Tinubu constitutes the boards of NADF, Bank of Agriculture and UBEC

Nigerian-born ex-UN envoy faults Senate on death penalty for kidnappers

Reps summon Usman Danfodio varsity VC over alleged poor 2023 budget performance

WWW.justliberationnews.com

Just Liberation Newspaper

...News, Entertainment, Investigative

December 6, 2025 / Vol. 3 No. 108 www.justliberationnews.com @justlibnews Justliberationnews @justliberationnews Justliberationnews ₦200

FROM THE ARCHIVE

Do the right thing even if nobody is watching which is called INTEGRITY

Osun PDP, ALGON celebrate S'Court verdict, say ruling restores constitutional order

Tinubu's paralysing fear breeds more insecurity



RIVERS OF DRAMA: I'm still in PDP, Wike says after 17 loyal Assembly members join APC

Tinubu's paralysing fear breeds more insecurity

BY IKEDDY ISIGUZO



WHAT is President Bola Ahmed Tinubu so afraid of that the renowned strategist quakes in his shoes when he wants to discuss insecurity? Why the incoherence with the glaringly tall evidence that the insecurity Nigeria faces cannot by addressed with mere words?

Some say that "offending the North" scares Tinubu. He would do anything to keep the North happy, or better still ensure that nothing suggests that he would attack the terrorists, though government confirms that it knows the locations of the terrorists who are making life more challenging for Nigerians.

Is the North happy that terrorists attack communities, kill as many as they want, abduct children and adults, destroy farms, burn houses, and leave with warnings that they would return? And surely, they return to repeat the process again.

Others claim that Tinubu places religion over Nigeria. As the Commander-in-Chief, would not allow Nigeria's military to fight the terrorists who are said to be mainly of the same religion as the President.

There is more.

Elections are too close for Tinubu to take firm decisions on anything that can harm his chances at the polls. He needs votes from the North to be re-elected.

Nothing is more important to Tinubu than being re-elected. Nothing. It sounds ridiculous to those who dwell on the unimportance of power.

The obtuse retorts to suggestions about the war on terror create some impressions:

. The President is pained about the situation

. The President knows what to do to the exclusion of other ideas

. The President has the best idea

. The President has made sacrifices over the issue, the most significant of which was not making a foreign trip.

What results have the President's pain produced? The over 200 school pupils kidnapped in Papiri in Niger State and their teachers are still in captivity. After a full week of blame shifting, government provided a response to the country on the Papiri abductions.

National Security Adviser Nuhu Ribadu took this presidential message to families, guardians, and a concerned world, "The children are where they are and will come back safely. I give you the assurance". It was at the occasion that Ribadu spoke about a cancelled trip as one of the biggest sacrifices the President had made since the abductions.

The Papiri pupils are still in captivity. All we have to hold to is Ribadu's promise. There is no urgency, no consideration. The children would be back safely, as if living with terrorists was a school excursion.

Nobody who knows that Ribadu is a chief promoter of the non-kinetic approach to countering terrorism would be surprised about at his calmness.

Ribadu wants negotiations with the terrorists, amnesty for the terrorists, programmes to address poverty in the conflict areas, and peace meetings with the attackers.

These positions foreclose going after the terrorists who have kept attacking communities and enforcing their own rules in those spaces.

More troops, more equipment, and more funding would all be wasted if the final decision is to be non-kinetic. Why should we buy guns that will not be used? What is the use of more recruitments into the various security agencies if they will not fight?

The terrorists know we are not inclined to fight. It is to their advantage to keep attending those empty negotiation meetings.

Assistance from abroad will be kinetic. It will include combats, real attacks on the terrorists, wherever they are.

Tinubu is afraid of assistance that he cannot control or at least manage. He dreads the complications could impact on his administration in ways that could affect his second term.

Measured words are used to discuss terrorism, the efforts of our troops are drowned in the non-kinetic dilemma, and Tinubu, as Commander-in-Chief, is not talking tough and giving orders that will make terrorism a dangerous business in Nigeria. If terrorists know that they can be rewarded with ransom, be allowed to celebrate their killings and successful raids of our communities, why should they stop?

Tinubu is crippled by fears of what he, personally, not Nigeria, could lose by confronting the terrorists. Is his commitment to Nigerians or terrorists?

We are treating terrorism like a joke, huge joke. Tinubu promises us a list of terrorism financiers. Why do Nigerians need the list? Why not go after them? We will see the results. Or are we also negotiating with the financiers?

Our military and other security agencies need the boldness from the President's pronouncements to motivate their actions at their different war theatres.

Tinubu's indecisive positive affects everyone. "Trumps is on our neck," Senate President Obong Godswill Akpabio, the other day told his colleagues in one of his off-handed statements in the Senate.

Imagine that the impression up there is that there is nothing wrong with terrorists killing our people, appropriating our territory, crippling Nigeria, spreading fear all over the land.

According to Akpabio, Trump is the problem. Akpabio does not seem to be speaking for himself alone. He is representative of the attitude of most members of his class. Trump asking them to stop the killings is a problem.

Without Trump, the parties will continue, thousands could die, there would still be millions to ensure the killings do not scratch the population of Nigeria and annual budgets for everything would be passed.

Tinubu should die to his paralysing fears and deal with the terrorists, no matter who they are, and what they believe - they are just enabled criminals.

Hundreds of defenceless children are sleeping in the forests. They are not safe until they are returned to their parents and guardians.

Nigeria needs to be safe again. Security is not everyone's responsibility, the way it is stated these days as reasons for the massive failures that have put Nigerians in under-estimated peril.

The buck stops at the President's table, in this instance, Tinubu or has anything changed?

Finally...

MRS Remi Tinubu, the President's wife, held a dinner for Senators on 28 November 2025 when the country was in mourning. The self-promoted "Mother of the Nation" was feasting when hundreds of abducted children were in the forest spending their young lives with terrorists. What a mother!

SENATE President Obong Godswill Akpabio was a major enabler of Remi Tinubu's dinner. The glee over him as he announced to his colleagues "our mother" has invited us to dinner, was another reminder of the frivolities he promotes at the Senate when he is not disrupting proceeding by consistently coming late to sittings and hurriedly taking over from the Deputy Senate President Barau Jibrin who plays the "first half" of the proceedings.

Akpabio has a knack for announcing dinners. On June 14, 2023, Akpabio had told his colleagues: "There will be a dinner for the Senate President and Deputy Senate President at 7:30 pm today. It's hosted by Senator Dantuse Mohammed, it's his initiative. Times are tough, so wherever you see free food, please avail yourself!"

PEOPLE are shocked that President Tinubu nominated Senator Adamu Garba Talba of Yobe State, who died in July at 73, as an ambassador. A perspective to this is that Tinubu's supporters could mark this nomination as "Another Promise Kept". Muhammadu Buhari who preceded Tinubu was famous for nominating the dead for appointments. Senator Talba's nomination aligns with Tinubu promise to continue with Buhari's ways.

A TRENDING video of the jest Nigerians are making of the US' planned intervention in terrorist attacks has threatened that voracious mosquitoes will make the mission impossible.

TERRORISM in North-East, North-West, and North Central has left no room to pay attention to the consistent attacks on buses from South-East, South-West, and parts of North-Central that pass Kogi State, to Abuja. Hardly a day passes without reports of these attacks. The security agencies have not found answers to the attacks.

ISIGUZO is a major commentator on minor issues

It's Your World

Get Informed, Get Inspired & Get Going!

With Just News Communication Company Limited (JNCCL) Services



JNCC Annual Lecture & Merit - Awards
2024 OCTOBER MAIDEN EDITION

JLN JUST LIBERATION News
SPEAK ON THE ISSUES

EVENTS PROJECT

FIA-SAC SPORTS ACADEMY CENTRE
UROMI-EDO STATE, NIGERIA - WEST AFRICA

JUST-GPD
JUST GREAT PEOPLE OF DESTINY MAGAZINE
Entertainment & Celebration



PHOTOGRAPHIC PRODUCTIONS



JLN JUST LIBERATION LIVE COVERAGE OF EVENTS

JLN ON LINE LIVE STREAMING

JLN JUST LIBERATION RADIO STATION

Amb Fanny Ikhayere Amun MON
Founder

JLN JUST LIBERATION TELEVISION STATION

JUST LIBERATION NEWS PAPER, TV, RADIO stations (ABUJA & LAGOS)
No. 17 Dipo Abe street off Grammer school Ojodu Berger Lagos- NIGERIA.
Email- fannyamunfannyamun@ gmail.com
phone numbers - +234(0)8033461662 & 09055222998.
AFFORDABLE DIGITAL PRINTING PRESS AT A PROJECT PRICE.

www.justliberationnews.com @justlibnews Justliberationnews @justliberationnews Justliberationnews

RIVERS OF DRAMA: I'm still in PDP – Wike says after 17 loyal Assembly members join APC

ORIAKU IJELE (WITH AGENCY REPORTS)

A mild drama was added to the political ecosystem of Rivers State, when in a new twist, some lawmakers of the House of Assembly, loyal to FCT Minister, Nyesom Wike, resigned their membership of the Peoples Democratic Party, fueling speculations that the minister, who was expelled by the party, was finally ready to leave, but that was far from reality. Mr Nyesom Wike, in a dramatic move, however said he was still a member of the People Democratic Party (PDP).

Reacting, Wike told journalists, shortly after he inspected some ongoing road projects in Abuja, that although the lawmakers did not consult him, they acted within their rights.

He, however, said that not all the lawmakers defected to the APC.

"I am still in the PDP and it is not everybody that has left.

"I believe 16 or 17 of them have left out of 27. We still have quite a good number; about 10, and we will continue to work together.

"They never told me, but they have a right to do so.

"For me, those who left were free to do so, and for those who remained in the party, we will continue to work together," he said.

Describing the development as "very unfortunate", the minister noted that everybody has the right to make a choice.

He blamed the development on the current factionalised state of the party, adding that the party's Constitution allows members to leave if the party becomes factionalised.

He recalled advising the PDP leadership to put the party together, stressing that "at the end of the day, if nothing is done, it's the party that is losing".

The minister said that efforts were ongoing to see how the remaining members of the party would work together and be a relevant opposition.

Meanwhile, the Speaker of the Rivers State House of Assembly, Martin Amaewhule, and other defectors hinged their decision to dump the Peoples Democratic Party on the crisis in the PDP.

Others who dumped the PDP were the Deputy Speaker, Dumle Maol (Gokana), Major Jack (Akuku-Toru), Linda Stewart (Okrika), Franklin Nwabochi (Ogba/Egbema/Ndoni), Azeru Opara (Port Harcourt 3), Smart Adoki (Port Harcourt 2), Enemi George (Asari-Toru 2), and Solomon Wami (Port Harcourt 1).

Also included were Igwe Aforji (Eleme), Tekena Wellington (Asari-Toru 1), Looloo Opuende (Akuku-Toru 2), Peter Abbey (Degema), Arnold Dennis (Ogu/Bolo), Chimezie Nwankwo (Etche), Gerald Oforji (Oyigbo) and Ofiks Kabang (Andoni).

The 10 remaining members of the PDP in the House appointed Sylvanus Nwankwo of Omuma constituency as Minority Leader.

Amaewhule, who represents Obio-Akpor I constituency, hinged his decision to dump the PDP on the "division in the PDP".

"Distinguished colleagues, let me happily announce to honourable members that your Speaker, Rt Hon Martin Chike Amaewhule, has decided and has indeed written to my Ward Chairman, Mr Osondo Orlu, of my decision to leave the Peoples Democratic Party," he said.

"APC is my new party. I will do all that is needed to be done towards ensuring that the party card of the All Progressives Congress is issued to me in no time. I am happy to be a member of the APC so that we can join forces with Mr President. He is doing so much for this country.

"President Bola Ahmed Tinubu means well for Nigeria. He is tackling issues of security headlong. The President has shown love to Rivers State; he is helping Rivers people to be part of the governance of this country. I am so delighted to be part of the APC so we can support the President right inside the All Progressives Congress," the Speaker added.

Nigerian-born ex-UN envoy faults Senate on death penalty for kidnappers

BY ORIAKU IJELE

Professor Uchenna Emelonye, a renowned human rights scholar at Bournemouth University UK and former United Nations Senior Human Rights Envoy, has strongly criticized the Nigerian Senate's move to amend the Anti-Terrorism (Prevention) Act to impose the death penalty for kidnapping and related offences, warning that the proposal contradicts Nigeria's international human rights commitments and undermines global normative standards.

