving millions untreated.

Medical specialists described hypertension as a ‘silent killer’ because it often shows no symptoms until severe complications set in. When symptoms do appear, they may include persistent headaches, dizziness, blurred vision, nosebleeds, chest pain, or irregular heartbeat.

Gender differences also influence the trend. Men are more likely to develop hypertension at younger ages, often due to

lifestyle habits and reluctance to seek medical care. Women, however, carry a heavier burden later in life, particularly after the age of 70, as hormonal changes and longer life expectancy make them more vulnerable.

According to Layeni, “In my professional opinion, the solution lies in integrated care that bridges the gap between physical and mental health. Hypertension should not be treated as an isolated cardiovascular issue, but as a condition deeply influenced by emotional, social, and psychological well-being. Health systems must scale up detection, treatment, and awareness campaigns, while also normalizing mental health care as a central part of hypertension management.

“On an individual level,

people must be encouraged to care for their minds just as much as they care for their bodies. A calm, balanced emotional state reduces the strain on the heart and blood vessels, while poor mental health does the opposite.

“Unless we begin to treat hypertension with this holistic approach, we will continue to see rising numbers of cases, higher rates of complications, and unnecessary deaths.

“As a mental health specialist, I believe the key lies in prevention, early detection, and above all, acknowledging that the heart and the mind are inseparable. When we prioritise both, we give individuals, families, and communities the best chance at living longer, healthier, and more fulfilling lives.”

INDIA OIL CORPORATION SHUNS US CRUDE, BUYS 2M BARRELS FROM NIGERIA

of 2.06 million bpd budget benchmark.

The improvement comes on the back of tighter security in the Niger Delta, where oil theft had previously drained as much as 300,000 barrels per day. Fresh operations and surveillance have slashed those losses to fewer than 5,000 bpd, according to the Nigerian Upstream Petroleum Regulatory Commission (NUPRC).

At the same time, rig activity has surged, with 46 rigs recently active compared to just eight in 2021. International oil companies are also renewing interest, with International Oil Companies

(IOCs) operating in Nigeria planning to expand deepwater production.

Crude exports account for about two-thirds of government revenue and more than 80 per cent of foreign exchange inflows. Rising output offers a chance to ease fiscal pressures, strengthen foreign reserves and further stabilise the naira.

According to Reuters, in recent months, Indian refiners have taken advantage of a favourable arbitrage window and raised their purchase of US oil via tender. Their US oil purchases were also helping cut India’s massive trade surplus with

the US, which has doubled the tariff on Indian imports to 50 per cent, citing New Delhi’s purchase of Russian oil.

But the report noted that the landing cost for US crude was high compared to other grades, despite the front-month Brent-WTI differential being about \$4 per barrel, reason it may now be turning to Nigeria and the Middle East.

Also, India has said it will continue to buy Russian oil as long as it remains economical to do so, despite the Donald Trump administration’s decision to impose heavy import tariffs on Indian goods due, in part, to its energy

purchases from Moscow.

Since Europe and the US shunned Russian oil over Moscow’s 2022 invasion of Ukraine, India has taken advantage of discounts on Russian output to become the largest buyer of Russian seaborne crude, arguing that its purchases of Russian oil have kept the markets in balance.

Trump, who is seeking to broker an end to the Ukraine conflict, has said India’s oil imports are helping fund Moscow’s war effort and imposed a 50 per cent tariff on imports from India last month.

India’s Finance Minister, Nirmala Sitharaman, speaking on local news channel CNN-News18,

said India, the world’s third-biggest oil importer and consumer, had no plans to eschew Russian supplies, despite Donald Trump’s pressure.

“We will have to take a call which (supply source) suits us the best. So we will undoubtedly be buying it,” she said, adding that India spends most of its foreign exchange on purchases of crude oil and refined fuels.

US Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick urged India on Friday to back the dollar, resume trade talks with Washington and stop buying Russian oil. “We’re always willing to talk. The Chinese sell to us. The Indians sell to us. They’re not going to be able to

sell to each other. We are the consumer of the world,” Lutnick said in an interview.

In the fiscal year to March 2025, oil and refined fuels purchases from overseas accounted for about a quarter of India’s overall imports. “Whether it is Russian oil or anything else, it’s our decision to buy from the place which suits our needs whether in terms of rates, logistics, anything,” Sitharaman added.

Besides, US Treasury Secretary, Scott Bessent, has accused India of profiteering by importing Russian oil at lower prices and then reselling refined fuel at a higher rate.



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NEWS

News Editor: **Charles Ajunwa**09157401421 (sms only) Email charles.ajunwa@thisdaylive.com**CONSUMER PROTECTION IN PETROLEUM SECTOR...**

L-R: Executive Director, Distribution Systems, Storage & Retailing Infrastructure, NMDPRA, Mr. Ogbugo Ukoha; FCCPC Executive Vice Chairman/CEO, Mr. Tunji Bello; NMDPRA Chief Executive, Mr. Farouk Ahmed, and FCCPC's Executive Commissioner (Operations), Mr. Louis Odion, during a strategic meeting at the FCCPC to strengthen consumer protection and competition collaboration in the petroleum sector, held in Abuja...recently

Adeniyi: Nigeria Rallying African Heads of Customs to Clear Trade Obstacles

● Grenada, Saint Kitts PMs, Edun, Oduwole, Zamfara gov, others hail impact of Dangote industries' investments in continent

James Emejo in Abuja and **Peter Uzoho** in Lagos

The Comptroller General of Nigeria Customs Service (NCS), Mr. Bashir Adewale Adeniyi, yesterday said the country is currently working with the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) Secretariat, Afreximbank, and the World Customs Organisation (WCO) Secretariat to convene a roundtable of African heads of customs administrations in Abuja.

As he declared that the Intra-African Trade Fair (IATF) 2027 in Lagos will unleash opportunity to showcase Nigeria's economic competitiveness, prominent leaders including the Prime Minister of Grenada, Dickon Mitchell; Prime Minister of Saint Kitts and Nevis, Dr. Terrance Drew; Nigeria's Minister of Finance

and Coordinating Minister of the Economy, Wale Edun; Minister of Industry, Trade and Investment, Dr. Jumoke Oduwole; and the Governor of Zamfara State, Dauda Lawal, among other personalities yesterday commended the socio-economic impact of Dangote Industries Limited's investment across Africa.

Also the Dangote Group exhibition stand at the 2025 IATF holding in Algiers, the capital of Algeria, was one of the most visited at the continent's leading trade and investment forum as majority of inquiries centred on polypropylene (PP), a key product of the Dangote Petroleum Refinery.

Speaking on Arise Television, Adeniyi said the aim of the meeting was to chart practical solutions, align continental initiatives, and leverage WCO

tools and instruments to create seamless trade facilitation across the continent.

He also said the continent must harness the power of its youth, stating that the demographic dividend remained a secret weapon.

The Comptroller General of Customs (CGC) said Africa's young, increasingly skilled population brings fresh

perspectives and digital-native approaches to export markets.

He called for deliberate efforts to build export strategies around youth engagement and to create pathways for young entrepreneurs to access global markets with unprecedented ease.

He also said Africa must unleash the export potential of women, noting that evidence had shown that women exporters

often outperform once barriers are removed.

He said, "Creating dedicated pathways and support systems to harness this proven competitive advantage is essential for Africa."

He pointed out that customs administrations across the continent understood these strategies, noting that many are already implementing relevant initiatives. However, he said, "progress

is often undermined by fragmentation, which limits our collective impact and slows progress toward positioning African exports globally."

The CGC also said the Nigeria Customs Service is currently taking deliberate steps to reduce the cost of doing business at the nation's ports by simplifying processes and facilitating trade to boost exports and economic competitiveness.

Wanted Sujimoto CEO Pledges to Report to EFCC, Denies Allegation

● Enugu state accuses investor of N5.7bn fraud
Boluwatife Enome

Sujimoto CEO, Olatijibomi Ogundele, yesterday, released a video denying allegations of fraud and insisted he was not a fugitive after he was declared wanted by the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC).

This was as the Enugu State Government has accused Ogundele, of defrauding the state of N5.7 billion, noting that Ogundele vanished into thin air after he was paid the said sum for the construction of 22 Smart Green Schools in different parts of the state.

In a statement signed by Enugu's Commissioner for Information and Communication, Dr. Malachy Agbo, yesterday, the State government also accused Ogundele of premeditated fraud, explaining that while he presented a bond issued by Jaiz Bank to secure the contract, he used the company's Zenith Bank account registered with the state's Ministry of Works and Infrastructure

to receive the said payment, making it impossible for the State to hold Jaiz Bank liable.

The EFCC, in a statement earlier yesterday, said it was looking for Ogundele – a Lagos-based businessman and Chief Executive Officer of Sujimoto Luxury Construction Limited – over alleged diversion of funds and money laundering.

The anti-graft agency, in a notice signed by its spokesperson, Dele Oyewale, described Ogundele as a 44-year-old indigene of Ori-Ade Local Government Area of Osun State.

"Ogundele is a 44-year-old indigene of Ori-Ade Local Government of Osun State and his last known address is: G 29, Banana Island, Ikoyi, Lagos State," the EFCC said. "Anybody with useful information as to his whereabouts should please contact the Commission in its offices."

However, on a passionate appeal recorded on video, Ogundele denied culpability.

DSS Files Terrorism Charges Against Ansaru Leaders Linked to Kuje Prison Break

The Department of State Services (DSS) has filed terrorism charges against two senior commanders of Ansaru, a terror group reportedly linked to Al-Qaeda, over their alleged role in violent attacks across Nigeria.

The suspects are Mahmud Usman, also known as Abu Bara'a Abbas/Mukhtar, who is described as the Emir of Ansaru, and his deputy, Mahmud Al-Nigeri, also known as Malam Mamuda. They were recently captured during security operations.

According to the DSS, the charges against them include leading a terrorist organisation, funding its activities, recruiting members, and planning violent operations nationwide.

The two men were alleged to be behind the July 2022 deadly attack on the Kuje Prison, where more than 600 inmates, including Boko Haram suspects, escaped.

Their arraignment is expected soon at the Federal High Court in Abuja. This comes three weeks after the National Security Adviser, Nuhu Ribadu,

announced their arrest.

Ribadu had said, "The first is Mahmud Muhammad Usman (aka Abu Bara'a/Abbas/Mukhtar), the self-styled Emir of ANSARU. He is the coordinator of various terrorist sleeper cells across Nigeria. He is also the mastermind of several high-profile kidnappings and armed robberies used to finance terrorism over the years."

"The second is Mahmud al-Nigeri (aka Mallam Mamuda), Abu Bara's proclaimed Chief of Staff and Deputy. He is the leader of the so-called

"Mahmudawa" cell hiding out in and around the Kainji National Park, straddling Niger and Kwara States up to the Benin Republic.

"Mamuda trained in Libya between 2013 and 2015 under foreign jihadist instructors from Egypt, Tunisia, and Algeria, specialising in weapons handling and IED fabrication."

The NSA said the two men had been on Nigeria's most-wanted list for years, having jointly spearheaded multiple attacks on civilians, security forces, and critical infrastructure.

Rewane: Nigeria's GDP Will Hit \$357bn if Power Supply Moves from 4,500MW to 8,000MW

Dike Onwuamaeze

The Managing Director of Financial Derivatives Company Limited (FDC), Mr. Bismarck Rewane, has pointed out that Nigeria's gross domestic product (GDP) could rise to \$357 billion if electricity supply would increase from the present 4,500MW to 8,000MW.

Rewane also noted that Nigeria has spent not less than \$30 billion in the power sector in 26 years only to increase the country's power generation by mere 500MW, from 4,500 MW in 1999 to 5,000MW in 2025 even though the sector has installed capacity to generate

13,000 MW.

He pointed these out in his presentation on September 3, 2025, at the Lagos Business School (LBS) Executive Breakfast Session titled 'Nigeria Bailout or Lights Out: The Power Sector in a Free Fall', where he stated categorically that the way out for the power sector that has N4.3 trillion indebtedness to banks would be either a bailout or lights out for Nigeria with its attendant consequences.

He said "According to the World Bank, a 1.0 per cent increase in electricity consumption is associated with a 0.5 to 0.6 per cent rise in GDP."

"If power supply rises to 8000MW, from current 4500MW, the bailout shifts money from government into investment, raising consumption and productivity. And due to multiplier effects, GDP could rise to \$357 billion."

The FDC's chief executive remarked that "in the last 30 years, Nigeria has invested no less than \$30 billion to solve an intractable power supply problem."

"The initiatives, which started in 1999 when the power generated from the grid was as low as 4,500MW, have proved to be a failure at best."

"Twenty-six years later, and after five presidential administrations, the country is still generating 5,000MW. Nigeria is ranked as being in the lowest percentile of electricity per capita in the world."

"The way out is a bailout, or it is lights out for Nigeria," he said.

He traced the origin of the huge debts of the power sector to its privatisation under President Goodluck Jonathan's administration, when many of the investors thought they had hit a jackpot, only to find out to their consternation that they had bought a poisoned chalice.

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Chairman Owa Royal Princes Secretary



STRENGTHENING COLLABORATION...

L-R: Debo Adefarasin, Modupe Olubanjo, Adeniyi Odejebi, all of Globacom; Governor Lucky Orimisan Aiyedatiwa of Ondo State, Tunde Adebayo, Wale Adiatu and Akeem Yussuf, all of Globacom, during a strategic partnership meeting between the company and the State Government in Akure, Ondo State...recently

LG Accounts’ Signatories: Osun APC Tackles PDP, Says Impersonation Crime to Humanity

Yinka Kolawole in Osogbo

Leadership of the All Progressive Congress (APC) in Osun State has frowned at what they termed the dangerous act of impersonation by Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) members who claimed they were the elected and duly sworn-in chairmen of local governments of the state under the umbrella of Association of Local Governments of Nigeria (ALGON).

The APC State Director of Information and Strategy, Mongaji Kola Olabisi, stated this in reaction to insinuation by the PDP local government leadership of ALGON, Osun State which faulted the statement credited to APC governorship aspirant in the state, Mr. Kunle Adegoke, who they alleged openly admitted that the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) had opened accounts in the names of local government councils in Osun State, and that the signatories to those accounts were not the legitimate civil servants but members of the APC recruited to claim local government civil service

positions and offices illegally.

According to Olabisi, "The PDP lie persistently repeated could be taken for the truth by the unsuspecting members of the public, we shall endeavour to state unequivocally that the 10th February, 2025 Court of Appeal judgement which expressly reinstated the APC local government council chairmen and councillors is explicit enough for proper comprehension even by non-lawyers."

Olabisi said, "In the eyes of the law, the reinstated elected APC local government council chairmen are the legally recognised executive local government bosses in charge of the council affairs in Osun State today.

"The only known and recognised state chairman of ALGON is Hon. Abiodun Idowu who is duly acknowledged at the headquarters of the body in Abuja.

"The truants behind the composition of the unsigned purported press statement knew the implication which was the reason they are afraid to put

forward the name of their fellow impostors."

"We want to enjoin the members of the public to discountenance the hogwash that oozed out from the impersonators who are calling themselves members of the Osun State ALGON as it diversionary, lacking merit and frivolous.

"Come to think of it, is the purported leadership of the Osun ALGON not lettered enough to know that the matter is in court

and should not be commented upon?

"It is pretty difficult for someone to give what he does not possess and when the head is rotten, the entire body is in an irredeemable problem."

The ALGON leadership had alleged that the APC members were impersonating the statutory civil servants who are the legitimate signatories to all existing accounts of the 30 local governments in

Osun State.

They said what Adegoke admitted they have done with the connivance of the CBN was against the law and all extant establishment laws.

"Throughout the democratic world, politicians do not sign government cheques. We therefore call on the CBN to quickly close the illegal accounts it has opened for politicians. The intent is clear. It is to divert Osun

people's money to private and political pockets.

"It is worse that the so-called APC chairmen backing them were never legitimate office holders. Their purported election was nullified by the judgement of the Federal High Court sitting in Osogbo on 30th November, 2022, a judgement that was further affirmed by the Court of Appeal in Akure on 13th June, 2025. That is the settled law.

Tanker Drivers Threaten Strike over Row with Dangote Refinery

● Unionism is voluntary, there should be no compulsion, energy analyst faults NUPENG

Emmanuel Addeh in Abuja

The Nigeria Union of Petroleum and Natural Gas Workers (NUPENG) and the Dangote Refinery are set for a showdown over claims by the union that the oil company was in the process of monopolising the transportation and distribution of petroleum products across the country.

Besides, NUPENG expressed concerns over alleged anti-labour practices, especially with the latest

directive that drivers recruited for the operation of the company's imported 10,000 Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) trucks would not be allowed to join any trade union.

In a veiled threat, NUPENG in a statement in Abuja jointly signed by its President, Williams Akporeha and General Secretary, Afolabi Olawale, said that from Monday, September 8, members of the union will "start looking for alternative employment/

skills and sources of livelihoods," urging Nigerians to bear the consequences.

But reacting to the development, an energy and market economy analyst, Dan D. Kunle, in a noted to THISDAY, faulted the move by NUPENG, and argued that, "A free market economy is an open market. Free entry free exit. Nigeria FGN must not accept these threats to persist. Investment at a certain scale normally distorts the small-scale operators who lack

capital to scale up."

He added, "Unionism is a voluntary association. There is no compulsion. The Registrar of Trade Unions has the right to register such an association, and members are free to join or leave. The new association can be an affiliate of NUPENG. NUPENG is simply afraid of losing its members. That, in turn, waters down their capacity for disruption. It is a case of an anticipated balance of terror.

WHO, Partners Step Up Response in Congo Ebola Outbreak

Oluchi Chibuzor

The World Health Organisation (WHO) yesterday said it was collaborating with the Federal Ministry of Health of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and other partners to intensified public health measures to contain the current Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) outbreak in the Central African country.

In an update, the global health body, explained that on September 1, 2025, it received an alert from the Ministry of Health of the DRC regarding suspected cases of EVD in the Bulape Health Zone, Kasai Province, DRC.

It stated that the first known index case was a pregnant woman who presented at Bulape General Reference Hospital on 20 August 2025 with symptoms of high fever, bloody diarrhoea, haemorrhage and extreme weakness.

"She died on 25 August from multiple organ failure. On 4 September 2025, following confirmatory laboratory testing, the Ministry of Health declared

an outbreak of EVD. Ebola virus disease is a serious, often fatal illness in humans.

"The virus is transmitted to humans through close contact with the blood or secretions of infected wildlife and then spreads through human-to-human transmission.

"As of 4 September 2025, 28 suspected cases, including 15 deaths (case fatality ratio (CFR): 54%), have been reported from three areas of the Bulape health zone (Bulape, Bulape Com and Dikolo) and Mwaka health zone."

Among the deaths, four were health-care workers.

"About 80 percent of the suspected cases are aged 15 years and older. Six samples were collected from five suspected cases and one probable death from Bulape health zone and arrived on 3 September at the National Public Health Laboratory (INRB) in Kinshasa for confirmation testing.

All five samples tested positive for Ebola virus (EBOV) through GeneXpert and Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) assays on 3 September 2025.

Peter Obi: Tinubu Now Finds It Difficult to Stay in Nigeria

Chuks Okocha in Abuja and David-Chyddy Eleke in Awka

The 2023 presidential candidate of the Labour Party, Peter Obi, yesterday, criticised President Bola Tinubu over his foreign travels "at a time Nigeria is in dire need of his presence to deal with myriads of challenges."

Obi, who wrote on X, a social media platform, expressed concern about the president's intermittent travels across Europe and, in particular, France.

According to the former Anambra State governor, the President's frequent visits abroad gives an

impression of a man getting increasingly uncomfortable in his home.

He said: "From all indications, our President is not finding his home in Nigeria conducive for a long stay, and it should be concerning to us.

"Just yesterday, for the umpteenth time, Mr. President waved the nation goodbye again, barely six days after his return to Nigeria, after he spent 15 whole days for just a five-day engagement. He is now heading for about his 10th trip to France in two years, this time for his annual holiday. It does look like Mr. President is running

away from Nigeria at every slight opportunity.

"And one would wonder why so much of his two years in office has been spent on holidays or away from the very country he was elected to preside over."

Meanwhile, Obi has praised missions for their contributions in propagating quality healthcare in Nigeria.

Obi stated this yesterday when he visited Aguata Anglican Diocese to support the acquisition and revitalisation of the Good Hope Specialist Hospital in Isulo.

Obi during the visit donated

N10 million to the facility which is locate along the popular Basden Road in Isulo, Orumba South Local Government Area of Anambra State.

Presenting a cheque of N10 million which he said is the first tranche of his support, Mr. Obi expressed profound joy at contributing to a project that will enhance access to quality healthcare for the people.

He noted that his decision to support the Diocese was motivated by his personal conviction that investing in healthcare is one of the most meaningful ways to uplift society.

FAAN Urges Early Arrival as Airport Terminal Reconstruction Begins

Chinedu Eze

The Federal Airports Authority of Nigeria (FAAN) has urged passengers travelling out of the country through the Murtala Muhammed International Airport, Lagos, to get to the

airport early, as there could be delays, saying the reconstruction of the planned international terminal has started.

In a travel advisory issued yesterday, the agency advised passengers to allow more time for their trips because processing

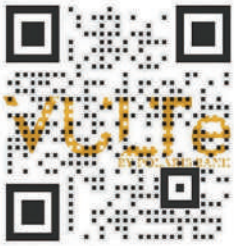
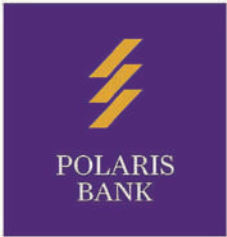
them may take a longer time.

"To ensure a smooth travel experience, we kindly request that passengers leave early for the airport to avoid missing flights, obey all traffic instructions to aid traffic flow, and park vehicles properly in designated car park

areas," the agency said.

FAAN also urged that only travellers come to the airport during the reconstruction period due to limited space.

"We appreciate your cooperation and understanding," it added.



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COMMENTARY

PATE AND THE RENEWED HEALTH AGENDA

Paul A. Obi highlights efforts by the Coordinating Minister of Health and Social Welfare, Muhammad Ali Pate to strengthen the health sector

"Of all the forms of inequality, injustice in health is the most shocking and inhumane."
- Martin Luther King Jr

Nigeria has never lacked competent and stellar technocrats who could turn the tide of things and shape public policy for common good. What the country lacks is the combined forces of technocracy, political will and efficient policy making that moves ideas from talk shop hubs to practical and implementable programmes. In the Nigerian health sector, these evolving gaps between technocracy and political will had been the bane of the sector for a long time. Far beyond inertia in public policy within the sector, the Nigerian healthcare service delivery system also suffered from the expertise required political support to change the dynamics of public health system

In such an atmosphere, technocrats who found themselves as ministers and cabinet members were either frustrated or arm-twisted by the flurry of political expediency. Ministers for the most part had to read and study the body language of the Presidency and sometimes navigate the tortuous paths of presidential power, or risk great political and administrative upheaval. It appears that the tenure of former Minister of Health during the first term of late former President Muhammadu Buhari's government, Prof Isaac Adewole was caught deep in this cascading presidential power muscle flexing.