Prof. Emelonye noted that the proposal runs counter to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) ratified by Federal Republic of Nigeria in 1993 and the Second Optional Protocol to the ICCPR, the world's primary instrument advocating for the abolition of capital punishment. Although Nigeria has not ratified the Optional Protocol, it remains bound by the ICCPR's restrictive standards on the use of the death penalty.

"Expanding the death penalty is a regressive, ineffective, and legally questionable response to kidnapping," Prof. Emelonye stated. "This amendment places Nigeria in direct conflict with international human rights jurisprudence and threatens to reverse decades of global progress toward ending capital punishment."

Arguing that death penalty does not deter crime, Prof. Emelonye emphasized that there is no credible evidence that capital punishment deters kidnapping or violent crime. "Nigeria cannot hope to deter crime through executions. What is needed is investment in policing, intelligence, and justice-sector reforms—not a return to punitive excesses.

"There is plethora of evidence to show that the "error rates" in Nigeria's criminal justice system is very high. So, while the country continues to struggle with torture-based confessions, inadequate investigations, and limited legal representation, expanding capital punishment in such a context increases the danger of wrongful executions and the risk of irrevocable miscarriages of justice, in violation of the ICCPR's due-process guarantees.

"The Senate proposal to reintroduce death penalty into our body of laws would set Nigeria's trajectory backwards and place it among the retentionist jurisdictions where capital punishment remains entrenched, rather than aligning with the growing global abolitionist consensus on human rights-based justice systems.

"African countries that have abolished the death penalty, including Sierra Leone, Rwanda, Burundi, Zambia, and the Central African Republic are not experiencing higher levels of kidnapping, demonstrating that abolition does not fuel violent crime and that capital punishment offers no meaningful deterrent effect."

Emelonye urged members of the Nigerian National Assembly to reconsider the proposed amendment and instead pursue rights-centric, effective, and evidence-based strategies to address kidnapping—such as enhanced community policing, targeted socio-economic interventions, strengthened criminal-justice institutions, and decisive action to curb the proliferation of small arms and ammunition that continues to fuel insecurity across the country.



Scene as some dignitaries participated in declaring open the "Nigeria Police Women @ 70" celebrations, an event honouring seven decades of exceptional courage, service, resilience, and leadership by women in the Force.

Osun PDP, ALGON celebrate S'Court verdict, say ruling restores constitutional order

BY MIKE DIKE, OSOGBO

The political tension surrounding local government administration in Osun State heightened on Thursday as the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) and the Awotunde-led faction of the Association of Local Governments of Nigeria (ALGON) celebrated the Supreme Court's split judgment on the controversy over withheld local government allocations.

Both groups hailed the decision as a landmark ruling that reaffirms constitutional order and exposes alleged illegal actions linked to the Attorney-General of the Federation (AGF), Lateef Fagbemi, SAN.

PDP: 'AGF Fagbemi has been exposed'

In a statement signed by its State Chairman, Hon. Sunday Bisi, the Osun PDP described the judgement as a "major indictment" of the AGF, claiming it had "lifted the veil over unconstitutional directives" issued to the Central Bank of Nigeria and the Federal Ministry of Finance.

The party alleged that the AGF instructed financial institutions to pay funds to persons it described as "illegal entities," despite subsisting court rulings affirming the February 22, 2025 local government elections conducted by the Osun State Independent Electoral Commission (OSIEC).

According to the PDP, the AGF encouraged sacked chairmen to open bank accounts contrary to court orders, a move the party said amounted to an attempt to "rewrite the Nigerian Constitution." It argued that the Supreme Court verdict rendered the bank accounts opened in United Bank for Africa (UBA) by the affected individuals "inoperable and criminal."

Hon. Bisi said the judgement had "exposed the illegalities and partisan arrogance" surrounding the AGF's actions, adding that it restores clarity to Osun's local government structure.

He urged stakeholders to respect the Supreme Court's ruling and warned security agencies against providing illegal protection to individuals removed by court orders, describing such actions as an invitation to unrest.

The party also commended the Awotunde-led ALGON for its "patience and patriotism," and thanked residents for their support throughout what it termed a "dark period imposed by rejected APC forces."

Meanwhile, the Sarafadeen Abiodun Awotunde (Spain)-led faction of ALGON expressed "profound appreciation" to the Supreme Court for what it called a landmark judgement affirming the rightful status of democratically elected local government chairmen in Osun State.

In a statement personally signed by Awotunde, ALGON described the verdict as "a victory for constitutional order, local government autonomy, and the will of the Osun people expressed on February 22, 2025."

The association noted that the Supreme Court made it clear that only elected chairmen—inaugurated after the nullification of the Oyetola-era process—possess the legal standing to file any action regarding local government allocations. The apex court also reaffirmed that local governments, not state governments, are the proper parties in matters concerning their constitutionally protected funds.

ALGON commended the Court for reinforcing earlier orders barring banks from releasing local government funds to unauthorized persons. Awotunde said the ruling "removed every doubt" and strengthened the foundation of true local government autonomy.

"Let everyone know that the main points of the judgment are sacrosanct; all parties involved in the legal battle should return to the Federal High Court, and the Yes/No chairmen have no tenure left," Awotunde added.

The ALGON chairman also confirmed that Governor Ademola Adeleke personally congratulated the association after the judgement, describing the ruling as a "big plus for grassroots democracy."


THE SUPREME COURT OF NIGERIA
History, Establishment, Jurists & Speeches
THE SUPREME COURT OF NIGERIA
History, Establishment, Jurists & Speeches

Tinubu constitutes the boards of NADF, Bank of Agriculture and UBEC

President Bola Ahmed Tinubu has announced the constitution of the boards of the National Agricultural Development Fund (NADF), the Bank of Agriculture (BOA), and the Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC).

Senator Umaru Tanko Al-Makura, appointed in July, continues to serve as chair of the UBEC Board. Uchendu Ikechi Mbaegbulem has been appointed to represent the South East, while Gift Ngo represents the South South.

Mrs Ibiwunmi Akinnola will represent the South West on the board, Dr Meiro Mandara the North East, Dr Abdu Imam Saulawa the North West, and Professor Paul Ibukun-Olu Bolorunduro the North Central. The chairman and members of the board shall hold office for a term of four years in the first instance.

President Tinubu confirmed the appointments of Muhammad Babangida as chairman and Ayo Sotinrin as managing director of the Bank of Agriculture (BOA), as previously announced.

The President also appointed three executive directors and five non-executive directors to the bank, representing Nigeria's six geo-political zones.

The executive directors are Fatima Garba, from Sokoto, as executive director, Corporate Services; Ka'amuna Ibrahim Khadi, from Borno, as executive director, Risk Management and Strategy; and Hakeem Oluwatosin Salami, from Kwara, as executive director, Operations.

The non-executive directors appointed to the bank's board include Aminu Malami Mohammed (North East), Charles Amuchienwa (South East), Oladejo Odunuga (South West), Rabiu Idris Funtua (North West), and Kochi Donald Iorgyer (North Central).

In the same vein, President Tinubu in October 2023 appointed Muhammad Abu Ibrahim as the executive secretary and CEO of the National Agricultural Development Fund (NADF) to lead the young agency, conceived by farmers and agripreneurs, to boost access to affordable capital.

In accordance with the Fund's statute, President Tinubu has now constituted the board members who will be pivotal to the agency's work.

Mallam Bello Maccido, the pioneer chairman of FBNQuest Merchant Bank Limited, is the board chairman. He has over 30 years of experience in the financial services industry. He represents the North West.

Other members include a prominent financial consultant and seasoned banker, Dr Nelson Henry Essien, representing Akwa Ibom and the South-South, and Amina Ahmed Habib, representing Jigawa and the North-West. Amina is a fellow of the Institute of Chartered Accountants.

Another member appointed by President Tinubu is Ondo State-born, Akinyinka Olufela Akinnola, an engineer with diversified business interests. He represents the South West.

Hassan Tanimu Musa Usman from Borno represents the North East on the board. He is the founder of New Frontier Developments Ltd and a former non-executive director of Access Bank.

Lufer Samson Orkar from Benue represents North Central.

Felix Achibiri from Imo represents the South East. He is the Group Director of Genesis Energy Holdings and the chairman and CEO of DFC Holdings Limited.



Oyo State governor, Seyi Makinde (second right); Consul General, Trade Counsellor of Denmark in Nigeria, Ms Jette Bjerrum (right); Eleruwa of Eruwa, Oba Samuel Adegboola (left) and Director General, Oyo State Agribusiness Development Agency, Dr Debo Akande, during a tour of the Oyo State Agribusiness Transformation Centre, Fasola, during the 2025 Oyo State International Agribusiness Summit. (Photo: STEPHEN GBADAMOSI)

FG says over 10,000 gender-based-violence cases recorded in 2025

The Federal Government says no fewer than 10,326 Gender-Based Violence (GBV) cases were reported between January and September 2025, with 2,444 survivors receiving care in recovery centres.

The Minister of Women Affairs and Social Development, Imam Suleiman-Ibrahim, made this known at the National Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue on Technology-Facilitated Gender-Based Violence (TF-GBV).

It was organised by ActionAid and other development partners on Friday in Abuja.

The News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) reports that the dialogue was part of activities to mark the 2025 16 Days of Activism, with the theme: "UNiTE! End All Forms of Digital Violence against Women and Girls".

The minister was represented by Dr Adanna Steinacker, Senior Special Assistant to the President on Women's Health.

She disclosed that 511 survivors were supported with livelihoods and empowerment interventions.

"Though there was a decline in the 2024 National Demographic and Health Survey in sexual violence, physical violence, and intimate partner violence, yet one in three women experienced GBV during the same period.

"However, across the country, violence against women, children and vulnerable groups remains a painful reality.

"Technology-facilitated Gender-Based Violence (TF-GBV) has remained largely unreported due to its complex nature".

The minister added that TF-GBV, which includes sex torture, non-consensual sharing of intimate images, online blackmail, and manipulation of digital platforms, has caused severe trauma and, in some cases, fatalities.

IED explosion kills 4 children in Borno – Police

The Borno Police Command has confirmed that four children were killed and one injured in an Improvised Explosive Device (IED) explosion on Friday in Banki, Bama Local Government Area of the state.

The command's Public Relations Officer, ASP Nahum Daso, said in a statement issued in Maiduguri that the explosion occurred at about 12:40 p.m. behind the Banki Motor Park in Wajari Ward.

He said that at about 1:00 p.m., one Babagana Mohammed of Wajari Ward reported the incident to the police, prompting the Divisional Police Officer in Banki to mobilise personnel and Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) technicians to the scene.

Daso said preliminary investigation indicated that a 12-year-old boy, Mustapha Tijja, sustained serious injuries from the explosion and was rushed to the FHI 360 NGO Clinic in Banki, where he is currently receiving treatment.

He explained that further findings revealed that the injured boy had gone with four of his friends to a makeshift room behind the motor park where the victims were playing with an IED allegedly picked from the bush before it detonated.

The spokesman listed the deceased as Awana Mustapha, 15; Malum Modu, 14; Lawan Ibrahim, 12; and Modu Abacha, 12.

He said normalcy had been restored in the area while investigation was ongoing.

According to him, the Commissioner of Police in Borno, Mr Naziru Abdulmajid, expressed deep condolences to the bereaved families and warned the residents, especially children, against touching strange objects or suspected explosives.

He urged the members of the public to report any suspicious items to the nearest police station, providing emergency contacts: 0806 807 5581 and 0802 347 3293.

NSA hands over rescued victims, pledges safe rescue of Niger school children

The National Security Adviser (NSA), Mallam Nuhu Ribadu, on Friday handed over some rescued victims to their family and announced the arrest of five suspects responsible for the kidnap of the victims.

The National Coordinator, National Counter Terrorism Centre (NCTC), Maj.-Gen. Adamu Laka, presented the two rescued victims, Antini and Safarau to their husband Ibrahim Ahmed, on behalf of the NSA.

He said the victims were abducted from their home at Kwanar Dangora in Kiru Local Government Area of Kano State on July 28, by a gang of 11 armed men wielding AK-47 rifles.

According to him, the assailants forcibly abducted the two wives who were subsequently taken into the bandits' enclave, where they remained in captivity for four months.

"Following the incident, the NSA directed security and intelligence agencies to launch an intensive, coordinated operation to trace and rescue the victims.

"After sustained efforts over the past four months, the two women were successfully rescued, and five members of the gang responsible for the abduction were apprehended.

"This evening, authorities formally handed over Safarau and Altine to their husband, Alhaji Ibrahim Ahmed," he said.

Laka said the leader of the apprehended suspects fled to Zamfara were the security agencies were in his trail, adding that the five suspects were in custody awaiting further action.

Reps summon Usman Danfodio varsity VC over alleged poor 2023 budget performance

The House of Representatives Committee on University Education has summoned the Vice-Chancellor of Usman Danfodio University, Sokoto (UDUSOK), Prof. Bashir Garba, over allegation of poor 2023 budget performance.

In a statement on Friday, the House Committee Chairman on University Education, Rep. Abubakar Fulata (APC-Jigawa), said that the vice-chancellor and management team should appear before the committee on Monday.

Fulata warned that the committee would not hesitate to issue an arrest warrant on the the vice-chancellor of he should fail to appear.

He explained that during an oversight visit to the university, the committee observed deliberate attempts to conceal documents regarding how the institution was being run and to frustrate lawmakers' on-the-spot assessment.

According to him, despite repeated letters to Garba to submit relevant documents regarding implementation of the 2023, 2024 and 2025 budgets, he has refused to submit them.

The lawmaker added that when the committee eventually visited the school, the vice-chancellor was nowhere to be found.

He said that the few available officers were not prepared to respond to questions and had no documents regarding the running of the school in the last three years.

"The committee is not on a witch-hunt mission, but we will not hesitate to issue a warrant of arrest, in line with the provision of the Constitution and House Rules, directing the Inspector-General of Police to bring him if he fails to appear with relevant documents on Monday, Dec. 8.

"A proper scrutiny on the implementation of previous budgets will allow the National Assembly, saddled with the power of appropriation, to know how to respond to critical challenges of the institution," he said.

The chairman cautioned university managements in the North-West zone against discrimination and unfair treatment in the appointment, employment and promotion of workers as well as admission of students.

Tinapa Rebounds as Cross River's New Growth Engine



Tinapa's revival is positioning Cross River for renewed economic growth, attracting investment and restoring regional confidence, writes Oluchi Chibuzor

Tinapa is experiencing a long-awaited resurgence, emerging once again as a strategic asset in Cross River State's push for economic renewal. Once regarded as a bold but unrealised vision, the project is now regaining momentum as new investments, policy support, and private-sector interest begin to reshape its prospects.

Its revival signals more than the rehabilitation of a landmark facility—it represents a renewed commitment to unlocking the state's commercial potential. As Cross River seeks fresh pathways for growth, Tinapa is increasingly positioned to serve as a catalyst for trade, tourism, and broader regional development.

On November 7, 2025, the Cross River State Government announced a historic breakthrough: The Tinapa Business Resort & Free Zone in Calabar, one of the most ambitious subnational developmental projects, which has been fully repossessed from the Assets Management Corporation of Nigeria (AMCON). The announcement ended 14 years of legal ambiguity and administrative complexity.

The resort was inaugurated on April 2, 2007, by former President Olusegun Obasanjo. It was a vision born by then-Governor Donald Duke to transform the state into the economic heartbeat of West Africa.

More importantly, it was designed as a fulcrum for job creation, revenue generation, tourism resuscitation, economic emancipation and development revolution.

After the glitz and glam that heralded its unveiling, the project, in 2011, literally sailed into a man-made financial tempest that grounded it. When all revival efforts failed, it was subsequently taken over by AMCON.

Nonetheless, Tinapa's story, from its glittering conception to its paralysis, public debt, and eventual repossession by the Cross River State Government in 2025, reads like an epic. It has been described in many quarters as a decisive victory that will rewrite the state's story for future glory. It is a narrative of hope, missteps and remarkable resilience.

And now, under Governor Bassey Otu, Tinapa is experiencing what many have described as its most promising rebirth.

Child of Necessity

Tinapa was conceived at a time when Cross River State sought to reinvent itself as a globally competitive investment destination. As the State transitioned away from oil dependency and aggressively promoted tourism, the government envisioned a complementary commercial nerve centre, one that would blend leisure, trade, and business.

The resort was designed as a mixed-use development with world-class retail facilities, wholesale emporiums, a film studio (Studio Tinapa), hotels, entertainment complexes, and Africa's largest waterpark at the time. The aspiration was not merely infrastructural; it was structural. Tinapa was intended to serve as what Governor Otu recently described as "an enabler of the socio-economic transformation of the State."

For years, the vision attracted international attention. Investors, tourists, and development analysts touted the facility as a symbol of subnational ambition executed at an admirable scale.

At its opening, it was easily one of the most sophisticated business and leisure estates in Nigeria.

It was hailed as a breakthrough. The combination of luxurious hotels, state-of-the-art retail spaces and seamless architectural design gave the State an economic beacon unlike anything in the region.

Its location, strategically positioned near the Calabar Free Trade Zone, was intended to support duty-free shopping, large-scale trade, and international commercial traffic. The early years saw a surge of interest from businesses and tourists. Conferences were held there. Families flocked to the waterpark. Retail shops buzzed with activity.

For a while, it worked. Tinapa was alive. And Cross Riverians believed the promises that their State had finally found a non-oil revenue engine strong enough to rewrite the future.

Regulatory Hurdles and Operational Strain

But despite the glamour of its launch and the massive capital investment it attracted, Tinapa soon began drifting toward uncertainty. However, Tinapa's decline did not occur overnight. It was gradual, layered and deeply tied to regulatory constraints. The very engine that was supposed to power the resort, duty-free operations, ran into federal Customs restrictions that crippled the resort's core business model. Goods meant to be traded freely were trapped in layers of bureaucracy.

Without free-flowing international commerce, Tinapa's retail sector lost its competitive edge. Shops closed. Investors exited. Foot traffic dwindled. Financial pressure mounted and the State, unable to maintain the massive infrastructure without the projected revenue streams, found itself sinking into debt. The project that once symbolised progress became an emblem of stalled potential.

It was during this period of financial distress that Tinapa fell under the management and supervision of AMCON, which had stepped in to recover debt obligations.

Legal Contest over True Ownership of Tinapa

Once AMCON took over the management of the resort's liabilities, the question of ownership entered a grey zone. Though Cross River State remained the initiator and principal stakeholder, the facility functioned under different operational and legal encumbrances that undermined the State's direct control. The ambiguity discouraged investors. Potential partners feared litigation. The general public viewed the once-glittering estate as a stranded asset.

Tinapa, in effect, became a majestic structure trapped in limbo, unable to operate freely, yet too valuable to abandon.

For years, successive governments attempted negotiations, renegotiations and legal reviews. But it was not until 2025 that a breakthrough finally came.

Otu's Repossession as Turning Point

Tinapa repossession, which state officials described as "decisive, strategic and economically necessary," restored the resort as the bona fide property of the Cross River state government.

Governor Otu, while literally taking back the keys to the resort, delivered a set of statements that captured both the gravity of the moment and the optimism of the state moving forward.

He said: "Today's event has finally removed the legal lacuna on the ownership of Tinapa, which is now the bona fide property of the Cross River state government. We are not only reclaiming the facility; but also increasing the stock of our enduring infrastructure.

"The return of Tinapa is not merely an event; it is a rebirth, the triumph of faith, patience and resilience. This is more than reclaiming an asset; it is the revival of a vision that once placed Cross River on the global economic map."

He reaffirmed his administration's commitment under the, "People First Agenda" to reposition Tinapa as a thriving hub for trade, tourism, and creative enterprise."

He further revealed that discussions were already ongoing with credible investors and partners to transform the facility into a dynamic centre of commerce and job creation, guided by transparency and accountability.

Otu also expressed gratitude to the federal Government, AMCON and other relevant agencies for their cooperation throughout the transition process, commending all stakeholders who played key roles in ensuring the successful handover.

On his part, the Commissioner for Finance, Dr. Mike Odere, hailed the development as a symbol of renewed pride and optimism for the state.

"It means pride, it means reawakening, it means renewed hope as we are now free to attract investors and reposition the facility for maximum impact," he said.

Commenting, the Executive Director of AMCON, Mr. Shola Lamide, noted that the corporation had acquired Tinapa in 2011 but faced challenges attracting private investment to revive it.

He described the handover as "a win for both AMCON and the people of Cross River."

For many, the repossession was more than a bureaucratic win, it was clearly symbolic. It represented a return to clarity. A restoration of dignity. A renewed belief in the State's ability to steward its most valuable assets.

Confidence Restored, Economic Growth on the Horizon

Government officials say the repossession of Tinapa marks the beginning of a broad economic renewal. A senior official at the Ministry of Industry and Trade said: "These steps were taken to rekindle the confidence of our investors and provide a ray of hope for Cross Riverians."

Economic analysts agree that restoring control over Tinapa is critical for several reasons: Firstly, Cross River's business community has long complained about the uncertainty surrounding the resort. Repossession eliminates doubts and signals that the State is ready to re-enter the competitive investment arena.

Again, Tinapa remains one of the most extensive, fully built commercial complexes in Nigeria. With control restored, the State can now redesign its operational framework without legal obstacles.

The government has already begun engaging investors in: agro-processing; manufacturing; logistics; leisure and hospitality and export-oriented businesses

This aligns with Otu's vision of transforming Tinapa into what he calls: "an investors' haven where limitless opportunity beckons"

Interestingly, the Governor has issued an open invitation to citizens at home and in the diaspora to become part of the rebirth. Tinapa is being marketed not just as a resort but as a new investment frontier.

How CRSG Negotiated Tinapa's Freedom

While some of the negotiation details remain confidential, authoritative officials from the Ministry of Finance and the State Executive Council provided insight into the strategy.

Top on the list is debt regularisation: Where the State entered a structured settlement with AMCON, satisfying obligations without incurring new destabilising liabilities.

Another way was legal harmonisation, where government lawyers worked to dismantle overlapping claims and unify Tinapa's legal identity under the State. More so, a full audit of buildings, facilities, equipment, and associated components ensured a clean handover.

There is governance restructuring, and the state is establishing a new management framework to professionalise operations, eliminate waste, and reposition the resort for profitability.

A senior official familiar with the process noted that the Governor "played a hands-on role" and insisted that the State must reclaim Tinapa's legacy project to "correct historical economic missteps."

To protect the gigantic project, the state government is bolstering regulation by engaging with federal agencies to ensure Tinapa enjoys smoother commercial operations, free from the regulatory chokeholds that crippled it in the past. Governor Otu's statements at the repossession ceremony reveal a clear philosophical direction.

First off, Tinapa is to be reborn as a driver of statewide socio-economic transformation. Repossession increases State-owned infrastructure as a long-term asset and ending legal disputes reassures local and international investors.

The Governor's call to citizens demonstrates inclusivity in the coming wave of development.

He captured his aspiration in his opening declaration: "The project was conceived as an enabler of the socio-economic transformation of the State."

Cautious Hope, Renewed Optimism

Across Calabar and wider Cross River State, reactions to the news of Tinapa's repossession have been enthusiastic. For many, the development represents the return of a pride symbol that once projected Cross River into global conversations.

Business owners welcome the move, hoping it will catalyse wider infrastructure upgrades. Young people express optimism about new job opportunities.

Mrs. Clementina Agba, a businesswoman is already salivating over juicy business locked in Tinapa and preparing to move in there.

Another enthusiastic business owner, Mr Malachi James said: "Tinapa is not just a resort. It's a cultural heritage. We like to welcome visitors and show them our tourism endowment. With this resort set to roar back to life, Cross River and the wider Nigeria shall feel its pulse as it catalyses economic prosperity. I can't wait for its revival", he said.

For many, the consensus sentiment is that Tinapa is alive again. They note that Tinapa has returned home, not as the failed promise many have come to accept, but as a renewed opportunity ready for strategic rebirth. With legal bottlenecks cleared and a committed administration steering the ship, the resort stands a real chance of achieving the dream that inspired its creation.

According to investment experts, the path ahead will require discipline, investment and sustained political will. But for the first time in years, Tinapa is positioned on a runway, engines humming, ready to take off.

Osun Assembly passes Local Government Accounts Administration Bill 2025

BY MIKE DIKE OSOG–BO

The Osun State House of Assembly Friday, passed the Osun State Local Government Accounts Administration Bill, 2025—marking a major milestone in strengthening financial governance and transparency across the state's 30 local government areas and area councils.

The legislation regulates the opening, management, and operation of Local Government Accounts in line with Section 7(1) of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (as amended), which empowers state assemblies to legislate on local government finances.

The bill aims to enhance accountability, prevent financial mismanagement, and ensure strict compliance with statutory fiscal procedures at the grassroots level.

Under the new framework, signatory authority on all Local Government Accounts will now rest exclusively with the Directors of Finance and the Directors of Administration and General Services of the respective councils.