Presently, there appears to be some contrast from the past in the healthcare governance of Africa's most populous nation. With Prof Muhammad Ali Pate as the Coordinating Minister of Health and Social Welfare, there is a clear case of agreement about the impact of profound technocracy and political will. In keying into President Bola Tinubu's Renewed Hope Agenda; Pate has carved a niche in which Renewed Health Agenda is the definitive cornerstone of the nation's healthcare system. In that light, a vibrant healthcare system is one that focuses more on addressing inequality in health.



IN APPRAISING PATE'S NOVEL POLICY TEMPLATE, THE IMPACT IS NOT JUST ABOUT QUICK FIXES, BUT MORE OF CONCRETE STEPS AND OUTCOMES THAT HAVE SPIRAL IMPACT ON THE TEEMING POPULATION

For Pate, the essence of any worthy health policy is that which seeks to bridge existing gaps of health inequality and make healthcare systems more humane as Martin Luther King Jr sort of believed. To achieve this goal Pate is not only transforming the health sector, but also reforming it to suit the current needs of the populace. In strengthening the Renewed Health Agenda of the government, Pate's competence aligns with President Tinubu's political will within the sector. According to the Coordinating Minister, this alignment and the resultant positive outcomes are all products of "the consistent support of President Tinubu," adding that: "Nigerians can and should expect that the transformation of our healthcare system is not only continuing but already yielding tangible results."

In appraising Pate's novel policy template, the impact is not just about quick fixes, but more of concrete steps and outcomes that have spiral impact on the teeming Nigerian population. These outcomes are evident with 1003 revitalized Primary Health Care (PHC) facilities and centers; 5500 of PHC still under construction with an overall target of 17,000 as a nationwide plan. With the replacement of dilapidated PHCs across the country with new models, the Q1 of 2025 saw 37 million Nigerians accessing PHC services around the country, according to data released by the Federal Ministry of Health and Social Welfare.

Added to that, to widen the access net for maternal and infant health, 172 local government areas have been earmarked for the Maternal and Neonatal Mortality Reduction Innovation Initiatives (MNMRII). With this policy in place, six million pregnant women in the country received macronutrient supplementation in 2024 alone. Between 2023 and April 2025, the country witnessed 13.1 million antenatal care visitation in PHCs and other tertiary health facilities. Within the period under review, 4.2 million births were recorded in the country, receiving optimal professional medical attention from medical personnel.

Obi is a lecturer, journalist and researcher based in Abuja

RENO OMOKRI SLIPPED ON THIS ONE

We must be circumspect in telling stories about security operations, writes **JOSHUA OCHEJA**

Reno Omokri is indeed a table shaker. He shakes the table at his whims and caprices. I envy his guts. He is not afraid to make his opinion known on issues of national importance. His recent trip by road to Kaduna from Abuja with scores of journalists is one of such instances. He wanted to let us know that the once dangerous Abuja-Kaduna Road is now very safe for travel due to the efforts of our security agencies manning strategic positions on the long stretch. But he got it twisted this time around from a security standpoint. Some things are better left unsaid, especially when it comes to the operations of the military. A little can be too much in this instance. Reno is a patriotic Nigerian. Not many would spend their hard-earned resources projecting the image of Nigeria to the world. Did you notice his beautiful attire? He came prepared. This is what makes him different from other content creators.

The Abuja-Kaduna Road has a long history of tears and blood. Once upon a time, commuters dreaded the road. Travelling safely on that stretch is

regarded as a miracle. As a frequent traveller on that road, I knew some of the rules of engagement. You are to ensure your car is in perfect shape. You must observe from a distance to identify any strange happenings ahead of you. You must wear attire that won't hinder your pace in the event that your ability to run fast can save your life. You must also conceal your identity as much as possible and pray for divine protection. These and many more precautions are taken before embarking on a trip on that stretch of road.

Fast forward. The Abuja-Kaduna Road is one of the safest roads in the country. I agree with Reno. I knew this a long time ago, and in my usual manner, I authored an article titled "Abuja-Kaduna Road" in November 2023. <https://www.thecable.ng/abuja-kaduna-road/> In the article, I stated that the return to normalcy on the road was a result of a joint military operation (Operation Whirl Punch) launched by the Defence Headquarters in 2018 to provide security and restore normalcy along the Kaduna-Abuja Road and its environs. This operation is still in effect to date. I was careful not to give out sensitive information about this

operation. I knew the implications as a military historian. This is what Reno Omokri didn't know. He was excited about the trip and the fact that he went without the usual hordes of security operatives. His intentions were not malicious. But his expressions can be regarded as a security compromise. He ignorantly gave out very sensitive information about the security strategy on that road.

In one of his posts on X, he said, "military outposts are stationed at every one kilometre on the previous kidnap hotspot on the road, which is about midway to Kaduna. They are manned 24/7, and any bandit or kidnapper that attempts anything on that road will meet their maker on that same day" <https://x.com/renoomokri/status/1961129578992185419?s=08> This is too much for comfort. Military operations are not for content creation. They are intricate, and the stakes are high. No one should know that military outposts are stationed at every one kilometer on that stretch of road. It is confidential information. But this piece of information is everywhere on social media. A notorious space that encourages the good, bad and ugly.

Reno Omokri laid it bare for all. He

took pictures with security operatives, and there was also video footage of what the military outposts look like. I saw it. Adamu saw it. Olumide saw it. Kelechi saw it. A bandit leader saw it. A terrorism financier saw it. And the list goes on. The question is what you and I do with that information would be different from what a bandit leader and terrorism financier would do with the same information. The outcomes are different in most instances. This is my point. Security is a national concern, and it is the responsibility of all. We must be circumspect in telling stories about security operations. It was Ralph Nader, an American lawyer and politician, who said, "National security is the fig leaf against freedom of information." My interpretation is that sensitive information about military operations must be protected. It is not for public consumption. I wonder how Reno Omokri gained access to the military outposts on the stretch of road, with full media coverage. In one of the videos he posted, he was interviewed by the press with a military outpost behind him.

Ocheja, PhD, specializes in the documentation of the military histories of Nigeria and Africa

INSIGHT



Happy Sallah...

TO OUR READERS

Letters in response to specific publications in THISDAY should be brief (150-200 words) and straight to the point. Interested readers may send such letters along with their contact details to saturdayeditor@thisdaylive.com. We also welcome comments and opinions on topical local, national and international issues provided they are well-written and should also not be longer than (950-1000 words). They should be sent to saturdayeditor@thisdaylive.com along with the email address and phone numbers of the writer.

The NYSC at a Crossroads

When the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) was established in 1973, it was hailed as a bold initiative to heal a divided nation. The scars of the Nigerian Civil War were still fresh, and the scheme was designed to foster unity, cultural integration, and patriotism among the country's young graduates. For decades, it served as a rite of passage, bringing together youths from different ethnic and religious backgrounds under one national banner.

Today, however, the NYSC is battling for survival. What was once a noble institution has become the subject of heated debate. With insecurity, poor welfare, and questions about relevance dominating discussions, many are asking: has the scheme outlived its purpose, or does it simply need urgent reform?

The biggest concern facing corps members is insecurity. In recent years, young graduates deployed to volatile areas have fallen victim to kidnapping, insurgency, and communal clashes. Parents often express fear when their children are posted to certain regions, while some graduates resort to desperate measures to secure redeployment to safer states. The question many Nigerians are now asking is whether national service should come at the risk of young lives.

Another major challenge is welfare. The monthly allowance of ₦33,000, though increased a few months, has been swallowed by inflation and the rising cost of living. Corps members often

complain that their stipends barely cover feeding, transport, and accommodation. Many end up depending on their families for survival, defeating the very essence of an independent national service year.

Orientation camps, which are meant to be the foundation of the service year, also reflect the cracks in the system. While some camps boast modern facilities, others are overcrowded and poorly maintained. Reports of inadequate toilets, shortage of water, and poor medical services have become common. For many corps members, the three-week camp is not just an orientation but a struggle to endure discomfort.

Ladi Maxwell, Dept of Mass Communication, University of Maiduguri

Police and Tinted Glass Permit

The Police new Tinted Glass Permit is fast becoming another tool for exploitation. It is unnecessary, poorly managed, and shamelessly designed to fleece motorists. Worse still, the idea of renewing it every year is nothing but an unjustifiable cash grab—especially from a security agency that is not meant to be a revenue collector.

The so-called application process is a mess. The POSSAP platform constantly fails, biometric capture is available only in state capitals, and even after enduring long trips and hours of waiting, many applicants still cannot download their permits. Yet, police officers on the road continue to harass drivers and extort money—despite an official extension of the enforcement date to October 2025.

If the Police are sincere, they should make the process seamless, open application points in every divisional police station, and issue the permit once, not yearly. President Tinubu must call the IGP to order. Nigerians are tired of paying for incompetence disguised as policy.

Tochukwu Jimo Obi,jimobi83@gmail.com

Attack or Defend?
It's More Than Politics

There is a real difference between the Department of Defense and the Department of War beyond just words. President Trump, the only President without Military service or previous political experience, has no idea of the personal consequences of war. People who have fought bravely in battles during wars know that peace is what they are fighting for and they don't want to see any more wars. The switch from defence to aggression will endanger so many people, although not Donald Trump due to his 'bone spurs'. Any sane leader wants to stop wars and then prevent further incidents.

Dennis Fitzgerald, Melbourne, Australia

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NEWS



LAUNCH OF AMFANI ZHIBA FOUNDATION...

L-R: Marafa Nupe, Engr. Sani M. Ndanusa; former Minister of State for Budget and National Planning, Prince Clem Ikanade Agba; Hajiya Dele Ndanusa; Brigadier General Abdull A. Ahmad; Soniya Asusu Nupe, Mrs. Aishah Ahmad; Obaala of Imesi Ile, High Chief Olatunde Akinyemi- Aluko, who represented H.R.M. Enoch Ademola Akinyemi (Oyoyo II); Hajiya Amina Kere-Ahmed, and the Lerio of Imesi-Ile,High Chief Solomon Adepoju Adeshina, during Mrs. Ahmad's llaunch of the Amfani Zhiba Foundation in Bida, Niger State...recently

UNDP Urges Nigeria to Embrace Bold, Innovative, Integrity-Driven Leadership

Sunday Aborisade in Abuja

Nigeria must urgently move from transactional leadership to a transformational model if it hopes to unlock prosperity and global relevance, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Country Representative, Ms. Elsie Attafuah, has said.

She stated this yesterday in Abuja while delivering the keynote address at the National Leadership Conference 2025, organised by the GOTNI Leadership Centre under the theme 'Transforming Minds, Inspiring Results'.

Attafuah called for a new era of leadership driven by innovation, integrity, and measurable impact.

Held at the Transcorp Hilton, the two-day conference brought together policymakers, executives, diplomats, change agents, and youth leaders from across Nigeria and beyond.

The event aimed to redefine leadership thinking by equipping leaders with mindsets and strategies aligned with today's

global realities.

Attafuah said, "Leadership is no longer about position or privilege. It's about responsibility, trust, and results.

"The difference between nations that thrive and those that falter is mindset. If the mind is trapped, the nation is trapped. If the mind is free, the nation soars," she said.

She emphasised that Nigeria's true strengths lie not in its natural resources, but in its people, especially the youth, creative industries, and emerging tech entrepreneurs.

Highlighting global successes like Afrobeats, Nollywood, and fintech firms such as Paystack and Flutterwave, she urged leaders to stop seeing the youth as a liability and instead nurture them as vital national assets.

Attafuah argued that Nigeria must not merely consume technology but must become a leader in innovation, especially in fields like artificial intelligence, renewable energy, and digital finance.

She warned that Nigeria's

projected population of over 400 million by 2050 could either become its greatest advantage or a demographic crisis.

Overdependence on natural resources, she said, is no longer viable. What Nigeria needs, according to her, are strong institutions, quality education, and governance systems that outlast electoral cycles.

She asserted that development is no longer about what lies beneath the ground, but what

is cultivated in the mind. Mindset, she said, is the engine that powers innovation, resilience, and nation-building.

Attafuah outlined several imperatives for Nigeria's leadership transformation.

She stressed the need to reimagine governance by moving from patronage to performance, building resilient institutions, and reinforcing the rule of law.

She underscored the importance of investing in the country's youth

by providing education that aligns with the needs of the future economy and by supporting youth-led enterprises.

Nigeria, she said, must take the lead in Africa's energy transition by embracing renewables and utilising its mineral resources strategically.

She also called for a stronger focus on digital innovation, encouraging Nigeria to become a producer, not just a consumer of technology.

She emphasised the critical need for effective development financing through domestic resource mobilisation and partnerships with the private sector, international allies, and the Nigerian diaspora.

Transformational leadership, according to her, must cut across all sectors, business, government, civil society, and academia.

At its core, she insisted, lies a shift in collective and individual mindsets.

CVR: INEC Suspends Online Registration In FCT, Takes Exercise to Ward Level

Adedayo Akinwale in Abuja

The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) has announced the suspension of online pre-registration in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT).

INEC National Commissioner and Chairman, Information and Voter Education Committee, Sam Olumekun, in a statement issued yesterday also announced devolution of voter registration to ward level in the nation's capital.

He said, "The Commission has approved the devolution of the ongoing voter registration to Ward level in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT).

"This decision is in line with our policy as we approach major off-cycle elections as was done ahead of the Edo and Ondo governorship elections last year and

more recently in Anambra State for the forthcoming governorship election.

"Accordingly, the physical (in-person) registration currently taking place in the FCT office and the six Area Council offices of the commission has been extended to all the 62 Wards, making a total of 69 centres."

Olumekun added that the devolved registration would commence on Monday 29th September 2025 and end on Wednesday 8th October 2025.

Consequently, he added that the online pre-registration option in the FCT would be suspended on Monday 15th September 2025 to enable all pre-registrants to complete their registration at the designated physical (in-person) centres without which the online option alone is invalid.

Elumelu, Archbishop of New York to Receive Appeal of Conscience Award

The Appeal of Conscience Foundation has announced that His Eminence Timothy Cardinal Dolan, the Archbishop of New York, and the Chairman of Heirs Holdings, the United Bank for Africa, and Founder of the Tony Elumelu Foundation, Mr. Tony Elumelu, would be honoured with the Appeal of Conscience Award at the foundation's Annual Gala.

The award ceremony will take place on September 29, 2025, at the Waldorf Astoria in New York City.

The Appeal of Conscience Foundation, founded by Rabbi Arthur Schneier in 1965, is an

interfaith coalition of business, religious, and diplomatic leaders that advocates for peace, religious liberty, and respect for the other.

The Appeal of Conscience Award is presented to public figures who exemplify enlightened leadership and uphold the principle that "a crime committed in the name of religion is the greatest crime against religion," according to PRNewswire.

Commenting on the choice of Elumelu, Schneier said: "Tony Elumelu stands as a beacon of ethical entrepreneurship and visionary leadership," said Rabbi Schneier. "Business can

be a powerful force for peace, stability, and human dignity. His commitment to uplifting others is a living example of conscience in action."

Elumelu has championed youth entrepreneurship, financial inclusion, and African-led development through his philosophy of "Africapitalism", the idea that the private sector must play a central role in driving social and economic progress.

Through his enduring \$100 million-plus commitment, the Tony Elumelu Foundation's Entrepreneurship Programme has selected and funded over 24,000 African entrepreneurs

across all 54 African countries. Initiatives including the BeGreen Africa programme have further expanded this impact, equipping 1,600 innovative green businesses with the skills and support to advance environmental sustainability, drive climate action, and create jobs for Africa's youth.

Elumelu's family-owned investment Group, Heirs Holdings, recently released a 15-Year Impact Report which highlights how the Group's CSR activities have positively impacted over 500,000 people, reflecting its steadfast commitment to improving lives and transforming the African continent.

Aishah Ahmad's Soniya Asusu Nupe Title Inspires Amfani Zhiba Foundation Launch

The launch of the Amfani Zhiba Foundation in Bida, Niger State, marks a significant milestone in the state's socio-economic development, coinciding with the historic conferment of the Soniya Asusu Nupe (Giwa Mata) title on Mrs. Aishah Ahmad.

The traditional honour was bestowed on her by His Royal Highness, Alhaji (Dr.) Yahaya Abubakar, Etsu Nupe and Chairman of the Niger State Council of Traditional Rulers.

The Soniya Asusu Nupe title, emblematic of stewardship over

economic welfare, trade and finance, recognises Mrs. Ahmad's notable contributions to Nigeria and her global leadership in finance and policy formulation, a statement explained.

This distinction underscored the growing intersection between traditional authority and modern economic governance in Niger State.

The Amfani Zhiba Foundation, unveiled during the ceremony, aims to advance education, financial inclusion, mentorship and entrepreneurship, primarily targeting women and youth.

Key initiatives announced include the Soniya Asusu Female Economists Challenge and a Global Mentorship Programme in collaboration with the Federal Government Girls College (FGGC) Bida Old Girls Association. The foundation also plans to implement entrepreneurship programmes in partnership with government bodies and local stakeholders.

In his address during the title's conferment, the Etsu Nupe, Alhaji Abubakar said: "Mrs. Ahmad has brought pride to the Nupe Kingdom through her distinguished service

in finance and policy. The Amfani Zhiba Foundation will further strengthen economic wellbeing and community upliftment nationwide."

Niger State Governor, Mohammed Umaru Bago, represented by Hon. Dr. Ibrahim Dangana, Commissioner for Primary Health, praised the foundation's focus on inclusive development.

"The government is proud to partner with Amfani Zhiba Foundation in efforts to enhance livelihoods across Niger State by empowering women and youth," he commented.



30
YEARS MEMORIAL

ESTHER
IHUOMA
EKEZIE
1939-1995

Fondly remembered by:

Surviving Children: Ngozi Egbe, Chidinma Ngobidi, Ndidiamaka Ibeh, and Uchenna Ekezie.

Sibling: Chinuru Ogbonna

Sons In-Law: Placid Ibeh, Charles Egbe, and Ekene Ngobidi

Daughter In-Law: Joy Ekezie

Grand Children: Chidozie Ibeh, Chidubem Ibeh, Adaugo Ibeh, Ogechi Ibeh, Naomi Egbe, Chukuwma Ibeh, Benedict Ekezie, Angela Ekezie, Chima Ekezie, Emmanuel Ngobidi, and Uzochukwu Ngobidi.

Mummy as we remember you today, It is difficult not to ponder what life would have been like if you had hung around a few more years. And yet here we are, three decades having gone by without you. Nonetheless we take solace in our faith that we shall all one day be reunited in the Kingdom to come where we shall part no more.

Signed:
Uchenna Ekezie (PhD)
Son

NEWS



BII'S AGRI-TECH INVESTMENT IN BABBAN GONA...

L-R: West Africa Regional Director and Head of Office for Nigeria, BII, Benson Adenuga; UK Trade Envoy to Nigeria, Florence Eshalomi; Managing Director, Babban Gona, Kola Masha; and British Deputy High Commissioner to Nigeria, Jonny Baxter, at the announcement of BII's \$7.5 million agri-tech investment in Babban Gona, held in Lagos...recently

Osinbajo to Religious Leaders: Use Your Pulpits to Preach Against Corruption, Cheating

●Nwachukwu, Kalu, Okonkwo call for new constitution, states' autonomy

Oluchi Chibuzor

Former Vice President, Prof. Yemi Osinbajo, has charged religious leaders in the country to use their pulpits to lead national reformation by preaching a gospel that will attack corruption and cheating. This was as Major Gen. Ike Nwachukwu (rtd), former Finance

Minister, Dr. Kalu Idika Kalu and presiding Bishop of The Redeemed Evangelical Mission (TREM), Dr. Mike Okonkwo, called for a new constitution that recognises the autonomy of states. Delivering his speech at the 24th Mike Okonkwo annual lecture themed, 'The Nigeria of Our Dream, Today's Reality

and a Responsible Pathfinder', Osinbajo said for the new Nigeria to come to reality the religious leaders must use their pulpits to entrench the principles of hard work, brotherly love and equity as exemplified by Puritans movement. At the event held in Lagos, Osinbajo asserted that there was no developed society today, be

it Christian, Muslim, completely secular, that developed without observing principles of hard work and productivity, equity and justice. According to him, "So the question then is simple. What is being taught on our pulpits? Is it the true and transformative gospel of Jesus Christ, or a variant of that gospel that is lacking in

power and even corrupting in its influence? "Is it the gospel that transformed Europe and America and later Asia? Are we hearing the message that righteousness exalts a nation, or do our holiness messages stop at adultery and fornication? Does it seem to us to be okay to receive stolen funds from politicians who refuse to build schools and hospitals, but are prepared to give large amounts of money to churches

and mosques? "I fear that we are not hearing the true gospel frequently enough on our pulpits, which will explain why, despite the number of churches and religious institutions, we still have a society whose values cannot sustain a modern economy. We are the elite of a society, and by that I mean the political class. When I say the elite, the political, the religious, and business leaders have come to accept corruption as the rule.

Lagos Lawyer Denies Link to Army General's Multi-billion Naira Asset Forfeiture

Wale Igbintade

A Lagos-based lawyer and businessman, Mr. Kayode Oladipupo Filani, has dismissed media reports linking him to the recent court-ordered forfeiture of assets traced to former Director of Nigerian Army Properties, Major General Mohammed Umar (rtd).

Filani stressed that neither he nor any of his companies was mentioned in the proceedings, questioning how his name became associated with widely circulated reports. On August 26, 2025, Justice Dehinde Dipeolu of the Federal High Court granted a final forfeiture order on assets traced to Umar.

The properties included 26 companies and shares allegedly acquired by the retired Army General. The order followed an application by the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), which told the court that 245,568,137 shares were purchased with proceeds of unlawful activities

during Umar's tenure as head of the Army's property company. In granting the application, Justice Dipeolu held that the EFCC had proved its case and ordered the shares permanently forfeited to the federal government, in favour of Nigerian Army Properties Limited.

NIDCOM Hails Macjob's Record-setting Movie, Ireke

Chairman and Chief Executive Officer, Nigerians in Diaspora Commission (NIDCOM), Hon. Abike Dabiri-Erewa, has commended Nigerian international broadcaster and producer, Gbolahan Macjob, for the groundbreaking global success of his film, Ireke. In a statement issued by NIDCOM spokesperson, Abdur-Rahman Balogun, Dabiri-Erewa described the achievement as a remarkable milestone for Nigeria, noting that Ireke: Rise of the Maroons has set multiple international records for a Nigerian local language film. The epic production, which

tells the untold story of African slave rebellion in the Caribbean, has been hailed worldwide for bringing often-neglected African and Nigerian history to a global audience. According to Dabiri-Erewa, the movie has transcended diaspora viewership, captivating Caribbean communities, white British audiences, and international film lovers across various regions. The NIDCOM boss lauded the film's outstanding viewing records, describing Macjob as a multi-talented creative whose roots and training in Abeokuta, Ogun State, remain central to his success.

Nylon Traders Embark On Cleaning Exercise

Oluchi Chibuzor

Members of the Nylon Sellers and Producers Association yesterday embarked on a cleaning exercise at the popular Oyingbo Market in Lagos State, vowing to partner with the state government on a cleaner and healthier state. In a heartfelt appeal to the Speaker of the Lagos State House of Assembly, Mudashiru Obasa, the group urged the lawmakers to

intervene and halt the enforcement of the July 1, 2025 ban on certain single-use plastics (SUPs) like styrofoam food packs, plastic straws, lightweight nylon bags and disposable plastic cups and cutlery. They acknowledged the government's environmental concerns but warned of dire economic consequences if the policy continues. Beyond raising concerns, the

traders also offered solutions. They pledged to partner state government on waste management, promising regular clean-up activities, recycling drives, and public education campaigns on responsible disposal of nylon products. Secretary of the association, Mr. Kamorudeen Yusuf, said "We will continue to sensitise people about pollution and proper disposal of nylon. If properly kept, it can be

transformed into wealth." He disclosed that the group plans to organise seminars in markets, engage traders, and partner with the government to promote responsible waste management. On his part, the Assistant Secretary, Mr. Akin Apata, emphasised the sector's role in providing jobs for unemployed youths and traders, while unveiling a new initiative to establish collection points across Lagos.

Interior Designer Murdered By Ex-Lover in Lagos

A young interior designer, Deborah Moses, known by her brand name Deb'rah Porsche, has been stabbed to death in Lagos by her former boyfriend, months after their separation. The suspect, identified as Lintex from Otukpo, Benue State, allegedly gained access to the estate where Deborah resided on Wednesday night by disguising as a dispatch rider. Security personnel became suspicious when the suspect reportedly scaled the perimeter fence to gain entry into the compound. It was gathered that he had earlier attempted to sabotage a gas pipeline outside

the apartment, apparently in a bid to trigger an explosion. When that failed, he forcibly broke into Deborah's residence and attacked her with a knife, inflicting multiple stab wounds that led to her death. Family sources revealed that Deborah had ended the relationship over a year ago, but the suspect continued to harass her and issue threats. It was also reported that Deborah, who had just completed her National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) assignment and was pursuing a career in interior decoration, had been ignoring his persistent calls and advances.

The Alternative Bank, PLASU Showcase Alfalfa Breakthrough for Livestock Sector

Nigeria's livestock sector may have found its breakthrough solution, Alfalfa. The high-protein forage crop, now thriving in trials at Plateau State University (PLASU) with funding from The Alternative Bank, is being hailed as a game-changer that could transform animal feed, boost productivity, and ease the long-standing

farmer-herder conflict. At the university's Green Field Day on Alfalfa Adaptability and Performance Trials, which held at the Faculty of Agriculture Research Plot in Bokkos, Plateau, on Tuesday, researchers, policymakers, farmers, agribusiness leaders, and development partners gathered to see first-hand how

the initiative – handed over to PLASU in May 2025 under The Alternative Bank's Corporate Social Investment programme – is advancing livestock feed solutions in Nigeria. Preliminary results from the trials have been highly encouraging, showing clear viability under Plateau State's weather and soil conditions.

Presenting his paper on 'Alfalfa Adaptability and Performance under Plateau's Climate', Associate Professor Hosea Istifanus Finangwai, Dean of the Faculty of Agriculture at Plateau State University and lead of the Alfalfa Project Research Team, reported that germination rates exceeded 85 per cent within two weeks.

NEWS XTRA



NBA CONFERENCE...

L-R: Bayonle Adepoju, Bayo Alabidun, Abayomi Sadiku, and Ademola Ekundayo, during the Nigeria Bar Association conference held in Enugu...recently

Export Ban on Shea Nuts: Stakeholders Urge Customs to Effectively Police All Borders

Ndubuisi Francis in Abuja

The National Association of Shea Products of Nigeria (NASPAN), the umbrella body for actors in the shea value chain in Nigeria, has urged the Nigerian Customs Service (NCS) to ensure effective policing of all borders, to avoid further perpetration of illegal trading.

While applauding the President Bola Ahmed Tinubu administration for the temporary ban, NASPAN noted that to achieve the desired impact, ensuring alignment with national goals and advancing the interest of actors across the value chain, certain critical success factors needed to be taken.

Briefing journalists in Abuja, Friday, NASPAN President, Mohammed Ahmed Kontagora

stated that the Nigerian Customs Service should ensure effective policing of all borders, to avoid further perpetration of illegal trading.

NASPAN, he explained, was profoundly appreciative of President Tinubu, and the Vice President, Senator Kashim Shettima, for their timely intervention in placing an immediate ban on the export of shea nut/kernel from Nigeria.

"This policy is not only strategic but also critical in repositioning Nigeria as the global leader in shea competitiveness.

"Though announced suddenly during the peak of seasonal transactions in shea nut harvest, processing, and trading, the ban is a welcome decision that NASPAN fully supports.

"It represents a paradigm shift in the regulation of shea resources, with the official integration of a critical economic product of wide domestic benefit and high export value.

"The grounds of the ban—including boosting local processing capacity, curbing informal trade, job creation, rural economic transformation, sustainability for women pickers, and resource optimisation—are

valid and justifiable, with tremendous potential for national economic growth," he said.

According to him, apart from the informed reasons already well articulated by the federal government, there are immediate impacts of the temporary export ban.

"The announcement can stem local price volatility as actors in the value chain

review emerging realities to explore ways in which the policy enhances mutually beneficial trade relationships. Integrating shea into the Nigerian Commodity Exchange platform will also foster price stability, transparency and fair returns to farmers, women pickers, and processors.

"The policy signifies government's readiness to formalise shea trading and

curtail informal trading, with huge economic losses arising from undocumented cross-border trading, smuggling, and black-market practices.

"The new policy direction presents the opportunity to assess the capacity of local processors to establish the gap between their requirements, shortfalls or excesses that could be considered for export," he said.

WWB, PreCEFI Push for Women's Digital Financial Inclusion in Nigeria

Sunday Ehigiator

Women's World Banking (WWB), in partnership with the Presidential Committee on Economic and Financial Inclusion (PreCEFI), has convened a high-level stakeholders' workshop in Abuja to accelerate women's digital financial inclusion (WDFI) in Nigeria.

The workshop, which brought together key players from the public and private sectors, including the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), Nigeria Inter-Bank Settlement System (NIBSS), National Insurance Commission (NAICOM), Bank of Industry (BOI), Deposit Money Banks, Microfinance Institutions, FinTechs, and Development Finance Institutions (DFIs), aimed at deepening women's access to financial services and narrowing the gender gap in financial inclusion.

Nigeria has set a target of achieving 95 per cent financial inclusion and closing the nine per cent gender gap in access to financial services as part of its economic strategy to build a trillion-

dollar economy. Stakeholders at the forum agreed that women's economic empowerment is pivotal to inclusive growth, poverty reduction, and macroeconomic stability.

Speaking at the event, Dr. Nurudeen Zauro, Technical Advisor on Economic and Financial Inclusion to the President, said the partnership between PreCEFI and WWB was vital to aligning national and global strategies.

"Both prioritise listening to women, designing services around their realities, and scaling impact. This workshop is about accelerating progress towards Nigeria's trillion-dollar economy aspiration," he stated.

Also speaking, Uche Uzoebo, CEO of SANEF, praised WWB's role in strengthening financial inclusion and stressed the importance of agent banking in reaching underserved women, particularly in Northern Nigeria.

"This partnership will accelerate the penetration of agent banking and increase the number of women with access to financial services," she said.

Glo, Ondo Govt To Partner on Digital Solutions

Telecommunications solutions provider, Globacom, has assured the Ondo State Government of higher efficiency and productivity with its digital solutions which it would make available to the state.

Group Lead, Enterprise Business, Globacom, Mr. Adeniyi Odejobi, made this known on Wednesday at a strategic partnership meeting with Governor Lucky Orimisan

Aiyedatiwa and other government officials in Akure, the state capital.

According to Odejobi, Globacom would partner with the state in the areas of Learning Management System (LMS) to aid Ondo secondary and tertiary institutions' students and would equally avail the state its Glo Share – Sponsored data service for zero-rated access on LMS for

students to learn online with free data within the state.

Similarly, Globacom's sponsored data service for zero tariff will also be available for unfettered access to Ondo digital payment platform to streamline revenue collection. "This means citizens will be able to pay their taxes whilst using free data in Ondo State," he explained.

Other areas of collaboration

will include the Glo surveillance solution to reduce crime through using the Glo Facial Biometrics and Traffic Management Solution.

We will also be assisting the state to track its official cars to forestall theft and abuse," he added. Part of the deal, according to Globacom, is the state free-access closed-user group lines which can be used for effective communication among public servants across ministries, departments and agencies.

Governor Aiyedatiwa who said he was proud of the rich array of solutions from the company said his government was willing to avail itself of the offerings to improve governance.

Abia Sacks Six Indicted Civil Servants for Salary Padding

Emmanuel Ugwu-Nwogo in Umuahia

In a demonstration of zero tolerance for corrupt practices, Abia State Government has booted out six civil servants indicted for belonging to a salary padding syndicate operating in the Ministry of Justice.

The dismissal of the workers, whose grade levels range

between nine and 14, was announced in a statement signed by the Chairman of the State Civil Service Commission, Pastor Eno Jerry Eze.

She explained that the salary padding scheme involving the sacked workers "was uncovered during an internal audit and administrative inquiry".

"The affected officers were found to have engaged in the manipulation of payroll systems,

resulting in the unlawful receipt of excess salaries over a sustained period," the statement said.

The civil servants indicted and dismissed were listed to include Mr. Dickson Uche Eze, Principal Accountant (SGL 12), Mrs. Esther Emeruwa, Senior Accountant (SGL 10), Mrs. Ijeoma Jonathan, Chief Executive Officer, Accounts (SGL 14).

Nigeria's First Lady Disburses N25m to Abia Women to Boost Small Businesses

Emmanuel Ugwu-Nwogo in Umuahia

Wife of the President, Senator Oluremi Tinubu, has disbursed the sum of N25 million to 500 women in Abia State to enable them grow their micro businesses.

The intervention grant was

given to the beneficiaries under the Renewed Hope Initiative Women Economic Empowerment Programme backed by the Tony Elumelu Foundation.

The disbursement was made by the wife of Abia Governor, Mrs. Priscilla Chidinma Otti, who represented the First

Lady at the ceremony held at Government House Umuahia.

In the address read on her behalf by Mrs. Otti, the First Lady said that this economic empowerment programme was about "supporting the entrepreneurial spirit of our women traders and small-scale business owners."

CHANGE OF NAME

I, formerly known and addressed as **AMODU RUKIYA**, now wish to be known and address as **MUHAMMED RUKIYA**. All former documents remain valid. The general public should please take note.

CHANGE OF NAME

I, formerly known and addressed as **ODOZI CHINEYE DIVINE** now wish to be known and addressed as **ISREAL CHINEYE DIVINE**. All former documents remain valid. The general public should please take note.

CHANGE OF NAME

I, formerly known and addressed as **MERCY ONYEMAUWA NKWAZEMA** now wish to be known and addressed as **MERCY ONYEMAUWA MAY STEWART**. All former documents remain valid. The general public should please take note.

SUPER SATURDAY

MOHAMMED GARUBA: Being an Arsenal Fan is Proof That One Can Persevere Under Any Condition

In the world of finance, Mohammed Garuba, co-founder of CardinalStone Partners Limited, a full-fledged investment banking firm based in Lagos, Nigeria, has carved out a reputation as a resilient leader, strategist, and mentor. With a distinguished career spanning investment banking, asset management, and board-level engagements, he has become a prominent voice in Nigeria's financial markets. Yet, beyond the numbers and boardroom decisions lies a man deeply passionate about life, relationships, and the pursuit of balance. An ardent Arsenal fan, he strongly believes that supporting the North London club is itself a test of perseverance and one that builds character and mental toughness. He speaks on the lessons that shaped his career, his views on Nigeria's economy, and the principles that continue to guide his journey. **Obinna Chima** brings the excerpts:



Garuba

You've had a distinguished career in finance. How do you balance work, family, and your personal passions like boxing, football, and playing golf?

Yes, I would say I have had a successful career, but still working towards achieving a distinguished one, no doubt. When you do what you're passionate about, you find out that it just comes naturally to you. I don't see work as work anymore; I see work as something I enjoy, and once you do what you enjoy, you find out that you're committing a lot of time to doing it. Initially, my philosophy around work-life balance was to work all through my active years, and then when I retire, I rest. So that's one way to look at work-life balance.

But over time, I've realised that there are better ways to achieve the balance, and so as much as possible, I try to free my weekends to reconnect and increase my social capital. I appreciate and cherish lifelong relationships a lot, so I spend a lot of time connecting with friends and family. For me, that's one big thing I might not have written down in any of my profile or memoirs, but relationships are key. And when I say relationships, it goes back all the way from my primary and secondary school friends up to newer relationships. These are people who knew me when I had nothing. These are people with whom we share old memories and can be frank and honest with me because we all started as peers and not because they expect anything in return. So, I spend time connecting with them. I have a schedule, once a week, I must reach out to people, usually towards the weekend. It's a conscious, calculated effort in trying to build that social network. I

reach out to friends, family, and associates in a conscious manner, and sometimes meet up to share notes on topical issues or to relax.

For football, I'm very passionate about it. I'm an Arsenal fan, unfortunately. Being an Arsenal fan shows that you can persevere. Yes, there's something about Arsenal fans, people like Aliko Dangote – we are resilience and can persevere. There's a lot of strength and mental energy required to love the club and remain hopeful. But aside from Arsenal, I also like Real Madrid in the Spanish league. So, I am a fan of two clubs and to choose or decide what to watch during the European Champions League match days and both teams are playing. It is even tougher when they paired to play against each other. But I really love Arsenal and I've loved Arsenal for a very long time. When I started watching football actively in the 1990s, I was initially a Liverpool fan. I had an uncle who was passionate about Liverpool, but over time, I got to admire Arsene Wenger's style of football, especially because he was fond of developing young talents and had a knack for taking risk. I like to groom young people and build leaders. I'm very passionate about that. So, for mentorship, I try to spend quite a useful time with together watching football.

Golf - It's something I take time off to relax once in a while, just to keep fit and relax. It's a very interesting game. It's a unique blend of networking, relationship building and exercise. So, when you combine all together I am doing what

I love - building relationships and exercising all at once. That's why I'm passionate about golf. If I decide on holiday destinations, one of the considerations is where there's some golf-related activities, because it just helps you bond and build new relationships. It breeds a unique ice breaker. Yes, boxing. My passion for boxing started in secondary school. I've learned a few tricks, and ever since then, I have followed boxing passionately. I try to read one book every month, and I choose books that complement my weaknesses. I am quite self-aware, and so the books are either complementing my weaknesses, or they help in setting a direction on where I think the economy or a certain passion is going so I've read all manners of books, from medical books to business, engineering, to economics, to insurance books, name it. I just choose topics, but mostly, I prefer business-oriented books and that's because it's a continuously evolving sphere. Business is continuously evolving. I swing more towards books written by professors and academia because they are research-based, and they give new insights.

As someone who enjoys mentoring, what values do you try to pass on to young professionals entering finance?

I would say it's not just finance, but it's generally about building people's careers, while I'm passionate about finance. One of the first key values I always pass on is ownership mentality. It is a key to success. Ownership mentality is so important because when you see anything you do like your own, it helps you excel significantly. With that, you're building your personal brand, and at the same time, also contributing to work. So you find out that it's a win-win. The first thing I always tell

Mohammed Garuba: Education, Industrialisation, Agriculture Hold Key to Nigeria's Transformation

people is, never see yourself as an employee. See yourself as an employer.

Secondly, on the back of ownership mentality, never send low-quality work. Assume you are the CEO, and that anything you are working on, no matter how junior you are, what is going up to superiors for review, is good enough to leave the organisation with little or no corrections. Thirdly, I think another big one is having a long-term view and not being in a hurry. I tell people career is a marathon. Never run with speed. Have a clear goal.

Fourth is understanding the organisation. Any organisation you go to; you must always try to stand out. And by standing out, it's about building relationships and doing your work at the highest standard, and you would always be noticed, and very easily, people gravitate towards you and you have sponsors. Do your job to the best of your ability as it will make you stand out and gift you excellence overtime. So, I think standing out and making a mark anywhere you go is very essential, and that's what I mentor a number of young people about.

Humility is another key attribute. It's even more important in finance and in Nigeria. When you are humble, you will go very far. And another key variable I teach people, and I would say this only became recent. People I have mentored post-COVID, I always tell them that resilience is a key attribute. Never accept no for an answer. During the COVID and post-COVID, things imploded. Those who were resilient, coincidentally, the Firm is a resilient organisation. I'll say the COVID year a good year because we are resilient. Coincidentally, the Firm started in the middle of the global financial crisis in 2008. So, resilience has always been our watchword. We're very dogged in what we do. We don't take no for an answer and so adversity does not weight me down. We believe in the saying that every disappointment is a blessing. We believe it and live it. We plan for adversity and so plan multiple scenarios. So we don't see disappointment as obstacles, we see them as an opportunity to improve and fine-tune our business. I always let people know that being resilient is key in achieving success especially in our volatile environment.

You talked about your love for reading. Which book has had the most profound impact on your outlook on life and business?

Not one book, but four books. The first one was when I started my career. The Firm encouraged every analyst to read Stephen Covey's '7 Habits of Highly Effective People.' It was like a Bible, and it catapulted my productivity and personal growth. First of all, it improved my self-discovery and catapulted my understanding of what was expected of me. So you can imagine fresh out of university with eagerness to make an impression in my first job, I was able to quickly imbibe a managerial style that was goal oriented, learning to prioritize, and having clarity of vision. It was all because of that book. So it was very important in my career. But then the three other books, two in very quick succession - 'Built to Last, and Good to Great' both by Jim Collins - have significantly influenced my entrepreneurial journey, and most recently, 'Atomic Habits' has been so impactful. So, '7 Habits of Highly Effective People,' built my self-discovery and my understanding of what is expected of me; 'Built to Last and Good to Great,' ignited the entrepreneurial spirit in me, and more recently, 'Atomic Habits' by James Clear transformed me. So these are books that have had tremendous impact in my life. In fact, they're so interesting that once in a while I go and read them again and again, and each time I read them, I discover new insights. But I've read quite a lot of books, but I still continue to remember these and I still go back to them. Also, there are a few other investment books, but these have had a significant impact on my life.

Now to the economy, in your view, what structural reforms are urgently needed to transform the Nigerian economy?

I would say three things. There is no quick fix, unfortunately, because our problems are structural. If we want to emancipate our people, I would say, start first with education is what economies have used to significantly jumpstart their journey to growth and continued prosperity especially if we compare ourselves to a few of our peer countries. For example China in trying to improve the overall education, a percentage of literate people versus the entire population leveraged the 'One Child policy' for over three decades. What happened within this time is that the percentage of educated people significantly increased. When I went to university in the 90s, student enrolments were already overstretched and had started to impact on quality. Today, even NYSC does almost four batches in a year compared



Garuba

to just one when I finished university. If not that a decent number of Nigerians are studying abroad, there will be significant under-educated population. So as much as the government is trying, we're still significantly behind due largely to the rapid population growth. I think education is one key area. The current 6-3-3-4 system was introduced in the 80s and till now it has fully not achieved its aim. Not everyone was supposed to go to university. Some were supposed to finish at Junior Secondary School and move into technical schools. Today, we're struggling with a huge gap in technical skills. That takes me to my second submission, which is industrialisation. You can't industrialise without having a strong education base to cultivate talents and also embark on research and development initiatives that suit our environment. So in the whole talk around industrialisation, we will find out that we don't even have the requisite human capital and experience. Those who have industrialised successfully, the likes of Dangote, BUA, and those also striving for industrialisation had to import knowledge to fill the gap. We are finding out that in almost every sector, whether it's in the construction or agriculture, we're harnessing blue collar talents across West Africa who give quality service, because they maintain they have been able to adequately take advantage of technical and vocational education. We have the likes of Shell and Chevron in the Oil and Gas industry who had to create their own training programmes to re-train Nigerian graduates to meet their standards, before absorbing them in their system. So, our ability to take education seriously by ensuring it is well funded it would also lead to huge technological development. Even as 'Japa syndrome' increased and we lost some of our best hands to international competition for talents we would be able to ensure we create a decent pool so we still have a significant number of people available to develop the country. Also with a large enough pool of well-educated population those who decide to emigrate actually go on to become good ambassadors and role models, as opposed to becoming liabilities in the host countries when we leave a larger population uneducated. So, the more people we educate, the higher the possibility of good representation of Nigeria globally. In fact, an educated populace has a better tendency to demand good governance, better voting outcome and quality of life. Closely following is agriculture. Till today, for a country like Nigeria, we still do more subsistence farming than mechanised farming. As far back as the late 70s, we already had a problem with food which was why initiative like Operation Feed the Nation was launched to enable us achieve self-sufficiency in food production with citizens were encouraged and incentivised to go into farming. The government rules allow workers to have a second job in the form of farming but not adequate incentives to make it a reality. Based on National Bureau of Statistics data,

we give birth to roughly 600 children every hour in Nigeria. That's roughly 14,400 children every day and about 5.2 million a year. If you consider a typical school having six hundred pupils, then it means we literally are giving birth every hour to roughly the size of a whole secondary school every hour. When you work with facts and statistics, you will discover that even with the revenue we generate as a country will be difficult to such a rapidly growing population considering years of under investments. The more we educate our people, the better for us and we've seen countries do that successfully. Indians have successfully emigrated to different parts of the world and make a mark especially in the USA and UK culminating in the British Prime Minister of Indian roots. They had a highly educated populace who emigrated and could compete and are now running some of the biggest organisations in the world. So education, industrialisation are key, and then closely followed is agriculture. Inflation numbers today is heavily influenced by agriculture.