The bill also expressly prohibits political office holders and their appointees from serving as signatories to these accounts—a move widely regarded as an effort to curb undue political interference in local government finances.

Following the passage of the bill, the Speaker of the House, Rt. Honourable Adewale Egbedun, announced that a clean copy would be transmitted to the Governor for assent.

Once signed into law, the legislation is expected to promote greater financial prudence, strengthen institutional integrity, and enhance service delivery across Osun State's grassroots administrations.

Police Inspector shot dead at checkpoint in Edo

A police inspector attached to the Ekiadolor Area Command was on Friday shot dead by gunmen who opened fire during a routine stop-and-search operation in Benin, the Edo capital.

CSP Moses Yamu, spokesperson of the Edo Police Command confirmed this via a statement made available to the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) in Benin.

Yamu said the incident occurred at about 12:00 p.m. when an unregistered, black, heavily-tinted Lexus SUV approached a checkpoint in the city and refused to stop despite being flagged down.

The suspicious behaviour of the vehicle's occupants, he said, prompted the officers to attempt further security checks.

"Tragically, in the course of this lawful engagement, one of the occupants of the vehicle suddenly opened fire on the Inspector at a close range and zoomed off," he said.

According to him, the inspector died on the spot.

Following the attack, the police spokesman said the Commissioner of Police in the state, Monday Agbonika, had ordered a full-scale investigation and an intensive manhunt for the perpetrators.

He stated that all intelligence and operational assets had been deployed to track down the assailants and ensure they face justice.

Yuletide: Police reaffirm ban on fireworks in Ekiti

The Police Command in Ekiti has restated that the ban on fireworks remains in effect as the Yuletide approaches.

This is made known in a statement by the spokesperson for the command, SP Sunday Abutu on Friday in Ado-Ekiti.

The command warned that the use, sale and public display of fireworks would attract arrest and prosecution.

The command expressed appreciation to the people of Ekiti for their support and cooperation, noting that such collaboration has played a significant role in curbing crime and sustaining the peace in the state.

According to the police, the ban is aimed at preventing criminals from exploiting the festive period to carry out unlawful activities under the guise of using fireworks.

The command warned that the sound of firecrackers could easily be mistaken for gunshots, creating panic, confusion and avoidable security concerns.

The Police stressed further that fireworks pose various health and safety risks to unsuspecting citizens and must be discouraged.

The command reaffirmed its readiness to fully enforce the ban, urging parents, guardians, community heads and religious leaders to caution their children and followers against flouting the directive.

It called on residents to remain law-abiding and vigilant, and to promptly report suspicious persons or activities to the nearest police station or via the emergency line: 08062335577.

Oborevwori's infrastructure drive in Delta delivering results — Aniagwu

BY NOSA AKENZUA, ASABA

Delta State Commissioner for Works (Rural Roads) and Public Information, Mr. Charles Aniagwu, has reaffirmed the state government's resolve to fast-track the delivery of critical rural roads and stormwater drainage projects across the stat, stating that Governor Sheriff Oborevwori's aggressive infrastructure drive is already yielding visible results.

Aniagwu gave the assurance on Thursday during an extensive inspection tour of ongoing projects in Osubi, Okuokoko, Ugolo-Okpe and neighbouring communities, including the 15.75km Orerokpe–Okulohoh–Oviri Road and the 12.5km Okwitolor–Okobia–Arhagba Road, all in Okpe Local Government Area.

Speaking to journalists, the Commissioner said the stormwater drainage project spanning the Osubi–Okuokoko–Ugolo-Okpe axis was designed to resolve the perennial flooding that previously submerged homes during the rainy season.

"Before now, a number of houses usually got submerged during the rainy season. This drainage project is meant to evacuate stormwater from several communities and channel it through the Agbaru River," he explained.

"Much of the drainage system has already been buried. What you are seeing now are surface drains complementing the underground sewer lines to control water and enable landowners to develop their properties."

Aniagwu reported significant progress on the road components, noting that contractors had begun asphalt laying on some stretches after completing sand-filling and earthworks. He expressed optimism that many of the projects would be ready for commissioning early in the new year.

At the 15.7km Orerokpe-Okulohoh-Oviri-Okpe Road, the Commissioner lauded Obakpor Engineering Construction Company, the indigenous contractor handling the project, saying over seven kilometres of binder course had already been laid.

"There is impressive mobilisation here, both in equipment and manpower," he said. "The contractor has assured that by March, the road will be completed. And as long as a contractor achieves milestones, the government doesn't delay payments. Bring the certificates and Oborevwori pays." He emphasized.

Aniagwu reiterated that Governor Oborevwori's policy of paying up to 40 percent mobilisation and promptly honouring certified job progress has improved contractor performance and speed across the state.

He also highlighted the 2026 budget's allocation of over 70 percent to capital projects, saying it places Delta among the few states in Nigeria with such an aggressive infrastructure ratio.

"With over ₦1 trillion going into infrastructure next year, we are ensuring ongoing projects give way for new ones. This reflects the governor's commitment to meaningful development across all three senatorial districts."

On the ongoing stormwater drainage, Aniagwu clarified that variations in drain sizes depend on the expected water volume at different points.

He said some sections measure as wide as 2m by 2m at downstream discharge points, while other areas include surface drains connected to buried sewer lines, supported by manholes for easy maintenance.

He assured residents that temporary disruptions caused by unexpected rainfall would soon be resolved, adding that the project is designed to prevent future flooding and improve environmental conditions.

Inspecting the 12.65km Okwitolor–Okobia–Arhagba Road, Aniagwu said the project cuts across two local government areas and opens up several fast-growing communities.

"Okwitolor, Okobia and Arhagba are not small villages. These roads crisscross agricultural belts and connect multiple communities. This is why we always say: tell us your local government, and we will tell you what is being done there by Governor Oborevwori."



A significant new addition to Nigeria's democratic literature was unveiled on Friday at The Electoral Institute in Abuja, where journalists, election officials, and stakeholders gathered for the public presentation of "The INEC Press Corps: Chronicles of Nigeria's Election Journalists", authored by Segun Ojumu, Chairman of the INEC Press Corps.

Okpebholo sacks Fred Itua as CPS, appoints Ebojele

BY TITUS AKHIGBE, BENIN

Edo State Governor, Senator Monday Okpebholo has sacked Fred Itua as his Chief Press Secretary.

The Secretary to the State government, Barr.Umar Musa Ikhilor, disclosed this in a statement dated December 4, 2025 and made available to newsmen in Benin-City.

Ikhilor, who did not give any reason for the sudden sack, however, announced the appointment of Dr Patrick Ebojele as the new Chief Press Secretary.

It was reliably gathered that Itua was allegedly sacked by the Governor for his insensitivity when a tout slapped a female journalist in Government House few days ago.

Ikhilor said the appointment of Ebojele reflected the commitment of the present administration to strengthen and deepen the communication channels between the Government and the good people of Edo State, ensuring clarity, transparency, and effective dissemination of Government policies, programmes, and activities.

The statement reads in part: "The Edo State Government wishes to notify the general public that His Excellency, Senator Monday Okpebholo, Executive Governor of Edo State, has approved the appointment of Dr Ebojele Akhere Patrick as the Chief Press Secretary (CPS) to the Governor.

"Dr Ebojele Akhere Patrick is a renowned journalist, public administrator, researcher, and lecturer with an extensive and distinguished professional record in media practice, public affairs, and academia.

"Dr Ebojele's journalism career spans reputable Nigerian media houses where he served as Edo/Delta Correspondent for Channels Television, as well as correspondent roles in New Nigerian Newspaper, Champion Newspaper, and Comet Newspapers.

"Dr Ebojele will be taking over from Mr Fred Itua, who will, upon handover, await a new reassignment to be communicated in due course. The Government expresses appreciation to Mr Itua for his contributions and service".

Until his appointment, Ebojele was a lecturer at the Department of Public Administration, Federal Polytechnic, Auchi, Edo State.

Here are five of the world's safest countries for 2025

According to the 2025 Global Peace Index (GPI), the number of state-based conflicts has reached its highest level since World War Two, with three more breaking out this year alone. The GPI, produced by the Institute for Economics & Peace, tracks 23 indicators, from external conflicts and military expenditure to safety and security measures like terrorism and homicide. The countries ranked at the top of the index have been remarkably consistent for nearly two decades.

Iceland

Ranked number one since 2008, Iceland remains the world's most peaceful nation, leading across all three domains: safety and security, ongoing conflict and militarisation. It even recorded a 2% improvement this year, widening the gap from the second-place country on the list.

For locals, that sense of safety is baked into everyday life. "While harsh weather conditions, especially in winter, may not always create a sense of safety, community does," said Inga Rós Antoníusdóttir, who was born in Iceland and is general manager for Intrepid Travel North Europe. "You can walk alone at night mostly without worry; you will see babies sleeping peacefully in prams outside cafes and shops while their parents enjoy a meal or [are] running errands; and the local police don't carry guns."

Inga credits the country's world-leading gender equality policies with allowing women to feel secure. "Equal opportunities and robust social systems create a fairer, safer society for everyone," she said.

She recommends visitors experience this inner calm by joining locals in everyday rituals. "Go for a swim in a geothermal pool and chat with strangers in the hot tub; hike a mountain, whether it's an afternoon climbing Mt Esja right outside of Reykjavik or a multi-day hike in the highlands," she said. "The real Iceland is found in its thriving music and art scene, in nature away from the main sites and in all kinds of weather."

Ireland

Though marked by conflict throughout the late 20th Century, today's Ireland continues to put peace at the forefront. It received especially high scores for reducing its militarisation year-over-year and ranked as one of the countries with the fewest ongoing domestic and international conflicts. It also placed within the top 10 for societal safety and security, with low perceptions of crime and violence.

People look out for one another here. It's the kind of place where you can ask a stranger for help and they'll go out of their way for you - Jack Fitzsimons

That feeling extends throughout the country for residents. "A deep sense of community and friendliness makes you feel welcome and at ease, whether you're in a small town or a big city," said Jack Fitzsimons, Kildare resident and director of experiences at Kilkea Castle. He finds that strong social support systems and a focus on community welfare also reduces inequality and tension. "People look out for one another here," he added. "It's the kind of place where you can ask a stranger for help and they'll go out of their way for you."

New Zealand

This year New Zealand moved up two spots to number three, thanks to improvements in the safety and security domain as well as fewer demonstrations and terrorism-related impacts.

As an island nation in the Pacific, New Zealand's geography gives it natural protection from external conflict, but its internal policies also afford residents a sense of peace. "New Zealand's gun laws are among the strictest in the world, which absolutely contributes to the sense of safety," said lifelong Kiwi Mischa Mannix-Opie, director of client experience at relocation firm Greener Pastures. She notes that it's a place where kids walk to school, people leave their doors unlocked and motorists will stop to help if a vehicle is broken down on the side of the road. "There's a general trust in others and in the systems around you, which creates a real sense of community in daily life."

Austria

Austria slipped one place this year to fourth but still ranked high across all domains. Like Ireland, Austria adopts a constitutionally mandated policy of neutrality, preventing it from joining military alliances like Nato. This enables the country to focus its attention and resources internally.

"Austria's decades-long policy of neutrality means the nation invests in its people instead of conflicts," said Armin Pfurtscheller, owner of SPA-Hotel Jagdhof. "A strong social safety net, world-class healthcare and excellent education foster stability and trust." He lives in Neustift in the Stubai Valley, where he says people wander along the Ruetz River at midnight, homes are left unlocked and bicycles sit unchained outside cafes. "Safe isn't just a statistic, it's the way life feels."

Singapore

Maintaining its position at number six, the city-state of Singapore is the only Asian country in the top 10 (Japan and Malaysia come in at 12 and 13, respectively). It ranks especially high for safety and security, even while maintaining one of the world's highest levels of military expenditure per capita, outpaced only by North Korea and Qatar.

The lack of ongoing conflict and internal security lead to a strong sense of safety for most residents. "I walk late at night and do not feel afraid. Walking home is not overwhelming or anxiety-provoking like it is in most large urban cities," said resident Xinrun Han.



ECOWAS leaders seek action against threats to democracy, rule of law

West African leaders have called for collective action by all member States to contain the prevailing threats to democracy and the rule of law in the sub-region.

They made their positions known in Abuja during a ceremony organised by the ECOWAS Parliament to mark its 25th anniversary, stressing that the sub-region would not survive the prevailing threats.

Julius Bio, Sierra Leone's President and Chairman, ECOWAS Authority of Heads of State and Government, noted that ECOWAS had persistently supported past peace-building efforts, regional cooperation, security, migration and human rights.