All these you mentioned are long-term measures, what do you think they should focus on in the short to medium term?

No doubt, there are short-term wins especially to tackle the debilitating effect of food inflation by leveraging our huge population as well as technology. Many things that can be done, but what is paramount is to have in place a clear policy direction. Nothing stops the government, for example, from considering a four-day working week for certain sectors whereby a day is allocated to farming staple crops. For example, a policy can, be put in place to leverage the National Youth Service Scheme to support agricultural cultivation of cash foods and you would see a multiplier effect in food production. But government, too has to then fix the main challenge which is mechanized farming and the provision of agricultural infrastructure like irrigation and storage. Use Dubai, for example, they have no rainfall, as we do in Nigeria, but they farm all year round. So, there are two things lacking that government will need to fix for this to happen. The first is irrigation, and the second is storage. Once these two critical issues are tackled, we will see the transformation of agriculture towards food sufficiency. Wastage is reduced and we can farm all year round. I don't need to wait for the rainy season. There's water to wet my crops, and I'm farming all year round. I see that the current Ministry of Agriculture is doing wonderful, because they're putting the building blocks to enable this growth. But for short-term wins, I feel, from a monetary policy point of view, we are seeing stability, and businesses are now able to plan better, and the results are showing across the economy. Most of the short-term wins, the government recognised them and very quickly moved to resolve them. The oil subsidy was a hydra-headed monster that was sinking the country. We were burning cash, and it is bitter

pill for the citizens to swallow but it was inevitable. I personally do not think the government has done a good job in explaining the positives of the subsidy removal but hopefully, as benefits begins to trickle down, it will be generally accepted. So the subsidy and FX reforms have created a much more conducive environment for businesses to plan and contribute to stable economic growth. And then another quick win is resolving security, which I think the government has also recognised and is doing everything to address. They have adopted a multi-pronged approach, and I am confident that security will improve, albeit slowly. The setting up of 'forest guards', a dedicated security outfit is a welcome development. It will not only create employment for over 100,000 people, but it will also help improve the security architecture. They'll be trained to combat insecurity and criminal activities affecting communities and safeguarding natural resources. Two things happen there: One, it improves agriculture output will be encouraged to return to their farms, and it supports the mining sector.

How is your Firm positioning itself to attract and retain investors in an environment where market volatility, inflation, and policy somersault remain significant challenges?

I think we've done this quite well with research. Again, it's about informing and guiding investors. The more you inform people, investors would continue to come. We spend a lot of time educating and informing investors. One key principle we abide by is that there is no one that can manage an investor's money better than them. They're certain investors who knew nothing about the stock market before, and when they started getting close to the Firm, we started educating them. We find that some of them take even far better decisions than some professionals, because they're bringing their unique experience from a different sector, and we're supporting them with the right quality of research. We cover macroeconomic research, we do sector-specific research, and we do company-specific research. When you combine all of these, you're able to understand the economy, the industry, as well as certain key sectors. We also do thematic reports. There are certain sectors or companies that we don't cover, but investors require specific information on them, and we spend time curating research reports on those companies.

What is your expansion plan?

We started as an asset management firm, and we want to continue strengthening that franchise. We've also been building and growing our asset management base significantly. We started off as a purely investment banking firm, but today we see ourselves as an investment franchise. While we've done very well in traditional asset management, we also pivoted into alternative asset management. Also I am looking to build a strong franchise that would focus a lot more on real sector by leveraging financial sector expertise and processes particularly looking at the entire real estate value chain as well as key infrastructure that would support the growth objectives of the economy.

How soon are we expecting to see the take-off of the real sector business?

We've started most of the initiatives. Some of them are policy-oriented, and we've started pushing some of these initiatives to the relevant government agencies. Luckily, we have a fairly supportive government that is very hungry to put reforms in place to catapult growth. The government at the moment is driving quite a lot of initiatives in the housing sector... Just recently, the Minister of Housing was at the Lekki Free Trade Zone to secure a huge expanse of land to support a new building materials hub. Alhaji Aliko Dangote in his desire to contribute to the growth of the economy leveraged similar reforms to venture into Cement manufacturing about two decades ago and today we are self-sufficient in cement and no longer import cement. The real sector is huge and fixing of the housing gap in Nigeria can be achieved as the ecosystem is been built. In Africa, there's a housing gap of about 50 million units and Nigeria alone accounts for about half of the deficit. As we look to fix the housing gaps caused by rapid urbanization, the focus typically is in residential housing which in turn leads to the development of commercial buildings to complement the symbiotic relationship caused by increased population density that then creates demand for local businesses and services like offices, restaurants, shops and recreation. This demand, in turn, attracts businesses, leading to the construction or conversion of commercial properties to support the residential community.

Read full Interview online - www.thisdaylive.com

FOCUS

Nigeria's Insurance Shake Up: Building Resilience in Age of Risk

In a country battered by economic shocks, failed harvests, and fragile institutions, Nigeria's sweeping new insurance reform is emerging as a bold experiment to test whether resilience can finally be built into the heart of its economy, writes **Festus Akanbi**

In the bustling offices of Lagos Island, the chatter is no longer about the stock market or the naira. It is about risk, resilience, and the future of Nigeria's insurance industry. When President Bola Ahmed Tinubu signed the Nigerian Insurance Industry Reform Act (NIIRA) 2025 into law earlier this year, few doubted it would jolt the sector. What was less certain was how deeply it would reshape not just insurers but the wider economy.

For the first time in decades, the insurance industry finds itself at the centre of Nigeria's economic reform agenda. With sweeping provisions that consolidate outdated laws, introduce risk-based capital requirements, expand compulsory insurance, and tighten consumer protection, NIIRA has been described as both a stress test and a lifeline.

"An insurer's strength is closely linked to the economic and regulatory context in which it operates," said Abimbola Adeseyoju, Managing Director of DataPro Limited, a Lagos-based credit rating and risk management agency.

He added: "The NIIRA 2025 has significantly changed this context by consolidating outdated laws and mandating risk-based capital."

Adeseyoju, whose firm has tracked Nigeria's financial landscape for decades, believes the reforms will push insurers to either transform or perish. "This is not just about raising capital," he said. "It is about discipline, sustainable profitability, and building institutions that can stand the test of shocks."

The New Rules of Survival

Under NIIRA, insurers now have just 12 months to comply with stiffer capital requirements. Analysts predict a wave of mergers and acquisitions as smaller firms scramble to meet the thresholds. Larger operators with deeper balance sheets may consolidate their dominance, but size alone will not guarantee survival.

"Smaller insurers that carve out niches or build loyal customer bases can still thrive," Adeseyoju noted in the DataPro's September Report, a monthly analysis of the Nigerian business and economy. He added that "What the law does is separate discipline from indiscipline, strength from fragility."

Perhaps more striking is the expansion of compulsory insurance. Beyond motor and marine, group life assurance, public buildings, and government assets must now be insured. That expansion could open new revenue streams for companies nimble enough to capture them.

But the real pressure lies in underwriting discipline. "Timely claims settlement will now be as important as writing policies," Adeseyoju said. "Customers will reward

insurers that honour their obligations. Regulators will penalise those who fail."

Digitisation adds another twist. While Insurtech promises efficiency and wider access, it also introduces risks, cybersecurity breaches, data leaks, and system failures. NIIRA places clear responsibility on boards and management to balance innovation with strong governance.

Trust as Currency

If there is one phrase Adeseyoju repeats, it is this: "Trust is currency."

"In the world of business, trust is everything. Investors, lenders, regulators and partners all want assurance that a company is financially sound and capable of meeting its obligations. A strong rating signals stability, discipline and resilience. A weak one raises doubts and closes doors," he explained.

This principle applies not only to insurers but across sectors. Nigeria's ginger farmers in Kaduna learned that lesson the hard way in 2023, when a fungal disease wiped out nearly 95 per cent of yields. Once the world's second-largest producer, the country's output collapsed, costing farmers over n12 billion, crashing exports, and pushing prices out of reach locally.

The crisis was not just agricultural, it was financial. "There was no safety net. No insurance. No diversification. No resilience," Adeseyoju said. "It exposed how fragile industries can be when risk management is ignored."

Lessons from the Ginger Crisis

In Kachia, Kaduna State, where ginger farms stretch over rolling hills, the devastation was visible: empty barns, idle trucks, and farmers drowning in debt. International buyers turned to India and China, while local traders lamented the lost harvest.

From a credit analyst's view, the ginger crisis was a textbook case of unmitigated risk: overdependence on a single crop, weak infrastructure, and little access to insurance. "The lesson is clear," Adeseyoju argued. "Profitability is important, but resilience and risk management sustain industries through storms."

His message resonates far beyond agriculture. It underscores why NIIRA matters, not as a narrow law for insurers, but as a template for resilience in an economy prone to shocks, whether from global oil price swings, pandemics, or climate change.

Global Ripples, Local Realities

Nigeria does not exist in a vacuum. Former U.S. President Donald Trump's tariff wars with China and Europe still



Adeseyoju

reverberate in emerging markets, driving up borrowing costs and squeezing developing economies. Nigeria, still overly reliant on crude oil exports, feels every ripple.

"In this world of interdependence, external shocks travel fast," Adeseyoju observed. "Our vulnerability comes from concentration, too much dependence on one sector, one commodity, one policy. The answer is diversification and resilience."

Insurance reform, in his view, is one brick in that foundation. By strengthening capital buffers, mandating discipline, and expanding coverage, NIIRA aims to create an industry that cushions shocks rather than amplifies them.

The Act also empowers the National Insurance Commission (NAICOM) with greater supervisory authority. Insurers must now submit more frequent and transparent reports, while boards are held personally accountable for lapses.

"Those companies that combine robust capitalisation, sustainable business models, prudent risk management, and strong governance will stand out as credible and trustworthy players," Adeseyoju said.

But governance challenges are not confined to insurance. Across corporate Nigeria, regulators are pushing for higher disclosure standards, stronger compliance, and better risk controls. The underlying principle is the same: survival in a volatile economy requires more than ambition—it requires structure and credibility.

DataPro's Kigali Master Class

To help businesses adapt, DataPro is taking the conversation beyond Nigeria's borders. Later this year, the firm will host a Master Class in Kigali, Rwanda, on compliance, enterprise risk management, and financial analysis.

"This is more than training," Adeseyoju said. "It is about equipping leaders with practical tools, stress testing, red-flag analysis, ESG oversight, compliance audits, that build resilient organisations. We want companies that last."

Read full article online - www.thisdaylive.com

Lanre Issa-Onilu's Giant Strides at NOA

Emma Ibediro

As a young man growing up, it was always a delight to listen to the jingles of Prof. Jerry Gana "if you are a President, President well, if you are Senator, Senator well, if you are a Carpenter, carpenter well," etc. It was a clarion call for commitment to nation-building. It was from the Federal Ministry of Information. We had a National Orientation Agency (NOA) headed by Prof. Elochukwu Amucheazi. The impact of the NOA was felt all over the country.

Those were the days of MAMSER (Mass Mobilisation for Self Reliance, Social Justice, and Economic Recovery). Then, the agency went the way of many government agencies. It suffered neglect. It became moribund. It went into a coma.

In 2023, the President, Bola Ahmed Tinubu, fished for and picked a thoroughbred professional, a seasoned dyed-in-the-wool journalist, a consummate technocrat to resuscitate the very crucial Agency. It is very interesting and indeed gratifying to see how Mallam Lanre Issa-Onilu has, within a short period, revived this Agency.

Today, the national consciousness and pride in our country is witnessing a resurgence. Issa-Onilu as Director General of NOA is intentional in thought and actions. He has worked assiduously to put the necessary framework in place to restore pride in one's nation. The consciousness has been taken

to an admirable height. Through carefully crafted television and radio programmes, jingles, and advertorials, the good works of the government are being disseminated seamlessly and convincingly. They are packaged in very captivating and appealing messages that are very penetrating.

The "I am a real Nigerian" jingle is a deeply penetrating message that resonates well with our efforts at national consciousness. Citizens must learn to see the nation from a positive angle at all times. Indeed, 'You cannot see the light if you keep your eyes closed'. So many positive things have happened in the life of this administration, but the naysayers who prefer to close their eyes to these developments will deliberately refuse to see them. Their hate for the leaders blinds them to the good works being done.

But Issa-Onilu has persevered despite challenges to drive the good messages home. He enjoins Nigerians to see our cup as half-full instead of half-empty. We must continue to be proud, resilient, and accountable Nigerians.

The activities and programmes of government have continued to be disseminated to the citizens through short but insightful visuals and audio on television and radio. The Captain Excellence and the delightful children provide in practical terms, information and availability of the Student Loan being championed by the Federal Government through NELFUND.

The save energy and water campaign could not have come at a better time, now that energy conservation is key to development. Timely warnings on flooding and other natural climate change events save the citizens' lives and



Issa-onilu

properties. When the new National Anthem was introduced, the National Orientation Agency, through a sustained campaign, took it to all the nooks and crannies of the country.

In the print media, he has brought to bear his knowledge and experience as a seasoned editor to pilot the publication of the Explainer journal. The Explainer has brought the programmes and projects of the government to the doorstep of every Nigerian.

This weekly publication has brought to an end the speculations associated with government programmes and the reasons behind them. Now you have them at your finger tips. The D.G is not

a man who is limited by analogue bureaucracy.

He is in tune with the digital realities of our time. Little wonder he has developed an AI chatbot, CLHEEAN. This chatbot provides an opportunity to Nigerians to seek information on government policies, programmes, and activities through voice or chat assistant right on their devices. This is currently available on noa.gov.ng.

Indeed, Issa-Onilu, as the Director General of the NOA has revived the once comatose Information and Orientation Agency into a giant Information megaphone.

However, it is my opinion that these efforts should be encouraged. The need to establish a desk in all government departments as an NOA desk, cannot be overemphasized. In this day of technology, an NOA desk equipped with a mobile telephone and Internet Internet-enabled laptop to receive information and forward the same to a central database should be considered and encouraged.

Secondly, the once popular but now moribund MAMSER 'army' should be established in all the States and Local Government Areas and assigned the duties of maintenance of civil order, control of traffic, and related matters. This set of thoroughly trained MAMSER officials will harmonise the haphazard activities of the untrained local government officials in maintaining social order and sanity. Certainly, it will be cost demanding, but every society is rated by the behaviour of its people. It will also be a huge avenue for the employment of our unemployed youths, especially in the Local Government Areas. There is no point emphasising that in today's Nigeria, the Police and Civil Defence Corps have not lived up to the expected standard in the discharge of their duties in this regard of management of social order.

Mikano Begins Promotional Sale of Feature-packed Changan CS15, Alsvin V3

Mikano Motors has unveiled unique promotional deals on two of its standout Changan models - the Changan CS15 SUV and the sleek Changan Alsvin V3 sedan - for a limited time only.

According to a statement by Mikano, these two models represent the perfect fusion of advanced engineering, cutting-edge features, and remarkable value. It added that the firm is dedicated to innovation and customer satisfaction.

Designed with city life in mind, Mikano notes in the statement that the CS15 is compact yet commanding and the ultimate choice for urban drivers, business owners, and anyone who wants a vehicle that works as hard as they do - and looks good doing it.

Mikano Motors said it had the bar for those in the market for feature-rich, fuel-efficient vehicles that do not compromise on style, safety or reliability.

Some of its highlights given include eye-catching exterior design with aerodynamic styling; spacious leather-trimmed interior with intuitive controls; robust braking systems and safety-first features; impressive ground clearance for smooth rides on city roads or rougher terrain and fuel-efficient performance matched with advanced engineering.

For those who prefer the sophistication of a sedan, the Alsvin V3 is said to be a clear winner.

Tailored for professionals, young families, and fleet operators, this compact sedan delivers much



The Changan CS15 SUV

more than its price suggests.

Its great features are contemporary exterior with premium interior ergonomics; intelligent safety technologies for added confidence, smooth, responsive handling; exceptional fuel economy and high-end features typically reserved for pricier models.

Both the CS15 and Alsvin V3 come with Mikano Motors' industry-leading 6-year warranty, setting a new standard for vehicle ownership in Nigeria. This isn't just about buying a car - it's

about securing long-term reliability, peace of mind, and lasting value.

Mikano Motors urges everyone to visit any of its nationwide showrooms to explore these vehicles up close.

According to the statement, "the limited-time offers won't last long - now's the time to upgrade your drive with a Changan CS15 or Alsvin V3, and experience why more Nigerians are choosing Mikano Motors as their trusted automotive partner."

25th International Motor Fair Returns to Eagle Square, Abuja

The highly anticipated 25th Abuja International Motor Fair is set to hold from November 24–28, 2025 at the iconic Eagle Square, Abuja, marking a historic return to this venue after nine years of exhibiting vehicles elsewhere in the FCT.

The Abuja International Motor Fair

Since its inception, the Abuja Motor Fair, staged annually by BKG Exhibitions, has stood as West Africa's most prestigious automotive platform, consistently attracting global and local auto brands, investors, policymakers, and innovators. This Silver Jubilee edition promises to be the most ambitious, impactful, and transformative in its 25-year history.

This milestone is driven by the visionary leadership of the National Automotive Design and Development Council (NADDCC) under the dynamic stewardship of its Director General, Mr. Joseph Osanipin.

NADDCC at the Center of a New Auto Era

For the first time in nearly a decade, Eagle Square will once again host the nation's premier automotive showcase—an achievement that underscores the sagacity, foresight, and bold leadership of Mr. Osanipin, widely celebrated as the most performance-driven DG since the inception of NADDCC. His commitment to repositioning Nigeria as the Automobile Hub of Africa is setting new benchmarks in the industry.

A Presidential Vision Backed by Strong Appointments

The return of the Motor Fair to Eagle Square also reflects the wisdom of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu, renowned for his unmatched ability to identify and appoint exceptional leaders. His decision to entrust NADDCC's mandate to Joseph Osanipin is now yielding transformative results, igniting renewed confidence in Nigeria's automobile future.

Driving Industrialisation Through Autoparts & Assembly

Mr. Osanipin is spearheading a vigorous drive to encourage local autoparts manufacturing and automobile assembly, laying the foundation for Nigeria's industrial competitiveness. His efforts are energizing investors, manufacturers, and stakeholders to recognize Nigeria not just as a market, but as a continental hub for innovation, production, and distribution.

The 25th Abuja Motor Fair: A Showcase of Strength and Potential

Adopted fully by NADDCC, the 25th Abuja International Motor Fair will be a grand showcase of Nigeria's automotive ecosystem—from government initiatives to private-sector innovations. It will present to the Presidency, National Assembly, State Governors, Local Governments, international investors, and the general public the immense strength, resilience, and potential of the Nigerian auto sector.

Jetour X70 Plug-In Hybrid Electric Vehicle Boosts Fuel Efficiency, Promotes Green Energy

In this era when motorists are very concerned about fuel efficiency, Jetour is one brand that many auto enthusiasts worry little about because the models are built to deliver more power and torque with as little fuel as possible.

This is even more with the Plug-in hybrid electric versions that promote fuel efficiency and green initiative, saving the owner more money and saving the environment. So, you can switch from petrol to electric driving at your convenience.

The Jetour X70 Plug-in Hybrid, coming with extra features like Driver and Passenger, Curtain and Rear Airbags, Hill-Start and Hill-Decent Assist Control, Electronic Parking Brake and 360° Surrounding Camera (2D/3D Panoramic Parking) is a vehicle to watch out for.

Other extra features are Lane Departure Warning System, Emergency braking/High Speed, Forward/Backward Collision, Lateral Collision (BSD/DOW) and Traffic Jam Assist.

It also has a 19-rim tyre size, Electronic Gear Shifting System, five Drive Modes Selector (EV, HEV, Eco, Sport and Normal), and Adaptive Cruise Control.

The LCD Touch Screen size is 10.23-inch, while the Phone Mirroring, Bluetooth, Digital Surrounding Recorder, Wireless Charger, Voice command Wi-Fi and Panoramic Roof are additional features.



Jetour X70 Plug-In Hybrid Electric Vehicle

The air conditioner comes with an Air Purification function, just as the Outside Rear View Mirror is auto fold with Electric and Heating functions.

The driver and passenger seats are powered, both with heater and ventilation. Also provided is an 8 Hi-Fi Sony Speaker and all other features in the regular X70.

With this vehicle, you have no cause for worry about charging, as provision has been made for fast charging, slow charging, engine charging and brake force charging. So, while driving with petrol power, the engine is charging the battery. The vehicle is powered by a 1.5 Litre Turbo/

Plug-in Hybrid engine, with a battery power of 19.43kWh and two dedicated hybrid transmissions.

Jetour was named the "Fastest Growing Auto Brand of the Year" at the Nigeria Auto Journalists Association (NAJA) awards held December 2024 in Lagos. This award recognizes Jetour's rapid growth and commitment to innovation, customer satisfaction/acceptance, and creating unique driving experiences.

Organizers of the award made up of renowned auto journalists cutting across print, electronic and

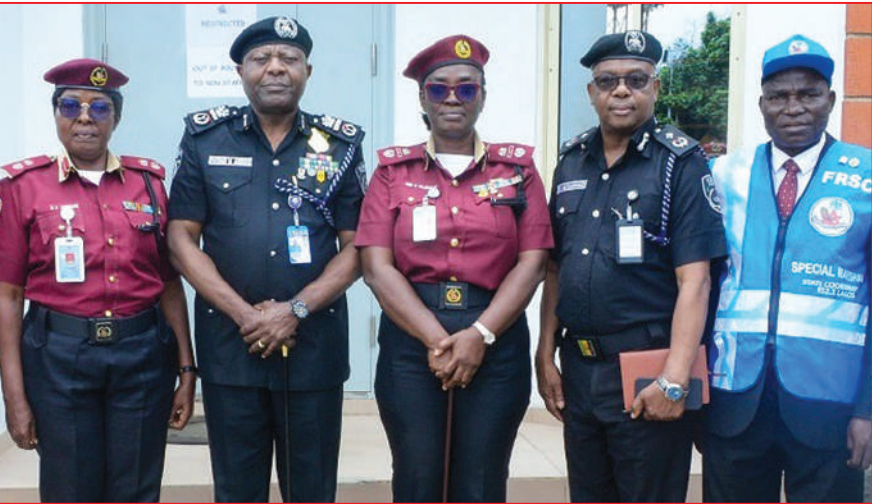
online in Nigeria, stated that the award was a result of the rapid acceptability and patronage of the brand shortly after it was introduced in the country.