He said that Sierra Leone was a major beneficiary of the transformative impact of such past efforts by both the ECOWAS Commission and Parliament.

According to him, member states must rise up and take drastic action by fighting tooth and nail toward ensuring that the current threats to democracy in the sub-region were arrested.

"The challenges before us demand an ECOWAS Parliament to raise a voice and give managerial accommodation. Together, let us reaffirm the commitments that our people have made so far and all possible opportunities.

"ECOWAS Parliament has consistently demonstrated that collaboration is not just desirable, it is indispensable for the progress and stability of our nation.

"As we mark this important milestone, let us also renew our resolve to build on the achievements of the past 25 years," Bio, represented by his Foreign Minister, Timothy Kabba said.

Dr Omar Touray, President of the ECOWAS commission, urged the Parliament to commit itself to the fight for the survival of democracy in the sub-region.

He stated that after 25 years existence, the parliament should look forward to a golden jubilee where democracy, rule of law and human rights are the norms in West Africa rather than tribulations.

"The silver jubilee of ECOWAS Parliament is coming at a time when we are celebrating ECOWAS' golden Jubilee as a community.

"As we celebrate this silver jubilee, let us take stock of our achievements and progress, as well as our challenges and opportunities into the future.

"We must therefore fight for democratic space, human rights and rule of law if we want our democracy to survive," he said.

The Speaker of the parliament, Mémounatou Ibrahima, said after 25 years, it was mature and must reflect on past milestones, and undertake a clear introspection on contemporary challenges toward a renewed future ambition.

"Our mediation missions in member states experiencing political tensions remind us with force that peace is not merely the absence of conflict.

"Peace rests fundamentally on just, credible, and inclusive institutions," she added.

Goodluck Jonathan, former President of Nigeria, said that democracy though challenged, remained the most reliable foundation for sustainable development and peaceful coexistence.

According to him, the parliament plays a critical role in the protection of democracy and inclusivity by supporting peaceful electoral processes across the sub-region.

Jonathan decried the violent extremism in West Africa and solicited for coordinated regional responses in which the Parliament serves as a convener of dialogue and oversight to strengthen collective security in the region.

"The future of our region will not survive in your free will. You must strive to strengthen the foundations of democracy in the sub-region.

"Our region must remain firm against unconstitutional treaties or governments.

Trump brokers peace deal between DR Congo, Rwanda in Washington

U.S. President Donald Trump has brokered a peace deal between leaders of the Democratic Republic of Congo and Rwanda, Félix Tshisekedi and Paul Kagame.

The U.S. president facilitated the signing of a peace agreement in Washington aimed at ending more than three decades of conflict in mineral-rich eastern Congo.

The ceremony took place at the Peace Institute, recently renamed the Donald J Trump Institute of Peace.

Trump said the United States would conclude bilateral agreements with both countries on rare earth mining, adding that major U.S. firms would be sent to the region and "everybody's going to make a lot of money."

Eastern Congo's vast deposits of strategic minerals have long fuelled the interests of foreign powers and armed groups.



Observers had speculated that the peace deal would align with U.S. economic priorities, with Washington applying political pressure to bring the presidents of Kinshasa and Kigali together – something African regional mediation efforts had failed to achieve.

Rwandan President Kagame said previous attempts to end the conflict had faltered, but Trump had succeeded where others had not.

Congolese President Tshisekedi tagged the agreement the beginning of a new and difficult path.

The two leaders exchanged a few gestures and did not shake hands.

The accord builds on a preliminary peace framework reached several months ago, committing both countries to respect territorial integrity, halt aggression, and cease support for armed groups.

However, regional analysts say it is unclear whether the agreement will actually end the decades-long conflict.

More important than the deal, they say, are talks in Doha that include representatives of the Rwanda-backed M23 militia, which earlier this year seized the provincial capitals of Goma and Bukavu in the Kivu region and set up its own administration in the controlled territories.

Jigawa: NUT honours Namadi as 'Best Performing Governor in Northern Nigeria'

BY UMAR AKILU MAJERI, DUTSE

The Nigerian Union of Teachers (NUT) has honored the governor of Jigawa State, Malam Umar Namadi, with the award of "Best Performing Governor in Northern Nigeria" in the Education Sector, describing him as a visionary, exemplary, and teachers-friendly leader whose reforms have significantly elevated the state's education sector.

The award presentation took place at the Government House, Dutse, when the NUT delegation, led by the Deputy National President of the Union, Comrade Muhammad Hambali, and the Jigawa State Chairman, Comrade Abdulkadir Yunusa, and comprising of NUT chairmen of all the 19 northern states, paid a courtesy visit to the governor.

While making his remarks, Comrade Hambali said the decision to honour Governor Namadi was driven by his outstanding performance and firm commitment to raising the standard of education in Jigawa State, noting that while several states struggled with salary arrears, layoffs, and refusal to implement the national minimum wage, Jigawa under Governor Namadi charted a different course.

"You are a visionary leader, an exemplary leader. And as the popular saying goes, "What is good for the goose is good for the gander." It is on this basis that the Nigerian Union of Teachers has deemed it necessary to honour you for your outstanding performance and your commitment to raising the standard of education in Jigawa State," he said.

According to him, the governor not only implemented an enhanced salary structure for teachers but also continued to hire more educators to strengthen the system at a time when other states were downsizing.

"When other governors refused to implement the national minimum wage, Governor Namadi implemented a jumbo-sized salary for teachers in Jigawa State. When other governors were sacking or retrenching teachers and workers, our Governor Namadi was busy laughing, smiling, and recruiting more teachers—and not unnecessarily, but because the system needed them. While other states delay salaries, here in Jigawa, salaries are paid on or before the 20th of every month. For this, Your Excellency, we say thank you."

NUJ president lauds Gov. Fintiri's projects

Mr Alhassan Yahaya, the president of the Nigeria Union of Journalists (NUJ) on Friday lauded Gov. Ahmadu Fintiri's transformative projects in Adamawa.

Yahaya gave the commendation during inspection tour of some key government projects while in the state for the NUJ's North-east zonal meeting in Yola.

The theme of the meeting was "2027 Elections, the North-East and Safety of Journalists."

Yahaya, who expressed satisfaction with the quality and scale of the projects, also said he would return to Yola with more journalists to further write about the governor's achievements.

"The developments were not only timely but also aligned with the needs of ordinary citizens.

"I will return to the state with journalists from southern and eastern parts of Nigeria to enable them see the achievements recorded under the Fintiri-led administration.

"Such exposure would help deepen national understanding of the progress being made in the North-east," he said.

The NUJ president commended Fintiri for prioritising grassroots development, particularly the intervention in the Saminaka community, an area dominated by low-income earners.

He said the project would have direct impact on livelihoods and strengthen public confidence in governance.

Also speaking, Dr Ishaya Dabari, the Commissioner for Commerce and Industry, who led the NUJ's delegates said, "the project is about creating an enduring legacy, a vibrant commercial hub, and an environment that will attract investments.

"It would also foster economic growth and create jobs for our youth and our people in general."

The commissioner said the state's Shopping Complex, one of the Fintiri's key projects would serve as a driver of economic activity, featuring retail outlets, food courts, office spaces, and recreational areas, among others.

Dabari said that the facility would create opportunities for Small and Medium-Scale Enterprises (SMEs), empower local entrepreneurs, and promote economic inclusivity.

In his remarks, Mr Mohammed Suleiman, the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Works and Energy Development, said the completed flyovers and the expansion of Galadima Aminu way were designed to ease traffic congestion, enhance safety and reduce travel time.

He said that pedestrian bridges would also be constructed at strategic locations to improve the safety of road users.

On the 7.5km stormwater drainage project near Air Force Comprehensive Secondary School, Suleiman said the project had eliminated perennial flooding around Saminaka and adjoining areas.

Taraba ACReSAL awards N6.17bn contract to control gully erosion

OKERAFOR ATHANATIUS, JALINGO

The Taraba State Agro-Climatic Resilience in Semi-Arid Landscapes (ACReSAL) has awarded over Six Billion Naira (N6.17bn) contract for the control of gully erosions and storm water in some parts of the State.

Speaking, during a ceremony held at ACReSAL headquarters in Jalingo, the State Project Coordinator, Dr. Yakubu Giwa Clement, said the contract was awarded to CGC (Nig) Ltd, a contracting firm that specializes in the control of gully erosions.

Dr. Clement further disclosed that the contract awarded to CGC Nig. Ltd was for the control of gully erosions at Bobboji area in Jalingo and Ndibam community in Takum local government areas of the State.

Congratulating CGC for winning the two projects, Dr. Clement revealed that they were chosen based on their past performances and track records that aligned with World Bank procurement rules. He expressed confidence that all terms and conditions of the contracts would be followed.

Applauding the State Governor, Dr Agbu Kefas for providing an enabling environment for ACReSAL to succeed in the State, Dr. Clement explained that ACReSAL is a multi-sector project that impacts three key areas, including land management and climate change mitigation.

According to him, the goal of the day's event was to finalize the signing requirements for the projects aimed at reducing gully erosion and controlling storm water.

State ACReSAL boss also told the gathering that the project at Bobboji covers about four kilometres and will include bioengineering, biodegradation and plantation work to reduce the effects of climate change. He stated that the project includes several activities supported by safeguard and reclamation plans to ensure that nobody is shortchanged.

"The team has gone through many stages to reach their present point, and the procurement officer has already explained the process. The aim is to showcase Taraba State as a leader in land reclamation under ACReSAL",

"I once more commend the contractors for their good submissions and I urge you to deliver quality work within the agreed timeframe. You have to publicly state when your plan to complete the Bobboji project and the Ndibam gully erosion control project in Takum",;he stated.

Also speaking, the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Environment and Climate Change, Hon. Aminu Kotolo advised the contractors to work according to the plan and required standards.

While encouraging the Contractors to do a quality job that will make the State proud, Hon. Kotolo added that the Technical Committee will visit the sites regularly to monitor the progress of the work.

Ke Youcheng, Business Manager of CGC Nigeria Limited, while expressing appreciation for being awarded the two contracts, explained that the Bobboji storm water control project in the Jalingo market area will include constructing culverts, drainage and beautification works. He promised that the company will deliver quality work within the 18-month contract period.



The Commandant General's Special Intelligence Squad (CG's SIS) of the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC) has achieved a major breakthrough with the arrest of suspects allegedly involved in the vandalism of a vital telecommunications tower in Yobe State.

Mob action claims four lives in Benue over alleged theft

BY: HENRY IYOR–KASE, MAKURDI

Suspected armed robbers were yesterday burnt to ashes after they allegedly burgled a provision shop at Gboko, Benue State.

The Daily Monitor on Saturday learnt the suspects were chased and overpowered by the youths, who allegedly set them ablaze.

An insider said that in recent times the youths preferred jungle justice meted on criminals rather than the following due process, which often leads to criminals escaping on legal technicalities.

"We are not taking chances at all because the public is fed up with these men of the underworld always stealing other people's properties."

A youth at the scene who spoke on condition of anonymity disclosed that jungle justice whenever criminals are beaten to death is punitive measure warning them to desist.

Meanwhile similar incident occurred at International Market along George Akume Way in the state capital, Makurdi, where two persons were reportedly killed yesterday over theft of bikes.

Police Public Relations Officer PPRO, DSP Udeme Edet, confirmed receipt of report of the development.

Northern CAN salutes new Defence Minister, says Tinubu showing commitment to end insecurity

IDIBIA GABRIEL, KADUNA

The Christian Association of Nigeria, (CAN), 19 Northern States and Abuja has congratulated the former Chief of Defence Staff, General Christopher Musa (rtd), on his appointment as Nigeria's new Minister of Defence.

Recall that President Tinubu appointed Musa earlier in the week following the resignation of former Minister of Defence, Abubakar Badaru, on health grounds.

In a statement issued on Friday, the Chairman of Northern CAN, Rev. Joseph John Hayab, said the President's decision reflects a renewed commitment to addressing the security challenges troubling different parts of the country.

Hayab noted that President Tinubu has shown attentiveness to public concerns by bringing in a seasoned military officer whose record of courage, discipline and operational excellence stands out.

The association recalled that General Musa's leadership as Chief of Defence Staff contributed significantly to stabilizing several theatres of operation, particularly in the North East and North West. It stressed that his return to the national security architecture at ministerial level would further strengthen efforts to tackle terrorism, banditry and other violent crimes.

Northern CAN appealed to citizens, traditional rulers, community leaders and security stakeholders to support the new Minister of Defence, emphasizing that safeguarding the country requires collective vigilance, unity of purpose and broad cooperation.