Jetour focuses on creating SUVs that offer a blend of technology, comfort, and affordability for families and adventure seekers.

The brand's name, "Jetour," translates to "convenient travel" in Chinese. Jetour has firmly established its reputation, particularly in the SUV and crossover market.

The company says it is offering a vehicle with solid after-sales services, genuine spare parts, dedicated technical back-up/support as well as a warranty of 5 years/150,000 kilometres, whichever comes first.

FRSC, Police Commit to Improve Inter-Agency Collaboration in Lagos, Ogun States



L-R: Corps Commander Adefope Modupe (Zonal head of operations); AIG zone 2, Adegoke Fayoadé; ZCO, RS2, ACM Ann Oladayo; DCP Bello Mohammed; and Lagos State Coordinator, Special Marshals, Dr Adebayo Dennis, during the visit of the AIG to the FRSC Zonal Commanding Officer, in Lagos... recently

The Assistant Inspector General (AIG) of Police, Zone 2, Lagos, Adegoke Fayoadé, has pledged to boost inter-agency collaboration between the Nigeria Police Force and the Federal Road Safety Corps (FRSC) within Lagos and Ogun states.

He made the pledge earlier in the week when he led senior officers to pay a courtesy call on the FRSC Zonal Commanding Officer (ZCO) in charge of Lagos and Ogun states, ACM Ann Oladayo in her Ojodu, Lagos office.

While appreciating the ZCO for her commitment to promote inter-agency collaboration shortly after she was appointed a few months ago, the AIG committed to contribute his quota to ensure that the roads are safer within the area of responsibility.

He equally promised to work closely with the FRSC during the end of year road safety activities, by providing security where necessary, especially along flash points.

In her remarks, ACM Ann Oladayo, while stressing the need for improved synergy amongst officers and men of the two security agencies, explained that her roadmap for Lagos and Ogun states, which is

in line with the policy trust of the Corps Marshal, is to, among others, reduce Road Traffic Crashes by 10%, intensify operations on the roads with emphasis on overloading and collaborative and joint operations during Ember months.

Tagging the police boss as 'Crime Fighting AIG' and herself as 'Crash Fighting ZCO', she suggested that a non-operational event that can foster synergy among the lower cadre and workshop be organized to bring the junior operatives together which will allow them to share ideas and brainstorm on smooth and better operational pathways in the course of carrying out the mandate of FRSC and NPF seamlessly in the zone.

She also used the opportunity to solicit for more assistance for armed backup during night patrols to address the issue of overloading of vehicles in the zone.

The AIG promised to spearhead the workshop that will host both agencies and other sister security agencies with the intention to cascade same to the rank and files, as according to him, the workshop will help to build bridge and close ranks among the senior officers and men of the NPF, FRSC and other sister agencies for the purpose of smooth, better and seamless operations.

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SHOWBIZFLAIR

Mohbad: Will DNA Test on Liam Grant Him Peaceful Rest, Justice?

Ferdinand Ekechukwu

The quest for justice in Mohbad's case has taken a dramatic turn, with questions around Liam's paternity now adding a sensitive twist to the unfolding saga. A former member of Marlian Music, Mohbad, real name Ilerioluwa Oladimeji Aloba, died tragically at the age of 27, on September 12, 2023.

His death sparked protests, vigils, and a nationwide demand for justice, considering the suspicious nature of his death.

Less than 24 hours after his tragic death, his father hurriedly buried him in Ikorodu, Lagos. According to the late singer's father, Joseph Aloba, he was buried quickly because of Yoruba customs. Following his death, his family – father, mother, and the deceased's wife Wunmi – were involved in various disputes, including matters concerning the paternity of Mohbad's son, Liam, and an autopsy.

After widespread outcry and clamour from concerned Nigerians, his body was exhumed pending investigations - a move that briefly gave the public reprieve. His fans and family anticipated that an autopsy would reveal the cause of his death. But that was not to be. In January 2024, his father disclosed that the delay in reburial of Mohbad was due to a pending DNA test and autopsy result.

An autopsy would later reveal that the singer may have died from a "severe allergic reaction" after an injection administered by auxiliary nurse Feyisayo Ogedengbe, which led to multiple organ failure. Despite this development, Mohbad has still not been buried due to the pending custody

battles over his body and the DNA issues.

Some members of the public, including celebrities, social media influencers, joined in, amplifying the call for a DNA test. In all this chaos and madness, nearly two years later, the court has now given an order that a DNA test be conducted on Mohbad's son, Liam. A Chief Magistrate Court sitting in Ikorodu, last Tuesday, September 2, 2025, granted an order for Wunmi, the late singer's widow, to be notified of the pending DNA test application through alternative means.

Magistrate Adefisoye Sonuga issued the order while ruling on an application filed by the singer's father seeking to conclusively establish whether Liam is Mohbad's biological offspring. It was gathered that Joseph Aloba, the late singer's father, initiated the application, aiming to proceed with the DNA test. This order came as the legal team representing the Aloba family, led by Emmanuel Oroko, recorded multiple failed attempts to serve Wunmi in person.

There's concern that this issue on one hand now, may finally silence the speculation concerning his death. On the other hand, it raises a sobering question echoed: Of what use is Liam's paternity to attaining justice for Mohbad? In court papers, Aloba stated that there remains uncertainty regarding the paternity of Liam and given the sensitivity of the matter, it is imperative that the paternity be conclusively settled.

He also noted that paternity is a live issue with regards to determining the respondent's maintenance obligations and the child's welfare and the DNA is therefore necessary to avoid further delays and prejudice. The statement referenced that the singer's wife, in a viral video, said she was ready for a DNA test, noting that she had never been available for the court sheriff to serve

her the originating motion.

On their part, Wunmi's lawyer, Taiwo Olawanle denied knowledge of the court order. Olawanle, however, stated that when they finally get the court order, it wouldn't be an issue for Wunmi to comply. In March 2024, Mohbad's father sought the order of a Magistrates' Court sitting in Ikorodu, Lagos State, for the DNA test, ordering Mohbad's wife, Wunmi to submit Liam for testing.

However, a letter from Salawu Akingbolu Chambers, Omowunmi's legal representatives, dated January 9, 2025, stated that Omowunmi admitted to rejecting Mohbad's father's choice of UCH Ibadan while he also rejected her choice of Lagoon Hospitals.

Concerns are rife that the ongoing drama regarding his death has done damage on multiple levels: "It shifted focus away from the quest for justice in Mohbad's case. It turned private grief into a public circus, leaving Wunmi constantly on the defensive. And it reduced Mohbad's legacy to blog headlines instead of the music, the art, and the unfinished fight for accountability," a report noted.

It added that "Yes, the DNA order may put an end to the speculation. But it should also force us to reflect: have we, as a society, lost sight of what truly matters?" It stated that Mohbad did not die because of paternity doubts. He died under controversial circumstances that remain murky, with too many unanswered questions.

"But Mohbad's soul will not rest simply because of a DNA result. He will rest when there are clear answers about his death, when the guilty are held accountable, and when his son can grow up knowing his father's name is remembered for his music — not for endless gossip and messy bruohaha. Until then, the real question remains: can we finally shift focus back



Mohbad

to justice for Mohbad?"

Mohbad, a rising star in Nigeria's Afrobeats scene, died in September 2023 under controversial circumstances, sparking nationwide protests, calls for investigations, and multiple legal disputes involving his estate, royalties, and paternity claims. His only child, Liam, was born in April 2023, just months before the singer's untimely death.

The paternity controversy has generated public attention, with Mr. Aloba making numerous public appearances, granting interviews and demanding a DNA test to confirm his grandson's identity, a request that initially faced resistance from the widow's family.



Ibinabo Fiberesima Brings Nollywood Epic, 'Amanyano' to Screen

Ferdinand Ekechukwu

Nollywood's epic film "Amanyano: The Eagle King" is set for release in cinemas nationwide on Sept. 12, its producer said. This will be heralded by a premiere slated for September 7, promising a spectacle of the rich Niger Delta glam. The cinema release follows the global premiere in the United Kingdom on Aug. 29.

"Amanyano: The Eagle King" is a cinematic milestone, weaving a tale of honor, sacrifice, and cultural pride inspired by the real-life story of King Ibanichuka, the last sovereign ruler of Okrika in present-day Rivers State. Produced by veteran actress Ibinabo Fiberesima, the film marks her bold transition into cultural storytelling, driven by a passion to showcase the rich heritage of the Ijaw people.

The star-studded movie, directed by renowned filmmaker Fred Amata, features a seasoned cast, including Nkem Owoh, Monalisa Chinda, Columbus Irosanga, Uju Okoli, and Ibinabo Fiberesima herself. Set in 1892 Niger Delta, "Amanyano: The Eagle King" chronicles the true-life story of King Ibanichuka, the last sovereign ruler of Okrika, as he faces colonial forces and internal betrayal.

The historical drama depicts an organised African city-state with thriving politics and challenging stereotypes of pre-colonial African governance and social systems. With its star power, historic narrative, and cultural depth, "Amanyano: The Eagle King" promises to be a cinematic milestone for Nollywood and a groundbreaking portrayal of African history on the big screen.

JJ 'Dejocular' Okonkwo Amplifies Afrobeats

Mary Nnah

Josiah Jachimike Okonkwo, popularly known as JJ "Dejocular" Okonkwo, is a seasoned broadcaster and broadcast producer with nearly two decades of experience. He has worked with Nigerian platforms, including Cool FM and News Central TV. Beyond broadcasting, JJ is also a DJ, an actor who has featured in both Nollywood and Hollywood North

productions, and a creative storyteller committed to exploring culture through sound and visuals.

Raised in Lagos in a family of singers, JJ grew up immersed in music. "From my father's record collection to my brother's cassette tapes, I was surrounded by rhythm and lyrics that shaped my lifelong passion," he recalls. From Lagos to Canada, JJ "Dejocular" Okonkwo Amplifies Afrobeats

After relocating to St. John's, Canada in 2023, JJ noticed a gap in the local music scene. "Most of the stations played only

mainstream Western music, with little or no Afrobeats," he said. "I felt disconnected. It did not reflect the multicultural reality of Canadian society. That, to me, was a gap."

This inspired Inside Afrobeats, a four-part audio series that explores the history and global impact of Afrobeats. "The goal is to amplify Afrobeats," JJ explained. "It is about the sound, the stories, the culture, and ensuring that African voices are part of the national conversation in music and media." With Inside Afrobeats, JJ Okonkwo is celebrating the sound he grew up with while ensuring that the world experiences it in full, including its energy, heritage, and pride.

Ajegunle Chiefs Association Marks 15th Anniversary in Style

Ferdinand Ekechukwu

It's no news that Ajegunle, a bustling neighbourhood located in the heart of Lagos, with its hyper-charged ragga feel and the attendant razzmatazz, has continued to trickle into visible spots of contemporary popular culture. Dubbed 'AJ City', the neighbourhood was abuzz with excitement recently as the Ajegunle Chiefs Association marked its 15th anniversary with a lavish dinner and gala night—to inaugurate its newly elected Executives and Palace project.

Held recently at the Association's Kirikiri Road Club-House, the Sunday, August 17 event was a testament to the association's commitment to the community and its rich cultural heritage. It attracted the who's who of Ajegunle extraction (men and women) from both home and diaspora, with the incumbent Chairman of Ajeromi Ifeodun Local Government, Hon. Olalekan Olu Akindipe, as the special guest.

Also on hand to support the LG Chairman were the President-General of the Ajegunle Association Europe, Chief Ceaser Avbioroko; the immediate past NNPC Chief Corporate

Communications Officer, Chief Olufemi Soneye; the National Leader, Chief Olushola Akingbade (member), and Nigeria's musical icon, Olorogun John Asiemu aka Daddy Showkey.

The event kicked off with a brief Annual General Meeting (AGM) and official swearing of the newly elected executives led by Kogi State Table-Tennis Association Chairman, Chief Shaibu Mohammed (President); CEO of Osupa Integrated Maritime Services – Chief Saidi Sani (Vice-President).

Others are Chief Ruben Timipreye (Sec. Gen), Chief Marvis Umusu (Treasurer), Chief Amuni Rilwan (PRO), John J. Ehirim (Fin-Sec), Chief Kelvin Irikefe (Assistant PRO), Chief Samson Adeleke (Provost), and Augustine Udoka (Welfare Sec).

In his rousing pep-talk, the LG Chairman, Hon. Akindipe, reiterated his government's commitment to support and partner with the Association's corporate social responsibility (CSR) and charity programs geared towards the development of the local community.

Jeremiah Music Band Elevates Live Music

In an industry where music defines the success of every occasion, Jeremiah Music Band (JMBand) has emerged as one of Nigeria's sought-after live performance groups. Founded by visionary bandleader Jeremiah Oluwatoke, JMBand is setting a new standard for luxury weddings, corporate galas, and private celebrations.

The band's versatility is unmatched, spanning Afrobeat, Jazz, Highlife, R&B, Gospel, and Pop. This diverse range of genres allows JMBand to deliver topnotch musical experiences that resonate with diverse audiences. Their portfolio of high-profile clients is a testament to their acceptance of professionalism and excellence.

According to Oluwatoke, "Our goal is to create performances that are more than music;

they are experiences that connect with the heart of every guest." For hosts seeking premium entertainment that reflects prestige and class, Jeremiah Music Band remains the partner of choice.

With their proven track record and exceptional performance, JMBand is setting a new standard for luxury events in Nigeria. The band's ability to deliver high-quality music and create memorable experiences has made them a go-to choice for many top brands and individuals.

"Jeremiah Music Band's impact on the Nigerian music industry is undeniable, and their commitment to excellence is evident in every performance. As a result, JMBand continues to be a leader in the industry, providing world-class entertainment to audiences across the country."



Ajegunle Chiefs

Burna Boy Confirms Australian Tour

Tosin Clegg

Grammy Award-winning Afrobeats superstar, Burna Boy has officially confirmed a Visa Approval for the Australia leg of his “No Sign of Weakness Tour.” The global tour, which has already sold out arenas across Europe and North America, will make four major stops this October.

In a post, Burna Boy disclosed that, “Two pieces of good news in one week, we’re cheeased up! New toy arrived & Visa stamped for Australia. The road is set, the stage is waiting. Australia, come see me and the crew on tour @ fromtheoutsiders.” Fans can expect electrifying performances in Melbourne (Sidney Myer Music Bowl, October 16), Sydney (Qudos Bank Arena, October 18), Brisbane (Entertainment Centre, October 20), and Perth (RAC

Arena, October 24). Renowned for his dynamic stage presence and chart-topping hits he promises an unforgettable experience for Australian fans as he continues to solidify his status as one of the biggest global acts of this generation. Tickets for the tour are expected to sell out quickly, further cementing Afrobeats as a powerful force on the world stage. This also further highlights the Billboards 50 Afrobeats artiste of all time spotlight on the African Giant as it shows the reach and potential of this genre.



Burna Boy

How Iyaniwura Akindele is Elevating Medical Aesthetics in Lagos

Tosin Clegg

Iyaniwura Akindele is the Lead Aesthetician and Chief Executive Officer of 1705 Medspa, a cutting-edge medical spa based in Lagos, Nigeria. Renowned for her expertise, professionalism, and human touch, she has steadily built a reputation as one of the leading figures in the country’s medical aesthetics industry. At 1705 Medspa, Iyaniwura combines science and artistry to provide advanced skincare and cosmetic treatments tailored to individual needs. Her philosophy is simple yet profound, “helping people feel at home in their own skin.” By prioritising client safety, satisfaction, and confidence, she has established her brand as a trusted destination for transformative treatments. On how her unique experiences have helped her perspective and approach to running the Medspa she shares that, “My background has given me a broad outlook and the ability to blend science, empathy, and innovation. It helps me approach aesthetics not just as treatments, but as holistic solutions that make clients feel confident and cared for. We tailor every treatment to individual needs, creating a warm, welcoming environment where clients feel understood and respected. Our goal is to enhance natural beauty while building confidence so that people truly



Iyaniwura Akindele

feel at home in their own skin. Beyond her business, Iyaniwura is also passionate about giving back. She actively supports local charities and non-profit organisations, contributing to causes that uplift vulnerable communities. This blend of entrepreneurial excellence and social responsibility has made her not only an industry leader but also a source of inspiration to many. With her unwavering commitment to excellence, innovation, and compassion, Iyaniwura Akindele is redefining medical aesthetics in Nigeria by setting itself apart in terms of safety, innovation, and quality of service.

Strategic Solutions Global Unveils Transformative Initiative for Africa’s Future

Tosin Clegg

Strategic Solutions Global has announced the official unveiling of the groundbreaking initiative, Diaspora Returns: Business Beyond Borders, an elite 8-day legacy-level immersion into the future of innovation, entrepreneurship, and culture in Africa. The initiative was designed to bring together global leaders, innovators, and changemakers from across the diaspora to unlock business potential, deepen cultural roots, and build generational bridges. More than a journey, Diaspora Returns is a movement to invest, collaborate, and reimagine Africa’s next era of prosperity. To mark this historic launch, a press conference was held in Lagos, where the vision behind the transformative agenda was shared. This was not just another event but it was the beginning of Africa’s renaissance story. Told through the lens of business, innovation, culture, and global diaspora collaboration, Diaspora Returns positions Africa as the future of growth, influence, and opportunity. Organisers emphasised that the program goes beyond tourism as it was designed to foster cross-continental investment, strengthen collaboration, and firmly position Nigeria as

a central hub for diaspora engagement. Spearheaded by Strategic Solutions Global (Atlanta) in collaboration with Waterlight Save Initiative (Georgia), the East Point Atlanta Convention and Visitors Tourism Bureau (USA), Palton Morgan Holdings (Lagos), and Eko Hotel and Suites (Lagos), the initiative is set to take place from November 17th to 24th, 2025, beginning with the arrival of the first set of participants from the United States. The Founder and CEO, Nancy Aragbaye, said operations would begin in November 2025, when more than 50 diasporans, mainly from the United States, will tour Nigeria for the first time, “This goes beyond tourism; we are here to start a movement that reconnects the diaspora to Africa with intention; to invest, collaborate, and build cross-continental business. Nigeria is a leading nation across the diaspora. When Nigeria gets it right, Africa gets it right, and when Africa gets it right, the world gets it right.” “I believe in global commerce, and I know that is what is going to propel Africa, and that is what is going to stir the renaissance of Africa. Those who are yearning to return with intention, bring your talents, skills, resources, and investments back here so jobs can be created and business can be done properly on a global level,” the Strategic Solutions Global founder said.



L-R: Managing Director/CEO, Health Forever Products Ltd, Mr. Abimbola Okubena; representative of the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Health, Dr. Hussein Abdur-Razzaq; Founder/Chairman, Health Forever Products Ltd, Otunba Olajuwon Okubena; and a guest Speaker from the University of Ibadan, Prof. Solomon Umokoro at the celebration of Jobelyn’s 25th Anniversary held in Lagos.

SUNDAY ADIGUN



L-R: MD, Knot Solutions Africa; Amruth Kumar; Chief Executive Officer, T2, Obafemi Banigbe; CEO, Knot Solutions, Global, Konuru Sumanth; and Chief Technical and Information Officer T2, Ayodeji Adedeji, at the strategic signing ceremony between T2 and Knot Solutions as part of T2’s digital transformation journey which held at Gitex Nigeria, Eko Convention Centre, Lagos... recently

SUNDAY ADIGUN



L-R: Co-founder, Directors’ Guild of Nigeria (DGN), Victor Okhai; founder, Africa International Film Festival (AFRIFF), Chioma Ude; director general, National Film and Video Censors Board (NFVCB), Shaibu Hussein; special assistant to the President on arts, culture and creative economy, Ayo Ad-eagbo; and head of media and PR, Africa International Film Festival AFRIFF, Latasha Ngwube, during the AFRIFF Film and Content Market (AFCM) Info Session in Lagos...recently



L-R: Opening Restaurants Manager, Kilimanjaro Restaurants, Onyech Precious; Restaurants Manager, Egemba Deborah Oluomachi; Area Operations Manager, Chinonye Nwatu; Human Resources Manager, Duru Anita Chisom; Pizza Jungle Manager, Godspower Wofuru; and second Assistant Restaurants Manager, Peace Ikweek Isaac during the official opening ceremony of Kilimanjaro restaurants Gbagada Branch in Lagos ...recently

PERSPECTIVE

As Hope Uzodimma Pushes for Lasting Impact in Governance

Donatus Eleko

Governance, at its core, is measured not by fleeting promises but by legacies that stand the test of time. In Imo State, Governor Hope Uzodimma appears intent on etching his name in history through projects and policies designed to outlive his tenure.

From infrastructure renewal to institutional reforms, Uzodimma has made it clear that his vision for governance goes beyond immediate political gains, aiming instead at structural changes that can secure long-term development for the state.

Yet, building a lasting legacy is no easy feat in Nigeria's fluid political environment, where short-term interests often overshadow sustainable planning. Uzodimma's push for enduring impact demands not only bold investments but also a commitment to accountability, inclusiveness, and continuity. The real test lies in whether these initiatives will remain resilient in the face of political shifts and economic challenges.

That was why when, recently, Governor Uzodimma, told media executives to freely go round the state to see what his government had done in catering to the needs of the people, he knew that he was staking his reputation.

The Governor knew that prying eyes of journalists could see the wrong things. But he was ready to take the risk, confident that his administration has done well in fulfilling its own side of the Social Contract.

Governor Uzodimma had told senior journalists, including executive members of the Nigerian Guild of Editors: "Take time to move around the state and see for yourselves, the progress we have made in building Imo into a model of excellence. As you do, you will notice that the flyover at Assumpta Roundabout was not there when last you were here. You will also see that the World-Class International Conference Centre at Orlu Road junction has since been completed.

"But above all, I urge you to interact with the management of the Orashi Electricity Company, so that you can be well appraised of how far we have gone in our determination, to provide 24/7 electricity across all 27 local government areas of the state in the coming months.

"I am confident that by the time you conclude your visit, you will agree with us that a new Imo is truly on the rise."

True to the promise, some giant strides have been made in Imo State under the Uzodimma administration. Right from the second term of the government, massive infrastructure and welfare programmes have been unveiled and vigorously been pursued.

Nobody would lose sight of the Mgbe/Umuchima erosion site, in Ideato, where reclaim work is ongoing.

One of the engineers handling the project, Chibuzo Agwuamba, told media executives who took up Governor Uzodimma's challenge of going round the state to see things for themselves, that the double lane and bridge would be completed in no time, adding that the Orashi River, which was diverted to enable construction work, would soon flow naturally, like before.