The association urged General Musa to prioritise the welfare of frontline troops, deepen inter-agency collaboration and ensure prompt responses to emerging threats nationwide.

Blood transfusion: How people die due to religious beliefs

STORIES BY ADA DIKE

There was an outrage online early this week when the news of an X personality known as Aunty Esther, spread and accused her of rejecting blood transfusion for her breast cancer treatment.

It was gathered that she rejected the blood transfusion due to religious beliefs despite over ₦30 million donation she received from kind-hearted Nigerians.

There have been many instances of the same scenarios that led to the patients deaths in many Nigerian hospitals.

For instance, in May this year, a Nigerian man said his relative died at a hospital in Port Harcourt, Rivers State, after a doctor refused to do a blood transfusion on her.

The Daily Monitor learned that the deceased family member said a woman gave birth through a Caesarean Section (CS), but she lost blood.

According to her relation, when the medical doctor was told to do a blood transfusion, she allegedly said she does not do that in her hospital due to her religious beliefs. He mentioned the church the doctor goes to.

"But the doctor said she doesn't do that in her hospital, because she is a religious person," he explained.

Another person shared how a woman almost lost her life after she refused to receive blood transfusion.

Diogonwa Precious said in a hospital she gave birth to her child, a member of Jehovah's Witness who was pregnant almost died. "She was pregnant and bleeding. She needed blood transfusion, but she and her husband refused because



they said it's against their faith. Everyone in the hospital including the doctor and nurses begged her, but she refused. Thank God she survived it."

Also, Nkechi Omoregbe narrated how a lady died in 2016 because both her husband and her mother refused to allow her to have a blood transfusion. She had acute fibroids and was losing blood constantly. "When she passed away, her mother said it was the will of God and that it was better to die than to accept a blood transfusion."

Another person, Mrs. Zanga wrote on X how she was born into Jehovah's Witness, but she's no longer there, but her parents and siblings are still there.

In her words: "Our second son died because my parents refused him blood transfusion. (He was a sickle cell patient), and they're hoping to see him again in "paradise" because he died "upholding his beliefs" He was an eight year old boy."

"My mom's sister died during childbirth, because she needed blood transfusion but, was also "upholding her beliefs"."

Zanga went further to say that: "My cousin died during a major surgery that needed blood transfusions, because she's "upholding her belief" of no blood transfusion.

"So, nothing happens in cases like Aunty Esther's. If she pulls through, glory be to Jehovah, but if she doesn't, she died "upholding her beliefs" and she "sure has resurrection hope"."

Worried by the way people are dieing because they refused blood transfusion, a pastor of a church, Mountain of Bethel, Ayobo, Lagos, Pastor C. Abiodun, said there should be massive sensitization in religious groups about the importance of blood transfusion, so that they can embrace it and allow their members to get blood transfusion.

"A lot of work should be done in religious groups to open their eyes on the need for their members to get blood transfusion so as to live," he said.

"Many Nigerian pregnant women rely more on traditional births"



Information reaching The Daily Monitor has it that Pregnant women are increasingly relying on traditional birth attendants and home births in Gauraka town of Niger State, due to an overstretched clinic.

This was revealed recently by an online platform, Nigeria Health Watch.

For many, according to the platform, the danger begins long before labour even starts.

"Our only options are traditional birth attendants or auxiliary nurses who run medicine shops," Sai'edi Sule, a resident explained. "At the clinic, the long wait is discouraging, and at night, no one is available."

The deteriorating state of the floor at the PHC. Image Credit: Nigeria Health Watch

Gauraka Model Clinic, a Level 2 PHC and Basic Health Care Provision Fund (BHCPF) focal facility, is designed to serve over 30 surrounding communities, including Apo village, Gwazunu, Nassarawan Iku, and Gauraka town itself.

Although the clinic has adequate structural space, it operates only 12 hours daily due to a lack of electricity, limited staff, and inadequate equipment. Women from nearby communities walk or ride motorcycles for care, only to meet drug stockouts, cracked walls, a leaking roof, non-functional toilets, and a collapsing septic tank. For pregnant women, especially at night, accessing care becomes nearly impossible. "We use candles and phone lights for labour at night because there's no electricity," Rose Yakubu, the Officer in Charge, stated. "Women deliver on the floor because one delivery bed is not enough."

According to them, health workers warned that these conditions directly fuel high maternal and newborn risks. Persistent drug shortages, limited staff capacity, and weak utilisation of the BHCPF fund severely limit service quality.

"BHCPF helped us tile some parts of the clinic and manage a few toilets, but we cannot do it alone," Yakubu added.

The strain on Gauraka Model Clinic contributes to rising home deliveries and delayed care-seeking behaviour. Inequitable access across distant communities worsens health outcomes, while insufficient funding and workforce shortages undermine the facility's ability to reduce maternal and child deaths.

"Gauraka's challenges reflect broader systemic gaps, drug supply failures, infrastructural decay, and inadequate staffing, which must be addressed to safeguard mothers and children.

Only then can the Nigeria Health Sector Renewal Investment Initiative (2023–2027), which emphasises equitable and quality primary healthcare systems under its second pillar, be achieved. Only then can the Nigeria Health Sector Renewal Investment Initiative (2023–2027), which emphasises equitable and quality primary healthcare systems under its second pillar, be achieved.

"Stakeholders should: Fund the complete renovation of Gauraka Model Clinic.

Provide toilets, water systems, solar power, beds, and essential equipment.

Increase BHCPF allocations to restore drug availability.

"Strengthen timely drug supply chains.

Deploy more clinical and non-clinical staff.

Expand maternal health education across communities.

"We contribute what we can to keep the clinic running, but it is beyond us," said Village Head Mallam Zakarin Jibrin. "Without health, there is no community," he added.

Kaduna State PHCB records massive turnout during town hall meeting



The Kaduna State Primary Healthcare Board shared a glimpse of a Town hall meeting they held recently.

"In attendance were, pregnant and nursing mothers, traders, artisans, religious and community leaders, civil society organizations, representatives from the disability community, media, health workers and programme managers from State Primary Health Care Management Board (SPHCB).

"The NPHCDA through the National Advocacy, Communication and Social Mobilization (ACSM) technical working group in collaboration with State Primary Health Care Development Agency (SPHCDA) is carrying out townhall meetings with citizens across states.

"This is to further provide a forum where citizens and stakeholders can provide feedback on Primary Health Care services in their communities and share recommendations," they explained.

Herbs for healthy blood nourishment

The discovery of herbs for the treatment of different types of ailments have helped a lot of families in Africa.

This week, The Daily Monitor present Madam Akeju's write-up concerning the usefulness of dried sorghum leaves (Poroporo Okababa) and blood sponge (Kankan Eje).

For generations, according to her, this powerful combination has been cherished in traditional herbal practice for supporting healthy blood nourishment and general feminine wellness.

"Many women find it especially helpful as part of their monthly regimen after their menstrual flow.

"Boil the dried sorghum leaves (poroporo okababa) and blood sponge (kankan eje) together. Sieve the mixture. Drink half a glass cup twice daily for one week.

"You may sweeten with honey, lemon juice, or milk based on preference," she explained.

The herbal expert emphasized that the traditional blend is valued for its ability to support healthy blood flow and promote a sense of uterine wellness and balance.



Kogi Govt commends Mangal Cement for donating security vehicles

IDRIS AHMED

Kogi State Government has expressed its profound appreciation to Mangal Cement Company for its generous donation of three brand-new vans to support the State's effort at enhancing security to safeguard the lives and property of the citizens.

In a statement by the Commissioner of Information and strategy, Kinsley Fanwo, released on Friday, the government in appreciation said the gesture by the Mangal Cement Company is a demonstration of a strong commitment to the security and wellbeing of the people of Kogi State.

" This supportive gesture by Mangal Cement Company, one of the foremost industrial giants in Kogi State, demonstrates a strong commitment to corporate social responsibility and partnership with the Government in addressing critical security needs.

"The donated vehicles will significantly boost the operational efficiency of our security agencies as they work tirelessly to maintain peace and order across the State," the government statement read.

According to the Commissioner, the timely support is a recognition of government effort in its avowed determination to crush insecurity in the State, hence the private sector like the Mangal Cement Company, join hands with the Government to ensure a safer and more prosperous Kogi State.

" We appreciate this timely support, which demonstrates what is possible when the private sector joins hands with the government in pursuit of a safer and more prosperous Kogi State.

The government therefore encourages other corporate organizations, business leaders, and stakeholders to emulate this exemplary act by Mangal Cement Company.

" Together, through shared responsibility and collaborative action, we can continue to advance the security, development, and collective well-being of our people." Fanwo stated.

FG urges ICAN to support tax reforms, other initiatives

The Federal Government has urged the leadership of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Nigeria (ICAN) to support tax reforms and other initiatives introduced by President Bola Tinubu to achieve the "Renewed Hope" agenda.

The call was made by the Minister of Information and National Orientation, Alhaji Mohammed Idris, when the 64th President and Chairman of the Council of ICAN, Malam Haruna Yahaya, and his team paid him a courtesy visit on Friday in Abuja.

According to Idris, chartered accountants in Nigeria have played a significant role in enhancing transparency and integrity in the global financial sector.

He assured ICAN that the Tinubu administration was committed to partnerships that promoted accountability, transparency, and institutional strengthening for national development.

"The promotion of accurate information, public orientation, and responsible governance is central to the values of President Tinubu's Renewed Hope agenda.

"It is in this regard that we call on ICAN to support the ongoing reforms of this administration, including the new tax policy set to take effect in January 2026.

"We urge you to champion this cause in your financial and professional sphere.

"We also welcome opportunities to expand our engagement with ICAN in ways that enhance public communication, strengthen financial literacy, and support professionalism in government institutions, all aimed at improving public trust and confidence.

"Your willingness to work with this administration is a testament to your commitment to building stronger, more resilient, and solid national institutions," he added.

Speaking earlier, Yahaya hailed Idris for fostering trust in public information and communication.

"Since assuming office in 2023, you have confronted one of the most pressing challenges of our time: how to build trust in public institutions and strengthen national cohesion through clarity, purpose, and consistency in information dissemination.

"The ministry has demonstrated commitment to promoting transparency, accountability, and development in Nigeria. We have been following its progress and are proud to be associated with your efforts.

"The winning of the host right for the UNESCO Category 2 Media Literacy Institute in Abuja is a remarkable achievement that will make Nigerians proud," Yahaya said.

He further highlighted other achievements of the ministry and expressed ICAN's willingness to collaborate with the ministry.

FG attracts $2bn investments in CNG, targets $5bn in 2027 – PiCNG



The Presidential Initiative on Compressed Natural Gas (PiCNG) and Electric Vehicles (EVs) says it has attracted more than two billion dollars investments in the CNG subsector.

The Executive Chairman/CEO, PiCNG, Mr Ismaeel Ahmed, made this known on Friday in Abuja at the Alfa Design Nigeria Limited CNG products unveiling and stakeholders' engagement in collaboration with the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN).

NAN reports that the products were unveiled by the PiCNG boss, alongside other dignitaries.

The dignitaries included Malam Ali M. Ali, NAN Managing Director, Mr Mubarak Abdul, Alfa Designs Chief Operating Officer, Pankaj Bohhra, Mijo Auto Gas, PiCNG officials and others.

The products that were unveiled included CNG conversion kits by Mijo AutoGas, CNG cylinder by EKC International, CNG Mother Station by CIMC ENRIC and Optical Gas Imaging Camera by Opgal Optronics.

Ahmed was represented by Mr Zayyanu Tambari, Chief Compliance Officer, PiCNG.

He said that the initiative rounded up to two billion dollars of private sector investment in the CNG subsector in just two years while targeting five billion dollars investment in 2027.

"As of 2023, when this programme started, the CNG sector was virtually non-existent.

"It was not really attracting any serious investment from any quarters. Today, as I speak, we have attracted over 1.8 billion dollars investments.

"We have rounded up to two billion dollars of private sector investment in the CNG subsector in just two years," he said.

He said that the event was a further reinforcement of the investment growing in the CNG space, adding that the target for 2027 is a modest target of five billion dollars.

"I believe by 2027, we should be looking at double digits investment numbers in the CNG sector, looking at the interest that the private sector is showing in the CNG ecosystem. Then jobs created," he said.

Ahmed said that the sector had also attracted over 80,000 direct jobs, adding that indirect jobs typically would be in the mode of a ratio of one to four.

According to him, the target for 2027 is 300,000 direct jobs.

"We are already at 80,000 direct jobs. Again, we are reasonably confident we will meet and exceed this target," he said.