The joy on the faces of the indigenes of Mgbe and Umuchima is beyond comprehension, as they pray for the governor and his team, for not only keeping to the promise of fixing the road, but also for saving the community from being washed away by erosion.

The all-important road, which links Imo State and Anambra, failed completely because of the poor construction by the Rochas Okorocha government and the neglect of the immediate past government, before Uzodimma came to office.

At a place where a bridge was needed, the past government built a culvert across a river with high torrential waters. To make matters worse, it was a slope, where water from the higher parts, right and left, converged

into the fast-flowing Orashi River. It was therefore not surprising that the road was washed away by flash flood and completely swallowed by erosion.

In the reclaiming job, the Uzodimma government is planning a concrete bridge across the river and to join the hilly parts of the road.

Already, concrete drainages are being constructed on either sides of the expressway.

As part of its programme to bring government close to the people, the Imo State Government House Annex in Eziachi, Orlu, is another cardinal project that thrilled visiting editors.

At a time when rural dwellers feel that Government House, which is situated at the capital city, Owerri, makes government look distant, the building of a Government House Annex in Orlu, gives the people a sense of belonging. Having a Government House Annex near rural dwellers brings them closer to government.

The ultra-modern Emmanuel Iwuanyanwu International Conference Centre, in Owerri, is standing as an edifice in the heart of Owerri.

Those who knew the old ICC would not believe their eyes at what is on ground now.

When Uzodimma assumed office, there was a poorly constructed "conference centre" on the spot. Soon after, the structure's roof was blow off by wind and the walls started caving in.

Since the entire structure failed integrity test, Governor Uzodimma shut the premises and planned a befitting edifice. The old structure was brought down and cleared, while construction started afresh.

Now standing as a Colossus is a brand new ICC that would host international and local conferences, weddings, and other events. With a massive parking area and ultra-modern facilities, the ICC is expected to make Owerri a conference destination, as part of the state's tourism boost.

The Assumpta Flyover at the intersection of Owerri-Port Harcourt expressway, Owerri-Onitsha expressway, and Bank Road is a legacy project that would change the traffic situation in Owerri.

Located at the "Control" area of Owerri, in front of the Assumpta Cathedral of the Catholic Church the flyover rises from two points and Port Harcourt Road end, into Onitsha Road end, and Onitsha-Owerri road end into Bank Road. When completed, vehicles from the Onitsha road end to Port Harcourt road will use the bridge as well as vehicles from inside town (Bank Road) Onitsha-Owerri road. With this bridge, the hitherto traffic congestion at "Control" roundabout will be solved.

The Owerri-Umuahia express Road is a project that gladdens the hearts of many. Just like the Owerri-Orlu Road and Owerri-Okigwe road, the Owerri-Umuahia Road is an important gateway. Hitherto in bad shape, the road, which passes Mbaise, Obowo and running all the way to Onuimo, the border bridge between Imo and Abia, is wearing a new look following the complete makeover or reconstruction by Gov Uzodimma government. The road is dualised with streetlights along the stretch, passing major villages as Mbaise and Obowo.

Expressing happiness at the level of infrastructure put on ground by Governor Uzodimma, the President of Nigerian Guild of Editors, Eze Anaba said: "The most impressive of the projects that I saw was the road linking the former governor's place. It is very impressive. The narrative was that it is a Federal Road that had been abandoned for a while, but it's the people of the state that use the road.

"A significant part of the state had been cut off; so the fact that the governor deemed it fit to link the two together is highly commendable. I even learnt that one can connect Anambra, using the road and it makes it more impressive."

He added: "Let there be peace in the South East, so that people can live, so that development can come. We should not escalate the



Uzodimma

fear, that the South East is unlivable. It's not good for anybody. My plea is, let there be peace in the South East."

Governor Uzodimma came into office with "3-R programme," standing for Reconstruction, Recovery and Rehabilitation. The tripod programme of action of Uzodimma's administration is not merely existing on paper, as he also matches his words with action. His good works of reconstructing, recovering and rehabilitating are noticeable in all sectors, including road constructions, Health, Education, prompt payment of salaries and pension, security, rehabilitation of decayed infrastructure.

Addressing members of Imo House of Assembly and Imo indigenes on Tuesday, June 24, 2025, in what was tagged, "State of the State Address", Governor Uzodimma had said: "When I assume office, I was immediately confronted with two pressing issues: widespread infrastructure decay, and the near-total breakdown of state institutions."

"Most roads were either, impassable or outright death traps. Governance was paralyzed. The civil service, often referred to as the engine room of government, had lost both its form and function. Even, the Government House had been reduced to a laughable caricature, with official business often conducted in Bush Bars or Guest Houses."

Confrontated with the mirads of challenges, the Governor rolled up his sleeves and swung into action in what many referred to, as "Infrastructural Revolution."

Beside infrastructure, another sector the Governor has etched his name in gold is education. According to him, education remains the foundation of any sustainable society.

He explained that it was the reason he took deliberate steps to reposition the educational sector from the very beginning of his administration.

Uzodimma said: "When we assumed of-

fice, the situation in our educational system was dire. Teachers were demoralised due to months of unpaid salaries and years of delayed promotions. Instructional materials were also scarce. Our flagship institution, Imo State University, was not left out. It had lost a number of both staff and students, and academic standards were in free fall."

At the tertiary level, he said Imo State stands out as one of the few states successfully funding five institutions simultaneously: Imo State University, Owerri; K.O. Mbadiwe University, Ogboko; University of Agriculture and Environmental Sciences, Umuagwo; Imo State Polytechnic and Ben Uwajumogu College of Education, Ihitte Uboma.

Other areas the governor has also left his imprints are: Health, Sports, Digital Economy and e-Governance, Transport, Agriculture, Environment, Information, Dredging of Orashi River, Security, among others.

With two and a half years to go, Uzodimma is pressing forward to prove his critics wrong. Recently, he announced a minimum wage of N104, 000 for state workers and he is passionate about his electrification programme, with the Orashi Electricity Company.

In the end, Governor Uzodimma's push for lasting impact in governance will be measured not just by the projects he completes, but by the depth of transformation they bring to the lives of Imo people. Legacy is not built on mere political rhetoric, but on policies and infrastructures that stand the test of time and serve generations yet unborn. If his administration can sustain its momentum, institutionalise reforms, and prioritise people-centered development, Uzodimma will not only etch his name in the annals of Imo's history but also set a benchmark for purposeful governance in Nigeria.

PERSPECTIVE

NBA, Enugu and a Conference Like No Other

Malachy Agbo

By this time last year, no one in Enugu State had envisaged that the state will play host to the elite Nigeria Bar Association's 2025 Annual General Conference. But fortune favours the bold. Indeed, bold is a word that aptly captures Governor Peter Mbah's ambitious goal to make Enugu the "conferencing capital of Africa". So, once the announcement pronouncing Enugu as the new venue for the NBA Conference was made, it was a case of what happens when preparedness meets opportunity. The choice of Enugu was necessitated by the decision to move the venue out of Port Harcourt, Rivers State. The underpinnings are now history. But the reality was that within four months of that surprise announcement, the 26th AGC became a reality. The Enugu option worked because the city was ready to absorb over 20,000 lawyers.

NBA President, Mazi Afam Osiagwe, acknowledged this fact when he said that Enugu was a befitting venue for the theme of the conference, "Stand Out, Stand Tall". "Enugu is the capital of the South East region and also the home of hospitality, beauty, and peace. That was why we chose Enugu State to host our conference after moving from Port Harcourt," he said.

Like one of the Igbo proverbs would say that obodo adironma bu uru ndi nze this may be difficult to translate exactly, literally means that a community is not at peace is to the benefit of the leaders. Since the end of the conference on the 29th of August, 2025, many people in Enugu State are counting their gains and blessings. Some analysts estimate that economic activities during the seven-day period generated over N7b (Seven billion naira) in trade and services.

Once the announcement was made, a bazaar of sorts ensued in the state. All the hotels within and close to the metropolis were fully booked. The intense demand resulted in hotels and apartments increasing their room rates by as much as over 50 percent. Rates hovered between N50,000 to N100,000 and even more per night. Still, as the date drew nearer, the surge became palpable and economics of demand and supply set in, necessitating some unfinished hotels to fast track their works to accommodate the visiting lawyers and sundry associates. The initial worry was whether there were enough rooms to absorb the number. But eventually, everyone that visited during that period secured a room. There's no doubt about this: the hotel operators wished it never ended; it seemed Christmas came early for them.

The restaurants and bars in the city were not left out in the frenzy. Some had to hire more staff to meet burgeoning demands. As one set of customers were leaving, others were walking in. One major constant indicator was the enthusiasm among the visitors to relish the Enugu delicacies – nkwoobi, ishi ewu, abacha, ugba and okpa. Many people took the recipe home, planning to replicate the enjoyment in their various homes and families.

Even though the mammy market was a make-shift facility to cater to the needs of lawyers within the precincts of Okpara Square, it was really a market in every sense. There was no closing time. The chairs were always occupied, as hands repeatedly hauled food from simmering pots and food coolers to plates. The market was saturated with assorted drinks, and the weather was clement throughout. Similarly, all the popular eateries were swarmed from evening time till late in the night. Once you had a location, people visited and repeated. It wasn't surprising though, because Enugu has a teeming number of restaurants reputed for their specialties and tantalising dishes that leave customers literally spoiled for choice.

It was no different for cab operators, as they steadily chauffeured people from their hotels to the Enugu International Conference Center, and to various destinations of their choice. Many also used the opportunity to visit friends and relatives



Governor Mbah (middle) and other panelists at the conference

who live in Enugu. Even commercial tricycle operators were very busy. Many lawyers chose to explore the city sitting in a "Keke" as they meandered through inner city streets – not for lack of fund, but for the thrill and fun. Many relished the breezy, open air experience of commercial tricycles, especially in the evenings and at night.

In the same vein, the inter-state transport sector also experienced the windfall. Many transport companies smiled to the bank too. As the land transport was patronised, so too were the airlines. Many even increased their fares and frequency to Enugu to tap into the opportunity.

The ancillary service sector cashed out as well. Virtually all the fuel stations in the city experienced a surge in sales. Both the visiting commuters, taxi drivers, Keke and small buses were making rapid shuttles and were refilling their tanks to meet demands. Within seven days, most of the fuel stations exhausted their stock and restocked at nights – a deliberate policy to ease traffic.

As the conference was ongoing, many lawyers used the opportunity to visit their loved ones. Those who had been postponing their visit to friends and families, the conference offered great opportunity for them. Some old classmates re-united. In such visits, cash exchanged hands.

Telecommunication sector was also busy. The surge in telecommunication consumption kept the operators busy in order to ensure that call drops were minimal. The social media was awash with real-time streaming and other posts. Many who could not make it physically to Enugu followed the event via social media. From Facebook to X (formerly Twitter), Instagram, WhatsApp, Tik Tok, etc, there was a regular stream of content from Enugu.

The list of the direct beneficiaries is endless. But the import of the seven-day influx of guests was a foretold vision that crystalised into reality. Enugu was prepared for such huge conference. According to Prof. Chidiebere Onyia, the government of Dr. Peter Mbah had strategically prepared Enugu to host conferences like that of the NBA and many others.

"The Enugu State Government under Dr. Peter Mbah, in its design and thinking around tourism, hospitality, and economic growth, had already factored in most of what you are seeing in preparation right now. Even without the NBA's plan to come, we had already started planning what would

happen if the NBA came here, if the Nigerian Society of Engineers came here, or others," he stated.

Onyia also recounted some developments that had earlier enhanced Enugu's capacity to host an event such as this: Enugu Air that was commissioned few weeks ago; the launch of 100 CNG buses and five modern transport terminals; the reconstructed and revamped Hotel Presidential unveiled days before the NBA conference; and other significant projects. "We want to ensure that when people come here, they move around easily, feel safe, and even love to live here. We are grateful to the NBA for choosing Enugu and believe that they will have a memorable experience during their stay," he said.

This much was acknowledged by NBA members. Chief Mike Ozekhome, a Senior Advocate of Nigeria, SAN, said he was familiar with the state over the years and it would be evil for anyone to deny the obvious transformations under Governor Mbah.

"I come to Enugu every year. So, I am not a stranger at all to Enugu State. It will be difficult for me to deny that I have not seen some groundbreaking projects. To deny your transformative leadership will be sinful, and I do not want to be a sinner," he said.

Ozekhome wondered how Mbah was able to "do these great things in a highly politicised environment infested by political buccaneers, and in an environment where there is more politicking than governance."

Another lawyer, Senator Dino Melaye, commended Mbah for emerging as a pacesetter in good governance in two years. "I am particularly and personally impressed with the governor of Enugu State because all these things have been done in two years. I only can see that you think out of the box," he said.

Melaye couldn't have said it better, with regard to "thinking out of the box". The hosting of NBA AGC in Enugu successfully is part of the connecting dots of Governor Mbah's economic vision. "Our vision is to grow Enugu's economy from \$4.4 billion to \$30 billion, to reduce the poverty headcount to zero, and to make Enugu the preferred destination in Nigeria for business, for tourism, and for living. We imagined a state that, within eight years, would be completely unrecognisable from the one we inherited," he said.

These words are not mere posturing. The lawyers who visited Enugu were simply awed by what they had experienced.

The Fear of Goodluck Jonathan

Darlington Okpebholo Ray

Until recently, I stood firmly in the camp of those who believed that former President Goodluck Ebele Jonathan should not consider a return to the Nigerian presidency in 2027. When prominent leaders of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), such as Prof. Jerry Gana and Governor Bala Mohammed, began to encourage him earlier this year to re-enter the political fray, I was among the first to advise against it.

My reasoning at the time was rooted in the global stature Jonathan currently enjoys. He is not only a statesman of repute, but also a respected voice in international diplomacy, trusted by organisations like the United Nations and the African Union. I felt he should continue on that noble path.

However, events in recent months have compelled me to reconsider. The increasingly panicked responses from the ruling All Progressives Congress at the mere mention of Jonathan's name have revealed just how powerful his candidacy would be.

Ministers in the Bola Tinubu's administration have gone out of their way to issue unsolicited legal opinions, character attacks, and political commentary, all aimed at discouraging one man from exercising his democratic rights. This reaction, more than anything else, has confirmed that Jonathan is the candidate they fear most.

One of the loudest voices in this manufactured legal argument has been that of Festus Keyamo, who claimed that Jonathan cannot contest again because he has been "sworn in twice."

This argument, however, does not hold water when placed against the clear provisions of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (as amended).

Specifically, Section 137(1)(b) of the Constitution disqualifies a person who has been elected to the office of President "at any two previous elections."

The operative word is 'elected.' Goodluck Jonathan was not elected in 2010 when he first assumed office. He stepped in as President by virtue of the 'Doctrine of Necessity,' following the death of President Umaru Musa Yar'Adua. That tenure was constitutionally incomplete and served purely to stabilise the nation. It was not the result of an election.

Furthermore, in 2022, a High Court in Yenagoa, Bayelsa State, ruled unequivocally that Jonathan remains constitutionally qualified to contest the presidency. The court stated that the constitutional amendment introduced in 2018, which bars anyone from being elected to the office of President more than twice, cannot be applied retroactively. Jonathan had held office before that amendment came into effect. Therefore, his eligibility remains intact and unimpeached.

This legal reality appears to have sent the ruling party into panic mode.

Even more curious is the unsolicited advice from the Minister of the Federal Capital Territory, Nyesom Wike. Wike, once a self-proclaimed loyalist of Jonathan, now presumes to lecture a former President on the virtues of staying out of politics.

He said Jonathan should "remain an elder statesman," yet has taken it upon himself to

speak daily on matters far beyond his ministerial brief. The irony is too glaring to ignore.

One cannot help but reflect on the timeless words of John Adams, the second President of the United States: "Power always thinks it has a great soul and that it is doing God's service when it is violating all his laws."

Wike would do well to reflect on this. A man who once positioned himself as a defender of democratic values has now turned himself into an unsolicited adviser, lacking the moral high ground to dictate the political future of a man whose legacy far outweighs his own.

Is Wike the only Minister in Nigeria? Why the constant press briefings? Why the obsession with controlling the narrative? Why the fear of one man exercising his constitutional rights?

The answer is simple. They know that President Tinubu has failed to meet the expectations of the Nigerian people, and they know that a Jonathan comeback would reawaken public optimism, both locally and internationally.

Indeed, the "Bring Back Our Goodluck" campaign continues to gain momentum, especially in Northern Nigeria. The reasons are not hard to understand. Under Jonathan, Nigeria witnessed a calmer, more civil political environment, greater freedom of expression, and a leader who, even in defeat, placed national unity above personal ambition.

Jonathan represents a return to civility, maturity, and international credibility. His leadership is remembered for its humility, respect for institutions, and commitment to democratic ideals. And now, when Nigeria needs all these virtues more than ever, those in power fear his return.



Jonathan

That fear is telling. For me, the decision is now clear. Run, Jonathan, Run.

Darlington Okpebholo Ray, a Media Consultant, Journalist, Human Resource Expert, Socio-political and Civil Rights Activist, wrote in from London, England

PEOPLE

Ayo Ibaru:

If I Wasn't in Real Estate, Tech, I Would Have Been a Teacher or Brain Surgeon

The Chief Executive Officer of Northcourt, a real estate advisory firm, and Co-founder, Build Africa Technology Company, Ayo Ibaru, is a man who thrives on discipline, vision, and balance. Ibaru, has built a reputation for blending business insight with resilience. Beyond real estate and tech, he admits he could easily have pursued teaching or brain surgery, two professions that reflect his passion for precision and impact. In this wide-ranging conversation, Ibaru shares his inspirations, insights on Nigeria's property market, and a bold call to scrap the Land Use Act. **Oluchi Chibuzor** provides the excerpts

What daily habits or routines have been most instrumental in your success as a CEO and entrepreneur?
To wake up early. Sometimes I wake up at 4 am and I sleep around 11 pm. I also like to work out a lot. I do six times a week. I do weight lifting. I like to jog, but I prefer weight lifting. I've been doing that now for almost a decade. I used to do it before, but I fell off. I am back now. Then I also have a strong family support system. My family is really supportive and I have a strong team here at work. They make my life a lot easier.

How do you balance the pressures of running two companies – Northcourt and Build Africa Technology Company - with personal life and wellbeing?

Christiane Amanpour has held dual or multiple contracts at different points in her career. She once had a contract working as a full-time correspondent for CNN and a contributor to CBS, and I always liked it. The reason is that I believe we are here to solve the most difficult problems for most people. So, I always like that idea. But what I'm finding out now is it's a lot of work. You do get the joys of seeing successes happen on both fronts, whether it is Northcourt, some big tickets, investment based on research by me and my team, or with Build Africa, we're able to supply high-quality building materials to some large sites, maybe in Enugu State, Aba or Lagos. So, you have those highs, and it makes it all worth it because people get their projects done and people see returns on their investment. But then, there are the lows where you are dealing with staffing issues, reporting to the regulator, and you have to do strategy and plan for the macroeconomic environment. Again, in Build Africa Technology Company, I have a strong team there. In fact, I have more senior management technical support there, maybe because it's really more of a distribution, high-quality and efficiency-driven business.

Who or what has been your biggest inspiration in shaping your career path?

Interestingly, it is my dad, and he is late now. May God rest his soul. He always believed that I would do well in this. And just as my career was gathering up steam was when he passed. But he did see me execute big projects, advise international clients. He did see me go on TV and he was a bit proud. He would tell his friends. So, my dad was always clear-headed as to where he wanted us to go. I think it was Barack Obama who said every man is always trying to correct his father's errors or exceed the standard set by his father. And I think I belong to the latter. He has given me a standard, discipline, a sense of purpose and vision. I even made reference to him in the book I co-authored with one of my very close friends, Dr Abel, 'The Migration Paradox.'

If you weren't in real estate and tech, what other career would you likely pursue?

I have thought about this a lot. Its twofold: One is teaching, because I'm third generation in a family of teachers. My mother was a teacher, and her dad was a teacher. So we're going back almost 100 years now. So, teaching would have



Ibaru

been good, lecturing again, at a more senior level, and I do a bit of that now. The second is brain surgery because it's complex, it's difficult, and you have to get it right. That's the kind of mindset I take to my current work. You can't just say, buy land, because that is so basic. There are complexities in the property process. Do we develop mixed-use assets? Do we develop long-term infrastructure? Do we develop multi-storey buildings and then make sure it's able to withstand whatever economic challenges come? So I picked brain surgery because it just needs that type of focus, and that's what I try to bring to what I am currently doing now.

What are the most significant trends and insights revealed in Northcourt's 2025 Half-Year Real Estate Report, and how do they compare with what we saw in 2024?

One is the 'smallification' of real estate. It's not a real word. What we found out was that in the residential real estate market, developers are finding out that it makes more sense to build houses and apartments that have fewer rooms. Five rooms and four rooms are now bespoke. They are now deliberate requests by customers or by the occupiers, as we call them in our industry. If a developer is going to market, what will be top on his mind is, how quickly can I get these assets off my hands, and how quickly can I get them at a high rate of return, and two-bedroom flats is what most developers are building. They are finding out that they can get their funding in time, return it, and then keep that cycle going. The second

thing is the distribution of sub-markets. Now, as far as Nigeria's real estate market is concerned, the order for return is Lagos, Abuja and then Port Harcourt, and they pretty much do the same thing.

But what is happening now is you're seeing a bit of hospitality increasingly going towards the south-east, and the big point here is the Landmark Africa's project with Enugu State. It's something I don't want people to sleep on because Landmark is known for pushing projects through, and they have Paul Onwuanibe, who is extremely brilliant. He's going to get things done as they're already making progress. So that's going out of Lagos, and it won't be the last.

Now, you also find Aliko Dangote's seaport going to Ogun State. When that is done, as we know, he will get it done, we can expect the amount of traffic coming to Lagos to reduce. So, you find that also moving out. I think Lagos will always be a central market as far as Nigeria is concerned. I still think it will be number one for quite a number of years to come. But what you're going to find increasingly is that other States, other regions, will start to have more assets of a larger value come to them. Who would have seen what Landmark Africa is doing in Enugu State today, 10 years ago. Another finding from the report is in the area of industrial real estate. Before Covid-19, industrial real estate was what we called the black sheep of the family. Residential was doing well, retail was also doing well, purpose-built student accommodation (PBSA) also doing well. But after COVID-19, it became very clear to more of the market that warehousing

is important, and that has continued to grow. And we put that in all our past reports and during TV analysis. But what has happened now is that even the sub-markets of warehousing have continued to see demand, and by that I mean cold storage and farmer storage. Cold storage involves farm produce, meat products and so on and so forth, while farm storage involves things like vaccines and drugs and so on and so forth. And that has seen demand. Another thing you should think about is just to go back to the decentralisation of the real estate market in Nigeria. If you look at the Dangote's seaport and Ogun State as a whole, you can see that it is now attracting more investment. For example, I think it was Emzor, that got the approval to manufacture active agents for malaria in Nigeria and they're going to build it in Ogun. Those are the key trends. Now, how does it compare with last year's report? From last year, there is now an increased demand for real estate experts who know what they're doing and I'm happy about that. When people who lack the right analysis go into real estate investment and then they lose their funding, they blame the entire market. But now you're seeing that with the right kinds of experts' involvement, you can have returns. The second thing is, and I have to give it to the Federal Ministry of Housing and Urban Development. They came up with a real estate app that pretty much allows you to log in fraudulent transactions. Now, the thing is, we have to follow through on that, which is another challenge. We look forward to seeing data at the end of the quarter, at the end of six or nine months or even one year. If we can have that, then we are on our way to becoming a more transparent real estate market which will attract more funding on a corporate level and not just from the diaspora.

From the report, how did factors such as inflation, interest rates, and government reforms influence real estate demand, supply, and pricing across key Nigerian cities in the first half of 2025?

The government is showing more concern as to the problems in the economy and again, because we know how big the problems are, and we see that they are showing some interest, it is a good thing, and we applaud that. We also see that the new tax law did give quite a number of concessions for developers, local players, real estate practitioners, things around rent, and that is something we have to appreciate the government for. When they do wrong things, I will tell you and when they do right things, I will also commend them. Now, the bad is because the economy is still not as stable. It is difficult to execute consistently high quality projects over the long-term. People need to remember that the real estate market is a 20 to 30-year market cycle.

And to be able to do that effectively, you can't have your currency moving from what it was in October last year to what it became in February 2025. So, interest rates are affected by that, inflation also contributes to the difficulties of establishing a consistent price of inputs into the housing process. Inflation keeps accelerating, sometimes it decelerates and then you see them do a rebasing.

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FEATURES

Adeosun: Why Govt Must Review Reforms to Improve Standard of Living

Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of St. Racheal's Pharmaceutical Nigeria Ltd, Akinjide Adeosun, recently turned 57. But unlike many corporate chiefs who might have marked the occasion with a lavish dinner or a private getaway, Adeosun chose a very different path, turning his birthday into an occasion for national advocacy, urging the federal government to review its economic reforms to ease hunger, rising transport fares, and unaffordable housing that continue to weigh heavily on ordinary Nigerians. **Sunday Ehigiator** reports

The event, themed 'Thanksgiving in Freedom', began at the All Souls' Church, Lekki Phase 1, Lagos, where Adeosun gathered family, friends, colleagues, and dozens of ordinary Nigerians together in thanksgiving and appreciation to God for adding another year.

He would later on the same day roll out a food bank to distribute food to hundreds of vulnerable and low-income earners, including cleaners, security guards, fuel attendants, sales representatives, drivers, etc., across several locations within the state.

The week-long event came to a climax at his Lekki residence, where he hosted journalists from various media organisations, using the occasion not merely to count his blessings but to raise an alarm about Nigeria's worsening economic crisis.

His appeal to the federal government was blunt: "Let us look at our reforms again and review where necessary. There is nowhere in the world without some form of subsidy. Nigerians are groaning under hunger, high transport fares, and unaffordable rents. Government must do something now."

From Celebration to Advocacy

The 57th birthday, he admitted, was his most fulfilling yet because it allowed him to give back directly to the people whose stories had shaped his advocacy. Over the months leading to his birthday, Adeosun had quietly conducted interviews with cleaners, security men, and artisans across Lekki, Ikoyi, and Victoria Island. Their testimonies, he said, revealed a consistent pattern of despair: "They spoke of spending half their wages on food, walking long distances to avoid exorbitant transport fares, and struggling to pay for tiny one-room apartments," Adeosun recounted. "These are the three anguishes facing the people: food, transport, and shelter. If leadership cannot address these, then what is the essence of governance?"

The Economics of the Dinner Table

As a pharmacist and healthcare entrepreneur, Adeosun is deeply aware of the nexus between nutrition and health. Malnutrition, he pointed out, is not only about hunger but also about diminished life expectancy, higher disease burden, and lower productivity.

According to the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), Nigeria's inflation rate stood at 21.88 per cent in July 2025, with food inflation climbing to over 22.74 per cent.

The cost of staples such as rice, bread, beans, and vegetable oil has more than doubled within two years. For a nation where more than 40 per cent of the population already lives below the poverty line, the implications are severe.

"There is a huge link between food and the health condition of the people," Adeosun stressed. "If you cannot eat, you cannot work well. If you cannot feed your family, you live in constant stress. This weakens the nation as a whole."

Fuel Subsidy Removal: A Double-Edged Sword

Adeosun did not oppose the removal of fuel subsidies. In fact, he commended President Bola Ahmed Tinubu for taking the politically difficult decision. But he criticised what he described as poor planning around the policy.

"Fuel subsidy removal was inevitable, but the government failed to anticipate its consequences. Petrol prices are the single biggest driver of inflation. Without cushioning measures, hunger, poverty, and anger were bound to increase," he said.

He proposed an unconventional solution: a 20 per cent crude oil discount for local refiners such as Dangote Refinery. This, he argued, would allow refiners to lower pump prices, which would in turn reduce transport and production costs across the economy.

"We must tinker with crude oil prices. Give Dangote and other local refiners a discount in naira terms. Petrol price will come down, and inflation will ease," he added.

From Consumption to Production

At the heart of Adeosun's advocacy is a belief that Nigeria



Adeosun must escape the trap of being a consumption-driven economy. Despite its vast population of over 220 million and abundant natural resources, Nigeria remains heavily dependent on imports, from pharmaceuticals to food items and even refined petroleum.

"We cannot use palliatives to solve this. They can only be solved through macroeconomics," Adeosun insisted. "We must invest in manufacturing and production. If Nigeria produces more than it consumes, prices will fall automatically, and the thirst for foreign goods will disappear."

The manufacturing sector currently contributes less than 10 per cent to Nigeria's GDP. Yet analysts say it has the potential to absorb millions of unemployed youths and stabilise the currency.

Rising energy costs, poor infrastructure, and forex scarcity, however, have hampered growth. Adeosun believes tax credits, energy rebates, and targeted incentives could help revive the sector.

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Rites of Passage Long Overdue for Our War Dead

Emma Nwaka

It is a common saying in Igbo land that "Isi Nwa Amadi Adigh Ato N'amba" (the head of a son of the soil is never buried outside the homestead). So too, that of a woman. If for any reason the head, and by extension, the body could not be traced and retrieved for proper burial, his kinsmen (Umu Nna) would perform certain rites in his honour for his soul to rest in peace.

There are numerous circumstances that could prevent the body of a kinsman from being found: Wars, plane crash, drowning at sea, fire incidents; those who died in kidnappers' den, or are devoured by wild animal, etc.

Usually, no effort is spared to bring back home the body of a kinsman for burial, no matter how far or torturous the road to his place of demise. I still recall when as a little boy my kinsman died at Azumini Ndoki in present day Ukwu East Local Government Area of Abia State. Isuikwuato, where I come from, is about three hours away, thanks to the modern-day road network. Back then, motorable roads, where they exist, were few and far between.

One morning, some able-bodied young men from my community, armed with a bed-like contraption made of bamboo (we call it 'Nkpakara'), coffin was not in common use then, were dispatched to Azumini to bring home his body so he might rest in peace with his ancestors. It must have been a torturous journey through bush paths, marshy farm lands and many rivers to cross. For them, on foot, it must have been a journey of many nights and days. When they came home bearing their burden on their heads, a hearse was not common then; the entire village was eerily quiet, signifying that the grim reaper has struck. As children, we were kept indoors until the burial was over. Children of nowadays would be struggling to feast their

eyes on a body while lying in state. A taboo back in the day.

Whenever I remember this sad event, the story of Jacob in the Bible springs to my mind. When it became obvious to Jacob that his time on earth was drawing to a close, he instructed his sons thus: "I am about to be gathered to my people. Bury me with my fathers in the cave in the field of Ephron in Canaan", despite being in Egypt at the time of his death. (Genesis:49). The similarity in cultural practice between what obtains among the Jews and Igbo with regard to the choice of place of burial is quite striking and instructive.

In Igbo land, it is believed that unless rites of passage are performed for the repose of the soul of the dead, the spirit, call it ghost if you like, of such a person will not allow the living to rest. Certain bizarre occurrences happen in the community that are attributed to such a spirit.

Every person who has lost a loved one knows they could not have a proper closure until the dead was buried. The Bible tells us that when Cain murdered Abel, God himself told Cain that "the blood of his brother is crying to me from the ground. (Genesis:4). So, the dead don't die, and die. In other words, death as we know it is not a final bus-stop for man. Put in another form: Even the Cross is not a dead-end. But this offering is not about eschatology. So, we move on.

Chinua Achebe in his inimitable poem- Remembrance Day- had this to say: " Your proclaimed mourning Your flag at halfmast Your solemn face Your smart backward step and salute at the flowered foot of empty graves Your glorious words, none nothing will their spirit appease..... Therefore, fear them. Fear their malice, your fallen kindred wronged in death. Fear their blood feud, your fallen

kindred wronged in death"

The Nigerian civil war ended over 50 years ago. I am not aware that Ndi Igbo as a collective, have carried out any rites of passage for our war dead. Lest we forget, it was for our collective cause that they laid down their lives.

Could it be that our failure to appease their spirit is the reason why many bizarre occurrences have become the new normal in Igbo land? Or are things that would have been regarded as "aru" or "nso-ani"; a terrible, unspeakable, abominable, atrocious act or behaviour, which in time past would have called for propitiation because they defile the land not happening today without any person batting an eyelid. Even when we shrug our shoulders at all about the unbecoming that are now becoming a way of life, we do so as individuals and retire to our respective homes with no collective resolve to bell the cat.

Erini, the proverbial umbilical cord that bind the Igbo nation together, which forbids the shedding of the blood of a kinsman, seem to have lost relevance. Or is it observed in the breach, if at all.

Is it not about time we paused to ponder? When Okonkwo, the protagonist of Achebe's Things Fall Apart, murdered a boy that calls him father, was he not banished from the land? Let us not write this off as fiction. Everyone knows that there is an undeniable intersection between real life situations and art. Come to think about it, was Okonkwo's fate any different from that of Cain

It is time we found out why the abnormal is today wearing the toga of normality in our land. An Igbo proverb popularized by Chinua Achebe tells us that, "A man who does not know where the rain began to beat him cannot say where he dried his body". I am not a diviner. That notwithstanding, I believe that if we appoint a date, which

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TRIBUTE

A Worthy Wealthmaster at 85

Ayo Arowolo pens a tribute to the corporate icon and boardroom guru, Chief Olusegun Osunkeye, who turns 85 tomorrow. Enjoy God willing (and why not?) Chief Olusegun Osunkeye, former Managing Director and Chairman of Nestle Foods Plc will be 85 tomorrow, Sunday September 7, 2025

Chief Osunkeye is one of the few individuals in the country who have been able to make it to the pinnacle of their careers and also finished well without scandals. Interestingly by staying on Nestle for 41 years, Chief Osunkeye, a Chartered Accountant by training, has demonstrated that you can be wealthy and live a good life working (or serving, as he would like to put it) for others.

My path and that of this corporate icon crossed about 34 years ago in 1991 when I had just been recruited into the defunct African Concord Magazine and assigned to work in the business and finance section of the magazine by my editor then, Mr. Bayo Onanuga, now President Bola Tinubu's Media aid. It was also that year that Chief Oshunkeye had just been appointed the Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of Nestle Nigeria Plc, one of the companies listed on the Nigerian Stock Exchange. One of my primary assignments as a business reporter was to cover the Nigerian stock market and one of the regular activities of the exchange was to invite directors of listed companies to make presentations at the popular Facts Behind the Figures event.

It was certain Chief Osunkeye, along with other directors of Nestle would appear on the exchange at least once in a year. As a reporter on the Exchange then, it also meant that I would encounter Chief Oshunkeye at the company's other corporate events such as their Annual General Meetings.

Somehow, I developed a liking for this doyen of accounting profession, especially his very serious approach to his presentation. Later through his principal media adviser, Dr Samuel Adenekan, I also got several opportunities to meet with Chief Osunkeye in the corporate office of Nestle at Ilupeju, either to interview him or to clarify some issues on some of the stories I was developing. He also seems to like to see me around him. Since that time he has been on my radar.

Our relationship blossomed however after retiring from Nestle as the Managing Director but retaining the position of its Chairman. I have been to his consulting office located at GRA, Ikeja a couple of times where we would just sit down and he would share either his times at Nestles with me or the lessons life has taught him generally. Some of these have been reported and published. Here are some of the condensed versions of some of those very precious life lessons:

One, Be Professional and develop competence of the job. He believes that if you truly want to get to the top of your career, it is imperative that you develop competence on the job

Two, Have mentors and mentor others. He believes that the road to the top is laced with landmines and without the help of mentors, the journey can be complicated or even truncated. He shares the influence of key mentors in his life such as Chief Michael Omolayole, another corporate icon and Late Chief Akintola Williams

Three, you need to develop a great networking skill. To get to the top, according to him, you need to develop great networking skills. The question to ask is how many people can you call successfully for help when you run into rough waters? By consciously cultivating valuable relationships you are building an emotional bank account from which you can withdraw in times of needs.



Osunkeye

Four, Develop a savings culture from the youth. As he related this with me, on the advice of an elder brother, he started saving from his first salary and this has continued till date.

"Apart from saving, I also invest particularly in shares. It was the proceeds from shares that I used to take care of my children's education and the money saved over time has also helped me to retire with comfort."

Five, maintain Work-Life Balance. This is how he put this:

"You must understand that and strive for balance in your life. Assume you are juggling 5 balls in the air, you name them - work, family, health, friends, & spirit. Work is a rubber ball, if you drop it, it will bounce back.

But if you drop any of the other 4 balls - family, health, friends, & spirit, they will be irrevocably scuffed, marked, nicked, damaged or even shattered"

Six, health is wealth. In his words: "you must look after yourself because many people depend on you. Give time to rest, not just working 18, 20 hours a day and bragging about it. You should live a work life balance. Do things in moderation and of course exercise. Sleep, watch what you eat, do exercise and do things in moderation."

Seven, the Lord is my all: "Here is the summary: every success you ever achieved was made possible by the grace of God.

What you are and the height you attain is through the grace and mercy of God. The race is not for the swiftest. Give Him all the glory and praise."

However, beyond those seven life lessons and several others he has shared with me over time and which were published in my column in THISDAY ON SUNDAY, what fascinate me most are the parchments from the notes I take (mostly not published) during my visits to his office. The last visit was on Thursday August 14, where we spent about two hours in very light but deep conversation. He had sent birthday IV to my WhatsApp, which once I received, I asked if could come around and promptly he sent a note to me confirming the appointment. I share few of my observations in this article.

One, Chief Osunkeye appears to have recreated in his consulting office in GRA, the ambience of his corporate office in Ilupeju, when he was the CEO of Nestle. As a matter of fact, each time I enter his office, the image of his corporate office in Ilupeju flashes into my memory. Chief oshunkeye maintains a professional secretary downstairs while his own office consisting a lounge for visitors and his own private room are on the first floor. On the second floor, Chief Osunkeye maintains a boardroom which can seat 12 to 14 persons. While our meetings usually take place at the lounge, each time, he would ask that

we go to his board room which is properly prepared for meetings. What amazes me is that he climbs the stairs very briskly as if he is younger than his age.

Two, I also observed that Chief Osunkeye likes to document his thoughts on paper even though he speaks extemporaneously on many issues, he always insisted on writing out his thoughts and send to me. This has been the pattern in all the interviews I have had with him. I had always wondered why he would do this, but I got the clue in one of the documents he shared with me during one of our meetings. He does not like to be misquoted or better still he likes everything attributed to him to be exactly what he says. He shared a story with me: "One day, I arrived in the office fully drenched by rain, straight into the hands of Mr. Akintola Williams... As a trainer, I went out on audit at ACB, Yaba with Mr. Williams. I had to add up "cast" \$ (put pound sterling symbol please as my keyboard doesn't have it) s d of 3 months of the waste book. I had cut pieces of paper-no adding machine or calculator at that time (1959). Mr. Williams was watching, called me, and showed me how to add up. He said, an accountant should not use an eraser to erase a figure; instead you should rule a line over the figure; in order words, do not destroy nor deface accounting records-see what happened to Arthur Anderson and the Enron Scandal much later in 2001".

Three, Chief Oshunkeye does not just like to keep relationships, in very creative ways, he also likes to service such relationships, especially the ones he considers very important to him. He speaks in glowing terms about all his mentors, his past associates who he consider valuable. While he tries at all time to keep his emotional bank account very positive, he does not seem to want to withdraw from the accounts. He once asked for my neck size for shirts while he was abroad and on return he would ask for my forward address and dispatch a matching shirt plus a tie. On my birthdays which I don't celebrate, he would call me and insist on getting a gift to me.

Four and I would like to dwell on this and also end with it even though I still have a lot of those parchments in my notebook: You cannot be with Chief Osunkeye without leaving with an impression of his being a spiritually aware individual and a strong believer in applying the word of God to every aspect of his life. During my last visit to his office, he handed over to me a publication that was done to mark his 80th birthday, titled A Life Of Abundant Grace and another document containing the thoughts he shared at an interactive session held at the Guided Missile s Church, Ikeja. Inside the 177-page publication and the other document are accounts of his exploits in the corporate world and how he used Biblical principles to dissolve some

situations that looked initially tough. For instance, he shared in the document how he used the principles he picked from reading the story of Nehemiah, an ordinary cup bearer who got inspired to rebuild the broken down walls of Jerusalem. This is how he put it: 'I set about to rebuild the company, much like rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem. First, I had to disengage the dissidents (the Sanballats and the Tobiahs), The HR Director, the CFO and the Company Secretary... Then I embarked on leading and motivating the management team (Nehemiah 2: 17-18).

I had been looking for the appropriate term to use in describing this corporate guru with sterling qualities but I found one as I was re-reading an old book on my shelf by Pabbi Levi Brakman and Sam Jaffe, with the title Jewish Wisdom for Business Success-Lessons from the Torah and Other ancient texts. In the book, I found a concept that appropriately captures my impressions of Chief Osunkeye after years of interactions. Taking inspiration from the book, it would be fitting if Chief Oshunkeye is described as a wealthmaster.

Here is the paraphrased version of how the authors describe a wealthmaster and the accompanying attributes:

Wealthmasters are essentially SPIRITUAL ENTREPRENEURS and CAREER PROFESSIONALS, a network of Christians in business and careers who are using their God given passions to generate as much money as possible legitimately and deploying a large chunk of the income to promote kingdom projects and service the world entirely.

- A wealthmaster sees his or her entire moneymaking enterprise through the prism of the higher cause that the money could ultimately serve
- A wealthmaster sees money as a tool with which he can achieve things for the world
- A wealthmaster sees wealth as God given blessing of which he is the custodian
- A wealthmaster feels responsibility to use his money for higher purposes that go beyond selfish desires for material possessions
- A wealthmaster understands that his business/career is another method by which he can connect to both higher power and share in divinity.
- A wealthmaster believes that as a branch connected to the vine, he is simply a pipe through which God channels resources to others
- A wealthmaster believes that the ultimate key to financial abundance is to continuously bless others with his resources.

From my own personal observations of Chief Oshunkeye I was able to come up 11 descriptions and principles that Chief Oshunkeye holds dear as a wealth master: As a wealthmaster, he believes that Poverty or Wealth is an inside stuff; unless your mind is programmed to think wealthy thoughts automatically, it is likely to attract the opposite polar poverty mentality. As a man thinketh, so is he; he believes that wealth accumulation is for a higher purpose: to service humanity and be a channel of constant blessings to others; He believes that prosperity of soul is the foundation for lasting wealth; when we prosper spiritually, we will prosper in everything else-including our finances; he believes that after God, our next priority is to be a source of blessing and continuous joy to our families;he believes that wealth is more of internal development than external provisions; He believes we are fully responsible for our financial destinies and no one should blame anyone else for his financial situations; he believes that health is wealth and that we should do everything to ensure that we keep our bodies healthy and fit to enable us fulfill our assignment on earth; he recognises that our bodies are the temples of the Holy Spirit, and must not be treated carelessly; he believes that no matter the pressure, we should create time regularly to have fun and 'spoil ourselves' a little; he believes that when we cultivate the habit of giving back to the society from the wealth we legitimately accumulate the God will smile back at us with more abundance; He believes that wealth and success are really accumulation of contacts over time. We should therefore make every relationship we find ourselves count; He believes that maintaining an attitude of gratitude in every situation we find ourselves is an indication that we know fully well that the God will always work everything out in our favour; Above all, he recognises God as the source of legitimate wealth and that He decided to send his only begotten son, Jesus Christ of Nazareth to the world, not just to die for our sins, but also to demonstrate how to be a real wealthmaster. Therefore, he will not be involved in any wealth accumulation where someone is cheated, short changed or defrauded.

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2026 WORLD CUP QUALIFIER... 2026 WORLD CUP QUALIFIER...



**Super Eagles' Last Throw
of the Dice as Amavubi,
Bafana Bafana Await**

GLOBAL SOCCER

2026 WORLD CUP QUALIFIER... 2026 WORLD CUP QUALIFIER...

Super Eagles’ Last Throw of the Dice as Amavubi, Bafana Bafana Await

With just a win from six matches, the Super Eagles of Nigeria precariously sit fourth in Group C of the 2026 World Cup qualifier log with seven points, nine points behind group leaders, South Africa. In spite of the perilous situation the three-time African champions find itself, the team still stands a chance of qualifying automatically for next year’s Mundial, provided it can win its four remaining matches in the group and hoping that the world football governing body, FIFA, would justifiably deduct three points from Bafana Bafana for fielding an ineligible player in their 2-0 defeat of Lesotho in one of the group stage matches. Ahead of today’s showdown against the Amavubi of Rwanda at the Godswill Akpabio Stadium, Uyo, Nigeria must get the job done or may kiss any chance of hoisting her flag at the Mundial goodbye, **Kunle Adewale** writes

Ahead of their revival encounters against Rwanda today and South Africa on Tuesday, the Super Eagles camp opened on Monday in Uyo for the 2026 World Cup qualifying matches.