He recalled that President Bola Tinubu unveiled the CNG programme in 2023 as a critical component of the energy mix in Nigeria, adding that in 2023, there were only seven conversion centres in Nigeria.

"Today, we are looking at 369, and the number is growing almost on a daily basis.

"The target for 2027 is 3,000 conversion centres.

"But if you look at what we have achieved, and then we are now growing in geometric and hopefully in exponential progression, by 2027 we will exceed this number," he said.

On refueling stations, he explained that in 2023, there were only 20 CNG refueling infrastructure in Nigeria.

"Currently, there are over 68 licensed and over 150 under construction at various stages of being completed.

"The target for 2027 is around 2,000 to 2,500 retail outlets," he said.

NAMA boss assures of operational, administrative workers' welfare

CHUKWUEMEKE IWELUNMO

The managing director of the Nigerian Airspace Management Agency (NAMA) Engr Umar Farouk says, the management is working round the clocks to see that all the operational, administrative and general welfare of ATSEP receives deserved attention.

Speaking at the Annual General Meeting of the National Association of Air Traffic Engineers (NAAE) in Lagos, Engr Farouk noted that the theme of this year's AGM "Safety, Efficiency and Innovation: The Triple Mandate of Air Traffic Engineers" captures the essence of the transformation currently shaping the global airspace management landscape.

Represented by the Director of Air Traffic Services NAMA, Mr John Tayo, said "In a world where technological evolution continues to redefine aviation, our responsibility is not only to keep pace but to lead with clarity, competence, and creativity"

Farouk said the management of NAMA recognizes ATSEP sacrifices and tenacity in their quest for excellence in the provision of air navigation services in Nigeria adding that



their toiling and sweats are not unnoticed.

"As Air Traffic Engineers, you occupy a strategic position in sustaining the integrity of our Communication, Navigation, and Surveillance (CNS) infrastructure. Your expertise remains the backbone of safe and efficient air traffic management. Every radar sweep, every communication channel, every navigational aid, and every emerging digital system depends on your vigilance, precision, and innovation".

Farouk said NAMA recognizes the work of the engineers and value their contribution, remaining fully committed to supporting a professional environment where skills can flourish and where modern technology and continuous training are prioritized.

He stated that the Agency's ongoing modernization efforts from CNS upgrades to advanced automation systems are built on a foundation strengthened by the engineer's competence and dedication.

"This gathering is not only an opportunity for technical dialogue; it is also a platform for collaboration, mentorship, and alignment with global best practices. I urge you to engage deeply, share boldly, and challenge conventional thinking as we collectively shape the future of air navigation services in Nigeria"

Farouk commends their commitment, especially in the face of operational and infrastructural challenges adding that their resilience continues to uphold the safety of Nigerian airspace, and for that, the nation remains grateful.

The president of National Association of Air Traffic Engineers (NAAE), Engr Selzing in his opening speech said there is an improvement in the working environment of it's members in the Nigeria Airspace Management Agency (NAMA) under the current leadership of Engr Umar Farouk.

Miri noted that it was not the same situation in Nigeria Civil Aviation Authority, Nigeria College of Aviation Technology and other sectors where it has members and urged them to brace up

Miri who admitted the improvement in the working environment noted that there were positive signs under the Engr Farouk Umar leadership


NATELLA
BUSINESS ACADEMY
...bringing the gain
National
Sales & Growth
Conference
...Building Capacity, Driving Growth
2025
Theme:
UNLOCKING GROWTH THROUGH
SALES EXCELLENCE &
BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT
WED 3RD - THURS 4TH
DECEMBER 2025
9AM-
3PM
NECA House, Plot A2, Hakeem Balogun Street,
Central Business District, Alausa, Ikeja, Lagos.
ATTENDANCE
FREE
REGISTRATION
COMPULSORY
http://bit.ly/3IC96Ct
28
Days to go
FOR REGISTRATION & ENQUIRIES
0803 407 8679, 0907 453 6176
natellacademy@gmail.com | enrol@natellacademy.com.ng
www.natellacademy.com.ng

I'll rather die than keep quiet about Jesus -Tonto Dike

Actress Tonto Dike, has continued to push the narrative of her new found love for preaching the gospel and telling the whole world about how much she loves Jesus Christ.

In a new post on her Instagram handle, the actress, who claims she is now a born again, highlighted how important and how much she loves Jesus Christ who saved her. In an emphatic stand, Tonto added that she would rather die than stop talking about Christ.

She wrote on her Instagram handle: "I would rather be mocked, ridiculed, or even slain than silence the name of the One who saved me.

"I refuse to hide God to protect my image before mere mortals.

"If it comes to it, I will wear mockery like perfume and carry reproach like a crown, because He is worth it all.

"Don't be ashamed to carry God everywhere. Unapologetically, God is looking for soldiers", Tonto wrote.



My mother died empty, says Tolu Odukoya, unveils '#My PastorBimboOdukoyastory'

Pastor Tolu Odukoya Ijogun, the daughter of late Pastor Bimbo odukoya, has revealed that her mother died practically empty because of her act of giving. She said her mother could give her eye for people and she was passionate about giving helping hands to people.

Pastor Ijogun said this on her Instagram handle as she kickstarted #MyBimboStory' to mark the 20th anniversary of the passage of a woman that impacted on many lives.

She said the idea stemmed from her encounter with people who told stories about how her mother's preaching and activities impacted on them positively.

She wrote: "This is just Part 1 because there's so much to say.

"My mother, my mentor, my inspiration.... Bimbo Odukoya.

"I've seen so many beautiful comments already, and they mean the world....

"But, I would truly love, if you could also share a short video telling your own story, how she touched your life, your faith, or your journey.

"Please post it with #MyPastorBimboStory so we can celebrate her impact together", she explained.

Kicking off #'My Pastor Bimbo story with her own experience, Pastor Tolu, said, God must have loved her so much to allow Pastor Taiwo and Bimbo Odukoya to parent her. She further explained that her mother loved God passionately and was not ashamed of talking about Him. "Bimbo Odukoya loved Jesus, she carried Him literally on her head. Bimbo Odukoya was my mother, she was an amazing mother. From very early, I knew that I was blessed to have her as my mother and my dad also. I said God must love me to have given me to this people", she said. "My mother was a lover of Jesus, a very passionate lover of my father and us her kids and all who were called to her. She loved God unashamedly and never cared who you were and where you are coming from.

"You will know about her God and she was very proud of being called a child of God. She carried her God and you will know. She was big on marriage, how people have made mistakes, demystified all the ideas around marriage and she loved people.

" My mother can give her eye. She was a giver to the core. She gave her all and she died empty, although she died at 45. She died empty because she gave it all and every person she met."



How I got married at 44 -Eve Esin talks to single ladies



STORIES BY ORJI ONYE-KWERE

Beautiful Nollywood actress Eve Esin, who just got married has opened up about her journey to marriage. She said, she never lost hope that one day she will meet the right man.

Esin said, she got hitched at the age of 43 though it was private. Adding that for some people, her testimony is impossible though she keyed into faith, believing in the Word of God that says that no man will say and it will come to pass, when God has not spoken.

Eve narrates her story: "My post is to give someone who has lost hope, hope. I am not a motivational speaker, but a child God showed mercy. I am only speaking from a place of truth.

"I got legally hitched at age 43, though extremely private. The pictures will still make it here. Clocked 44 on the 17th of October and got married traditionally and publicly on the 18th of October. To so many, the testimony I have is almost impossible. 43 years, not married? Old cargo!!!

"Who says a thing and it comes to pass when God has not spoken? Darling, I have been through it all, someday I will tell my story. I thank God for never letting me lose faith in him.

"I join my faith with anyone that feels time is slipping by and i say delay is not denial. May God in his infinite mercy grant the desires of your heart and divinely connect you to that person that completes you in Jesus mighty name, Amen," she prayed.

Fans angry with Tems for claiming to be 'Jesus baby'

Award winning Nigeria singer Temilade Openiyi, popularly known as Tems, have angered some social media fans after she claimed to be "Jesus baby"

Her comment sparked off condemnation from netizens who felt she can't claim to be "Jesus baby" when she sings secular music.

The singer made this declaration while answering questions at the People Gallery during the 2025 Fashion Awards. She was asked by the host about her zodiac sign, which she responded that her sign is love.



"Oh, I'm a Jesus baby. My sign is love, peace and joy," she said.

Since the clip went viral on the social media, the Grammy award winner has been criticised by some of the netizens who said she cannot claim what she is not.

One of the respondents that reacted this way: xm_muva wrote: "She [Tems] makes worldly music and shakes her fine ass on stage to the entire world. Christians are hypocrites lol. Y'all think your religion is a buffet, bro. Be free, ah?"

Actress Nkechi Blessing reveals what would have been her first atrocious movie role



Popularly Nollywood actress Nkechi Sunday Blessing, has opened up about some of the serious challenges she faced in the industry after she kicked-off her acting career.

Speaking in the recent edition of Honest bunch podcast, the actress revealed that one of the greatest challenges she faced while starting was when she was giving some unrealistic roles to play

The actress and producer recalled being handed a script that will require her to sleep with a dog, but she immediately turned it down because of the backlash of her action in the future.

She said, "Despite being a newcomer, I was given a script to sleep with a dog. I rejected it because I can't start off my career like that. Imagine my first ever movie, I am sleeping with a dog. It doesn't make sense. It is going to be a tag because whatever you start with is what people would associate you with. I didn't want to be renowned as someone who sleeps with dogs in movies.

"So, I rejected that script. But immediately I threw it down, so many girls grabbed it. I'm not sure any of them is in the limelight today."

However, luck smiled at her when she met veteran film maker Emeka Duru. He offered her a role the movie 'Through the Fire' produced by Emem Isong, which marked the beginning of her success journey in Nollywood.

MCSN phases out general distribution of royalties

The Musical Copyright Society Nigeria Lt/Gte (MCSN) is set to phase out general distribution of royalties to members starting from next year. In a communication to the members of the Society, MCSN announced that from next year, 2026; the Society will phase out general distribution schemes in which most members received same amount of money during distribution exercises.

In a circular dated 27th November and signed by the Chief Executive Officer of the Society, Mr. Mayo Ayilaran, announcing royalty distribution for the year ended 31 December 2023, the Society explained that "though the sum which is far short of our projection from collectable royalties from users of musical works and sound recordings, many of which are still not responding to our invoices, but it is clear evidence of massive growth of the membership of the Society within the last circle of distribution and the current one "

MCSN informed the membership that its desire is to "move from analogue and general distributions schemes to a more equitable, scientifically and technologically powered distribution exercises in the very near future". The Society strongly advised the membership that members should make it a top priority to notify and register their works on its appropriate platforms by logging into its website or reaching out to the Membership department.

MCSN also informed the members that it is working towards moving away from what is popularly known as "general distribution" to work and use based "specific distribution" informed by logs and reports from licensees.

In a brief chat, Mr. Ayilaran explained what general distribution and specific distribution mean.

VICTORY APARTMENT



FACILITES & SERVICES

- Accomodation
- 24hours Room Service
- Air Conditioning
- Free Wifi
- 24hours Power
- Free Parking Space
- Security









**No3 Uruan Close, Off Ambo Street,
Mbuka Area Calabar South**

BOOK NOW
+234(0)9166622224
victoryapartment647@gmail.com

Diabetes and wellbeing: A national development perspective



The global health landscape is undergoing a silent, yet profound, transformation. Where infectious diseases once reigned supreme, a new wave of chronic conditions, non-communicable diseases (NCDs) like Type 2 diabetes, hypertension, and heart disease are taking their place, driven largely by what we choose to eat. The price of convenience and the ubiquity of cheap, ultra-processed foods are creating a dual public health crisis, and Nigeria must now address not just hunger, but the quality of every meal.

Nigeria faces a significant and escalating diabetes burden. According to the International Diabetes Federation (IDF), the national prevalence of diabetes among adults aged 20–79 was estimated at 3% in 2024, translating to approximately three million adults living with the condition. This gives Nigeria the highest absolute number of adults with diabetes in the African region.

However, recent systematic reviews and meta-analyses suggest that the true burden may be considerably higher, with pooled prevalence estimates ranging from 6% to 7%, that is up to eight million, reflecting substantial subnational variation and widespread underdiagnosis.

Nearly half of adults with diabetes in Nigeria remain undiagnosed, fuelling complications like heart disease, kidney failure, and early death, according to the World Health Organisation. Diabetes now accounts for a major share of Nigeria's NCD burden, straining both primary and specialist care. Globally, NCDs remain the leading cause of death, with premature deaths concentrated in low- and middle-income countries. Poor diets high in salt, sugar, and unhealthy fats are a key driver, costing trillions in lost productivity and healthcare spending.