The Super Eagles will today face the Amavubi of Rwanda in a must-win clash before a trip to Bloemfontein to take on the Bafana Bafana of South Africa on Tuesday

After six matches, the Super Eagles are fourth in their qualifying Group C with seven points, nine points behind South Africa, who lead the group with 16points.

Benin Republic are second in the pool with eleven points, Rwanda are third with eight points, followed by Lesotho with six points, while Zimbabwe are bottom of the table on four points.

Meanwhile, Super Eagles forward, Moses Simon has said the 2023 Africa Cup of Nations silver medal team has no excuse for the series of poor performances it has recorded so far.

With only the group winners guaranteed a spot at the 2026 World Cup, Nigeria must win their four remaining matches to have a realistic shot at qualifying.

Simon, one of the more senior players in the team, says there can be no excuses. “We just have to win, there are no excuses. It doesn’t matter who scores, we don’t care, we just want to win,” Simon said to ESPN.

He added that every player would need to take more responsibility and be prepared to speak up and do whatever it takes to qualify for the World Cup: “If you know anything you can do to make us win, do it.

Simon says anyone on the pitch needs to make an effort to score goals in Nigeria’s battle to reach the 2026 FIFA World Cup: “A defender can score, a midfielder can score, even a striker can score. We just need to do it collectively.”

The Super Eagles were expected to dominate the group consisting of the likes of Rwanda, Lesotho, Zimbabwe, Benin Republic and South Africa, but started off poorly and have seen things go downhill from there, with a qualifying campaign disrupted by managerial changes, with José Peseiro, Finidi George, and new coach Eric Sekou Chelle each taking charge of matches in the series.

“I cannot say or point finger on someone because there are a lot of stuff going on,” Simon said, reflecting on what exactly it was that had shaped the disappointing run so far.

“You can see how many coaches played the qualifiers. First, it was Peseiro, then after Finidi, and after a new coach again, and we know every coach has their own tactics.”

Despite the odds being stacked so highly against the team, Simon remains confident the Super Eagles can qualify for the World Cup: “My confidence level is high because we have it in us to qualify. In terms of the spirit, everything is high and myself,

GROUP C							
Team	P	W	D	L	GF	GA	PTS
1 S’Africa	7	5	1	1	13	5	16
2 Benin	7	3	2	2	7	7	11
3 Rwanda	6	2	2	2	4	4	8
4 Nigeria	6	1	4	1	7	6	7
5 Lesotho	7	1	3	3	4	8	6
6 Zimbabwe	7	0	4	3	5	10	4



Will Super Eagles celebrate against Rwanda today

I have the belief and dream to be there. As a team, we are ready to work and to encourage the young ones also, we need to work together. We have to get the job done because this is our opportunity and we can’t miss it.”

Interestingly, Super Eagles captain, William Troost-Ekong has spoken highly of the team’s mentality and awareness ahead of the Rwanda and South Africa showdown.

He acknowledged the importance of the remaining four games, beginning with today’s date against Rwanda.

“The boys are very focused. We are looking forward to the game on Saturday, (today)” Troost-Ekong told NFF TV.

“Now it’s going to be an important set of games for us beginning from Saturday. We know the gravity of these games and we will focus on preparation.

“The boys are very focused. We are looking forward to the game on Saturday,” he said.

“Now it’s going to be an important set of games for us beginning from Saturday. We know the gravity of these games and we will focus on preparation.”

Indeed, Wilfred Ndidi demanded that the players should focus on the clash against Rwanda before turning their attention to the heavyweight encounter against South Africa.

He said: “We are not looking at the game against South Africa yet, because the game against Rwanda is the most important one in our hands right now, and we can’t let

it slip.

“If we let it slip, it’s finished. If we let the Rwanda game slip, there’s nothing like rivalry in South Africa. We have to win the game against Rwanda first, then we focus on the game against South Africa.”

Similarly, Fulham midfielder, Alex Iwobi said the players are excited, and looking forward to securing a vital victory for Nigeria against Rwanda.

He said: “The mood is good in camp. Everyone is feeling good and optimistic. We are all looking forward to the game.

“We are excited to play our first game against Rwanda. Hopefully we can prepare well and get the result we want.

“After that, we can think about the game against South Africa which is also very important.”

In the same vein, Lazio star, Fisayo Dele-Bashiru, has revealed that the team will not give up on their World Cup dreams following their poor start to the qualifiers.

He said: “I think all the players, the coaching staff and all the fans, we all have the same expectations for these upcoming games, which is to win the games (against Rwanda, and South Africa).” “We are in a difficult situation now. Nine points off the top. But I think everyone knows what we need to do and that’s what we are going to work towards.

“The squad is complete, I think, then the work really starts. And I’m confident we’ll get the job done.”

Super Eagles Roll Call

Goalkeepers

Stanley Nwabali
Amas Obasogie
Adeleye Adebayo

Defenders

William Ekong
Calvin Bassey
Ola Aina
Bright Osayi-Samuel
Bruno Onyemaechi
Chidozie Awaziem
Felix Agu
Benjamin Fredericks

Midfielders

Alex Iwobi
Frank Onyeka
Wilfred Ndidi
Fisayo Dele-Bashiru
Raphael Onyedika
Christantus Uche

Forwards

Victor Osimhen
Ademola Lookman
Samuel Chukwueze
Simon Moses
Cyriel Dessers
Tolu Arokodare

GLOBAL SOCCER



Anisimova Sets up Sabalenka US Open final

South Africa Crush Lesotho to Leave Nigeria Nine Points Adrift

• Benin move to second place with win over Zimbabwe

South Africa tightened their grip on Group C of the 2026 FIFA World Cup qualifiers with a commanding 3-0 victory over Lesotho in Bloemfontein yesterday, leaving Nigeria's Super Eagles with no margin for error.

Played at Free State Stadium, technically a Lesotho 'home' game but on South African soil due to stadium restrictions, Hugo Broos's side made short work of their neighbours to move nine points clear of Nigeria.

Mohau Nkota opened the scoring after 15 minutes, the 20-year-old forward expertly slotting home from an Aubrey Modiba cross.

Burnley striker Lyle Foster doubled the advantage just past the hour mark before Oswin Appollis of Orlando Pirates added a third within four minutes, killing off the contest.

The result means Bafana Bafana now extend their advantage at the top of Group C with 16 points from six matches.

Benin Republic rose to second in Group C with 11 points after claiming a crucial 3-0 win over Zimbabwe also yesterday.

Rwanda, ahead of their game against the Super Eagles, slip to third place with eight points. Nigeria, who only picked up their first win in qualifying against Rwanda in Kigali in March, are stranded in fourth with seven. Lesotho remain on five, and Zimbabwe are bottom with four.

It is now win or burst for the Super Eagles. Eric Chelle's men face Rwanda in Uyo on Saturday knowing that defeat would effectively end their hopes of reaching the World Cup.

With South Africa showing no signs of faltering, the Super Eagles must take maximum points against Rwanda before facing Bafana Bafana themselves in a decisive clash on Tuesday. Anything less than victory for the Super Eagles will likely see Africa's most populous nation miss out on football's biggest stage in 2026.

...Gabonese Officials to Officiate Bafana Bafana, Super Eagles Encounter

World football-governing body, FIFA has appointed Gabonese official Pierre Ghislain Atcho as referee for next Tuesday's 2026 FIFA World Cup qualifying match between Nigeria and South Africa in Bloemfontein. It is a Matchday 8 encounter in the African qualification series, and will hold at the Toyota Stadium.

Atcho's compatriots Boris Marlaise Ditsoga, Amos Abeigne Ndong and Cregue Fleury Moutkagni will serve as assistant referee 1, assistant referee 2 and fourth official respectively.

Olivier Safari Kabene from the Democratic Republic of Congo will serve as the referee assessor while Ugandan Mike Letti will be in the role of commissioner.

Team Lagos Coasts to Victory As Curtains Fall on National Youth Games

Omon-Julius Onabu in Asaba

With the stage is set for the closing ceremony of the 9th National Youth Games (NYG), today, at the Stephen Keshi International Stadium, Asaba, Delta State, Team Lagos has continued its hold on the first position on the competition's medals table.

The 9th NYG will climax, as part of the today's closing ceremony, with the finals of the 4x100 metres (male and female) relay as well as the 4x400 metres medley (male and female).

President Bola Ahmed Tinubu, represented by the Chairman of the National Sports Commission (NSC), Mallam Shehu Dikko, the Executive Governor of Delta State, Elder Sheriff Oborevwori, the Director-General of the NSC and Chairman of the Main Organizing Committee, Mr

Anisimova Sets up Sabalenka Final after Fight Back Against Osaka

Amanda Anisimova fought back from a set down to beat the resurgent Naomi Osaka and set up an enticing US Open final against defending champion Aryna Sabalenka.

In a topsy-turvy battle, Anisimova took charge of the deciding set win 6-7 (4-7) 7-6 (7-3) 6-3 and reach back-to-back Grand Slam finals.

The American eighth seed fell to a humbling 6-0 6-0 defeat by Iga Swiatek in her first major final at Wimbledon in July. But 54 days on, she ensured another shot at

US OPEN

Grand Slam glory after following up her quarter-final revenge victory over Swiatek with a gritty win against two-time US Open winner Osaka.

Eighth seed Anisimova fell to her knees in celebration after a three-hour tussle that ended at just before 01:00 local time.

Her reward is a meeting in today's showpiece against world number one Sabalenka, who earlier claimed a steely 4-6 6-3 6-4 comeback win over Jessica Pegula. "It means the world. I'm trying to process that right now - it's a dream come true," Anisimova said.

"The hope is to be the champion but I'm in the final now and I'm excited."

Eight weeks ago, Anisimova gained the unwanted title of becoming the first woman to lose a Wimbledon final 6-0 6-0 in 114 years.

...Trump to Attend Flushing Meadows Final First Time Since 2015

President Donald Trump will attend the US Open men's singles final on Sunday in what will be his first visit to the Grand Slam tennis event since 2015.

Trump, who was re-elected in 2024 for a second term in office, has not been to the New York City tournaments since he first came to power in 2016.

He had previously visited Flushing Meadows on several occasions before being joined by wife Melania on his last visit a decade ago.

A White House official confirmed to the BBC that the president was expected to attend.

In 2015, Trump was greeted by American six-time major champion John McEnroe as he watched from a hospitality area.

Trump, 79, was born in the Queens borough of New York City where the Grand Slam tournament is held.

No American player will compete in the men's final on Sunday.



Oshoala presented with the Glo-CAF African Footballer of the Year award in 2016

Globacom @ 22: A Legacy of Sports Sponsorship

For 22 years, Globacom has cemented its reputation as a leading supporter of sports in Nigeria and across Africa. The telecommunications giant has deployed significant resources to build a deep connection with communities through the universal language of sports. Its extensive portfolio of sponsorships has not only elevated the profile of Nigerian sportsmen and women, but has also driven significant brand affinity.

It all started in 2003, with a clear focus on football—the passion of Nigerians. Globacom sponsored teams continuously and it became an integral part of the game's fabric. The first major step was a partnership with the Nigeria Football Federation (NFF). What began as a N150 million deal quickly grew into a massive, multi-billion-naira commitment that supported every Nigerian national team, from the legendary Super Eagles to the rising stars of the youth and women's leagues. This partnership provided the fuel that powered the Super Eagles to their historic 2013 African Cup of Nations triumph.

The company put its weight behind the domestic league, sponsoring the Nigerian Premier League which became Glo Premier League and elevating its profile for years. It also extended its support to the Nigeria Football Supporters' sponsoring to continue to cheer the national teams to victory in their respective engagements.

Globacom also took its winning formula to Ghana where the company's operation started in 2012. The company became the official sponsor of the Ghana Premier League and the national team, the Black Stars.

On a broader scale, the company's most prominent continental endeavor, however, was its 11-year sponsorship of the Glo-CAF Awards. From 2005, Globacom transformed the annual ceremony which celebrated African football's best into a prestigious, globally recognised event.

And then came the partnership with English Football Club, Manchester United. This was a game-changer. The company leveraged on the club's achievements and successes in order to develop the round leather game in Nigeria. Globacom also sponsored its subscribers and Nigerian football fans on all-expense-paid trips to Old Trafford, making lifelong memories a reality.

Next was the Glo Soccer Academy, a West African soccer TV Reality show that was organised by Globacom in 2012 to discover and train talented young footballers in West Africa. The academy provided a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for the talented footballers to kick-start their career in professional football.

The 15 finalists were rewarded with a training trip to Manchester United Schools in Carrington, U.K where they had a chance to be coached by Manchester United staff. The 15 finalists received G-BAMS scholarships, in addition to being rewarded with a training trip to Manchester United Training School in Carrington, U.K and Dubai Football Academy.

Globacom also secured the sponsorship of the broadcast rights of English Premier League live matches on DSTV starting from the 2013/2014 season. The package of the sponsorship which lasted for many football seasons included EPL live matches, EPL match reviews, EPL Preview, Premier League World and studio branding. The matches ran from August to May every season, thus giving fans the opportunity to follow their club matches all through the season.

The telco also brought the 2018 World Cup to millions of Africans by co-sponsoring the live broadcast of all the 64 matches of 2018 World Cup matches on DSTV. This gesture also afforded millions of Africans the opportunity to view matches involving five African representatives at the Mundial.

Furthermore, to give its subscribers a lifetime experience, the brand ran a usage-based promotion called 'Go Russia' to send successful subscribers to Russia during the 2018 FIFA World Cup period. The 22 lucky subscribers enjoyed an all-expense-paid trip to that country where they had an opportunity to watch live matches, meet world class footballers, and also enjoy and assimilate the culture and cuisine of Russia.

Globacom's influence is not limited to football. In 2009 and 2010, the company sponsored the Lagos International Half Marathon, transforming it into a major global event that attracted elite runners from around the world and popularised long-distance running in Nigeria.

Glo's sports development programme was also extended to golf with the sponsorship of the Glo Golf Tour West Africa. With total prize money of over N100m, the Glo Golf Tour offered the biggest pro-am purse for golf in Africa.

In 22 years, Globacom has impacted positively on Nigerian sports. The company has not only promoted the games; it has invested in people, in dreams, and in a shared sense of national pride. Globacom's legacy is a testament to the power of corporate support in transforming the sporting landscape.

Team Lagos Beats Hosts, Delta to Clinch NYG Female Football Gold

• Dominates boxing, win volleyball event

Team Lagos clinched gold medals at the female football event at the ongoing 9th National Youth Games in Asaba, defeating host state, Delta, in a thrilling final.

The game was played at the football pitch of St. Patrick's College saw Lagos defeat Team Delta 5-4 on penalties after regulation time ended 1-1.

After the first half ended with no goal for either side, Team Delta scored first in the second half. The hosts looked set to avenge their earlier defeat in the group phase against Team Lagos, but the Eko girls found the equalizer deep into the added time.

Team Delta missed their first kick during the penalty shootout and that proved significant in the end as Team Lagos converted their penalties as the state delegates led by the Director General, Lekan Fatodu celebrated a major victory.

It was the fifth title for the Lagos female football at the National Youth Games, while the boys team secured Bronze medal after beating Team Bayelsa 2-0 in third place match.

Team Lagos increased their gold medal haul on Thursday, claiming important victories in both finals of the volleyball event and boxing.

The volleyball teams recorded identical 3-1 scores. The male team rallied from losing the first set to win Boys final Boys final 21-25, 26-24, 25-13, 29- 27 against Team Bayelsa while the female side won 25-13, 21-25, 25-7, 25-9 against Team Kaduna.

Another dominant performance in boxing culminated in three gold medals and one silver medal. Balogun Khadijat won gold in the 38kg female category, Ramon Quam gold in the 40kg male category, Agboola Oyindamola won gold in the female category and Idowu Adebayo won Silver in the 40kg Female category.

BACK PAGE LEAD PHOTOGRAPH



CIPM HR LEADERSHIP ACADEMY LAUNCH...
L-R: Registrar/Chief Executive Officer, Chartered Institute of Personnel Management (CIPM), Ms. Oluwatoyin Naiwo; Past President and keynote speaker, Dr. Abiola Popoola; National Treasurer, Mrs. Ogochukwu Egbuonu; President and Chairman of the Governing Council, Mallam Ladan Ahmed Gobir; Vice President, Mrs. Chidinma Justina Obiejesi; Past President and Chairman of the Occasion, Mr. Victor Eburajolo, and Immediate Past President, Mr. Olusegun Mojeed, at the launch of the CIPM HR Leadership Academy held in Lagos...recently

OBINNACHIMA

READING THE TEA LEAVES

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Focus on Nigeria's Non-oil Revenue Potential

The Presidency declared during the week that the nation is witnessing a historic shift in its public finances, with non-oil revenues driving the country's strongest fiscal performance in decades.

Presidential spokesperson, Bayo Onanuga, who revealed the refreshing departure from the old cycle, stated that between January and August 2025, total government collections peaked at N20.59 trillion, a 40.5 per cent increase compared with the N14.6 trillion recorded in the same period in 2024.

According to Onanuga, N15.69 trillion came from non-oil sources, accounting for three out of every four naira collected, describing the figures as a decisive break from decades of dependence on crude oil exports.

"This is a watershed moment for our economy. For the first time in decades, oil is no longer the dominant driver of government revenue. Reforms, compliance, and digitisation are powering a more resilient economy," Onanuga was quoted to have said.

In chest-thumping fashion, President Bola Tinubu said the cheering data are proof that the government's reforms to expand the revenue base and strengthen compliance are working.

"We have laid the foundations for a fairer, stronger fiscal system that will deliver for all Nigerians. Our revenues are growing because we are making every naira count, and because Nigerians are responding to reforms that are in the interest of the country," the president declared.

The surge in non-oil inflows was as a result of a combination of reforms. These included the Nigeria Customs Service's automation, digitised tax filings, tighter enforcement, and broadened compliance. For instance, the Nigeria Customs Service collected N3.68 trillion in the first half of the year, surpassing its target by N390 billion and already meeting 56 per cent of its full-year goal. Similarly, the Federal Inland Revenue Service has expanded digitised tax administration, bringing more businesses and individuals into the net. No doubt, inflation and exchange rate revaluation also contributed to the increase in non-oil revenue.

Indeed, for decades, Nigeria's public finances have been shackled to the unpredictable



Tinubu

swings of the international oil market. As an oil-rich country, Nigeria depends on crude oil as a major source of foreign exchange and revenue to the government. Crude oil revenue has constituted about 80 percent of foreign exchange earnings in the last four decades. And given the oligopolistic nature of the crude oil market, Nigeria has little control over both the price and output, thus becoming highly vulnerable to external shocks. With a greater chunk of foreign exchange earnings coming from crude oil export, changes in crude oil prices affect the country's external reserve and the value of the naira exchange rate.

This structural dependence creates both vulnerability and complacency as successive governments relied on oil rents to finance budgets, fund infrastructure, and sustain subsidies, while neglecting the harder but more resilient path of diversifying revenue sources. Lack of diversification and poor management of resources result in severe financial strains on the public sector whenever oil prices decline. The over-reliance on resource windfalls often leads to budgetary imbalances, fiscal mismanagement and fiscal indiscipline.

That is why the latest non-oil revenue data clearly reflects a profound structural shift in Nigeria's economy and its governance capacity. If the path is sustained, it can provide the

fiscal stability required to build infrastructure, fund social investment programmes, and reduce borrowing pressures that have over the years being a source of concern to citizens.

Nigeria has long proclaimed the need to diversify away from oil. Over the years, there have been different economic programmes focused on diversifying the economy from its heavy reliance on crude oil revenue. From Vision 2020, the National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy, The Yar'Adua Administration's Seven Point Agenda, the Economic Recovery and Growth Plan, Transformation Agenda, Nigeria Agenda 2050 (NA 2050), among several reform blueprints, highlighted the potential in non-oil revenue and the need to diversify the economy. However, execution often lagged, and oil's allure remained irresistible.

Therefore, to sustain this momentum, the federal government must shun the temptation to impose heavier burdens on compliant taxpayers, but instead broaden the tax net by capturing more of the informal economy.

Also, the government must take steps to ensure the simplification of tax regimes by pushing for mobile-based compliance tools and incentives for small businesses to formalise to ensure inclusivity.

Additionally, reforms in revenue agencies must be institutionalised with legal safeguards and autonomy to prevent reversals under future administrations. It is equally vital that the government invests these revenues wisely to guarantee trust and enhance compliance. Nigerians will support taxation when they see tangible improvements in roads, schools, hospitals, and power supply. Linking revenue growth directly to visible projects strengthens the social contract and encourages compliance.

Today, the heavy reliance on indirect taxes like VAT and customs duties means the system remains vulnerable, and the federal government must take steps to improve direct taxation from wealthy individuals and corporations who continue to underpay.

Sustaining the focus on non-oil revenues also involves going beyond taxation. Export diversification is crucial, as steps must be taken to ensure that manufacturing, services, and agriculture contribute significantly to foreign earnings. Trade in agricultural goods between Nigeria and the rest of the world is still relatively small. Today, the Nigerian agricultural sector is replete with diverse opportunities. Being able to effectively harness these opportunities will drive agricultural development and expand agricultural export. For instance, analysis by the Nigerian Export Promotion Council (NEPC) showed that the total amount of estimated untapped potential by 2021 for Nigerian exports of cocoa beans to the ten best markets (Germany, Malaysia, Singapore, Turkey, Netherlands, Italy, Japan, France, Mexico and Indonesia) is around \$425 million, according to a PWC report.

In the same vein, the estimated worth of cocoa butter for the top ten markets was put at \$81.9 million, while the value of untapped potential in the market for cocoa paste by 2021 stood at \$6.3 million. The untapped market potential for sesame seeds to the top ten markets (China, Japan, South Korea, Mexico, Poland, France, Lebanon, the United States, Canada and the UK) was estimated at US\$170 million. The Nigerian agricultural sector is replete with diverse opportunities. Being able to effectively harness these opportunities will drive agricultural development, expand agricultural export, and boost non-oil revenue.

At the subnational level, state governments should take responsibility for mobilising revenues from property taxes, agricultural levies, and service charges rather than depending entirely on federal allocations.

Reforming the country's outdated Land Use Act could unlock vast opportunities in real estate taxation and capital formation. At the same time, the government must build trust by ensuring that enforcement is impartial and not unduly targeted at small businesses while large corporations and politically connected elites avoid payments.

The non-oil sector has huge potential for foreign exchange earnings and can bring about huge employment generation and poverty reduction through the extensive backward linkages it offers.

To sustain the momentum, discipline, innovation, and inclusion are required, as this could mark the beginning of Nigeria's long-awaited economic rebirth and create a future where oil no longer dictates the country's destiny, but just one of many contributors to a truly diversified, resilient, and inclusive economy.