The 2024 Nigeria Demographic and Health Survey (NDHS) revealed that 41% of children aged 6-23 months consume sugar beverages, 24% consume unhealthy foods, and only 12% meet minimum dietary diversity. This early exposure to poor nutrition lays the foundation for a lifetime of health challenges.

Furthermore, the 2024 Global Food Policy Report noted that nearly 80% of Nigerians could not afford a healthy diet in 2022, highlighting deep affordability and accessibility issues. Tragically, NCDs are now responsible for nearly 600 deaths per 100,000 Nigerians, overtaking communicable diseases as the leading cause of mortality.

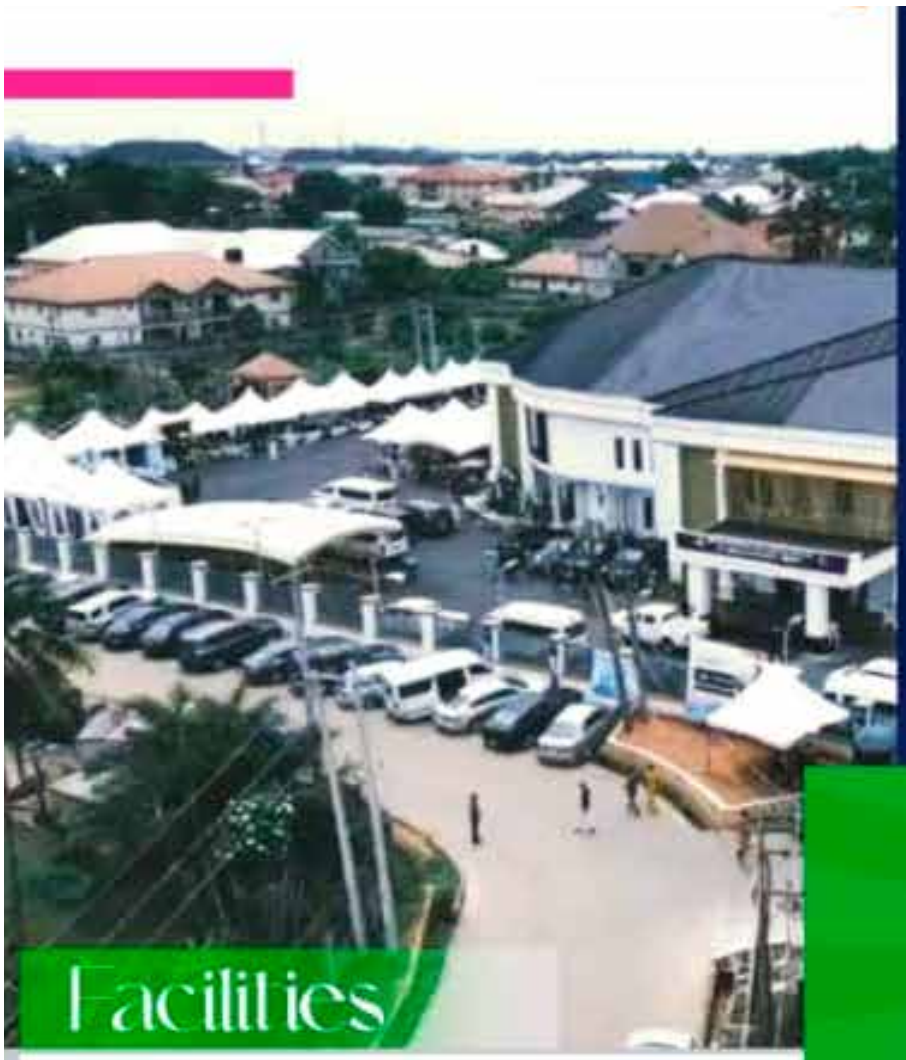
The case for strong policy is not merely moral nor academic; it is an economic necessity that addresses a clear market failure. When profit motives incentivize the mass production and aggressive marketing of nutritionally poor products, especially to vulnerable populations, the government must intervene to protect public health. Robust healthy food policies are not an infringement on personal choice but a mechanism to internalize the societal costs of poor nutrition, which currently burden healthcare system and the economy, not the manufacturers.

Nigeria's food environment needs to be reshaped, and action be taken across fiscal, regulatory, and institutional domains. An effective sugar-sweetened beverage (SSB) tax deters consumption and generates revenue for nutrition programs. Simultaneously, subsidies for fresh produce can improve affordability and access. Information and marketing regulation must also become the norm. The aggressive advertising of high-fat, high-sugar, and high-salt products particularly aimed at children must be curtailed.

Also, mandatory Front-of-Pack labels (FOPL) empower consumer choice by overcoming literacy barriers and simplifying nutrition information. The National Policy on Food Safety and Quality launched in 2024, must translate into tangible standards for schools, hospitals, and public institutions, removing sugary drinks and junks from our plates.

The clock is ticking on the National Policy on Food and Nutrition (2016-2025), with targets like reducing diet-related NCDs by 25% by 2025 unlikely to be met. This highlights the need for a revised, transformative policy in the next decade. Implementing bold, evidence-based food policies from SSB taxes to marketing restrictions and clear warning labels can transform Nigeria's food system from a source of disease into a pillar of health and national productivity.

To make World Diabetes Day 2025 meaningful, we need to ensure that the convenience of modern/ convenient foods does not ultimately cost the health of the Nigerian populace.



Cathelea
CONVENTION AND EVENTS

4000 CAPACITY AND MOST FRIENDLY ENVIRONMENT FOR GUESTS EXPERIENCE!

Facilities

- Main Hall - 4000 capacity with in-built world class stage lights, sound systems and special effects equipment. Best air conditioning system and sound proof walls. Serviced by 23 conveniences.
- 3 Fully furnished back stage rooms for offices, changing rooms or holding purposes.
- Exotic Hall - 500 capacity
- Mini Hall - 200 capacity
- Basement and open car parks - 550 cars without overflow.
- Located 8 minutes from Benin Airport.
- 24 hours private security and CCTV surveillance.
- Traffic from 6 roads around the location.
- Uninterrupted power supply.
- Basement car park available for multiple use- pavilions, trade fairs, exhibitions etc.



No 2 Ayanyo Omoigui Street (By Chief Daniel Inneh Street/Oko Central Road) Off 2nd Ugbor Road, GRA Benin City

+23481362669924

catheleaconvention@gmail.com

My impression of Real Housewives Ultimate Girls Trip –Mariam Timmer

Showmax's latest original reality series, The Real Housewives Ultimate Girls' Trip: Africa was premiered on Friday, 28 November. Mariam Timmer from the Real Housewives of Lagos speaks exclusively about the bold energy she's bringing into this season and the surprises that came with filming.



What was it like to be on the first edition of The Real Housewives Ultimate Girls Trip: Africa?

Being part of the very first edition of The Real Housewives Ultimate Girls Trip: Africa, is an incredible honor and a major milestone for me. Just like when I was selected as part of the debut cast of The Real Housewives of Lagos, it carries that same powerful feeling if not even more. I truly feel that I've helped pave the way for other African countries, especially Nigeria, to shine on this kind of global platform.

My name, Mariam Timmer, will always be part of the conversation when it comes to groundbreaking reality TV moments in Africa and that's something I'm deeply proud of.

RHUGT Africa was an amazing experience because they could have chosen anyone, yet they chose me. That, to me, is a testament to my work ethic, my authenticity and the energy I bring to the screen. It shows that staying true to myself has opened doors I never even imagined.

As an OG housewife, having been on all seasons of The Real Housewives of Lagos, what do you think RHUGT Africa will make people understand about you that they didn't before?

The Real Housewives Ultimate Girls Trip is going to make it impossible for people to overlook my evolution. I've grown, I've elevated, and I've refined who I am personally, emotionally and professionally. I'm not the same woman you met in Season 1 of RHOL and this trip shows that clearly. My consistency, my work ethics, and my presence speak louder than ever.

People will see that I'm not just someone who shows up. I show up with intention, clarity, and control. You'll see how I handle myself, how I manage situations, and how I hold my own no matter what the environment brings. This season is a reminder that Mariam Timmer isn't just part of the show; she sets the tone.

Was there anyone you connected with immediately and anyone who surprised you in ways you didn't expect?

I connected immediately with Annie Mthembu from the Durban franchise. Our energy matched from the start, and we bonded both personally and on a more professional, intentional level. I also connected well with Princess Jecoco from Abuja. There was instant familiarity and ease with her. As for the ones I didn't connect with right away… let's just say you'll have to watch the show to see how that story unfolds!

Did you form any new friendships on the trip?

Absolutely! I formed some beautiful new friendships on this trip, especially with the Durban ladies and Princess Jecoco. They were truly a breath of fresh air, and I connected with them in a very genuine way. I really like their energy, their openness and the way they show up for the people around them.

I also formed bonds with a few others, and what made it special was that our connection went beyond the show. Outside of RUGTA, we were able to open up, share what we were dealing with in our personal lives, and really support each other. That, to me, is sisterhood and I appreciated every moment of it.

You're known for being expressive and unfiltered. Did you feel the need to manage perception differently on this trip, or did you lean fully into your natural energy?

Haha, yes everyone knows I'm expressive and unfiltered, and one thing I'll never do is water myself down for anyone, no matter where I am. I don't manage people's perceptions of me. I show up as myself. Always. To be honest, I didn't feel the need to adjust to anything. A lot of the girls came in with their own ideas of who they thought I was, and you could tell they were on eggshells around me for a few days.

Then they realized I'm actually very easy to talk to and a whole vibe on my own. I brought my natural, happy energy as always, but I was also very self-aware of the space, the dynamics and the people I was with. So yes, I was fully me… just the elevated, intentional version.

Annie Mthembu of The Real Housewives of Durban in a recent interview said it was a tie between you and Christall Kay of The Real Housewives of Johannesburg on who brought the drama this season. Do you agree with her?

Haha, I love that! Drama is part of what makes these shows so entertaining, and I definitely brought my energy to the table. Christall Kay had her moments too, so I can see why Annie said it was a tie. But honestly, I like to think that while I bring the drama, I also bring authenticity, fun and heart and that's what makes my presence on the show unforgettable. So yes, I'll own it, I brought it, but in true Mariam Timmer style!

Which cultural moment on the trip made you proud to represent Lagos and Nigeria?

Honestly, every single day on that trip made me proud to represent Lagos and Nigeria. Being Nigerian isn't something I switch on and off, it is who I am, and I carry that identity with me everywhere I go. One of my proudest moments was teaching the girls about my Yoruba heritage. They were fascinated, they were curious, and they genuinely appreciated the culture I brought to the table. That meant a lot to me.

I'm also a huge believer in Nigerian and African fashion. I made it a point to wear only Nigerian designers throughout the show just like I've always done on RHOLagos. Every outfit was a statement, a celebration, and a reminder of the creativity coming out of our country.

I'm proud of who we are and being on a platform that allows me to showcase Nigeria's talent, culture, and craftsmanship to the world is something I take seriously. Representing Lagos and Nigeria will always be my honor.

Your style is a big part of your identity. What went into your fashion choices for RHUGT:Africa, especially knowing you were stepping onto a continental stage?

My style is absolutely a major part of my identity and RHUGT: Africa, I knew I was stepping onto a continental stage, so I came prepared. I wanted my fashion to speak loudly, clearly, and proudly about where I come from.

Just like on The Real Housewives of Lagos, I made it my mission to spotlight the brilliance of the African fashion industry, especially Nigeria. Nigerian designers are some of the most talented creatives in the world, and wearing their pieces is always an honor for me. Every outfit was intentional, every look was curated, and every moment was an opportunity to show off the artistry coming out of Nigeria.

I can proudly say I represented Nigerian designers throughout the entire trip and that, for me, was a major statement.

Why should people watch you on RHUGT: Africa?

Because I bring it all authenticity, grace, fashion, fun, laughter, drama… basically, the full experience. With so many incredible personalities from across the continent, it could get chaotic, but I would say I kept it exciting, real, and unforgettable. I'm unfiltered, unapologetically myself, and always ready to make an impact in every scene.

Expect bold fashion, bold energy, and bold moments you won't be able to take your eyes off me!

#Philip Asiodu: Blast from the years locusts ate our civil service



A remarkable book presentation in honour of one of the most significant public servants Nigeria has ever produced, Izoma, Philip Chikwuedo Asiodu, 91, took place at the Metropolitan Club, Victoria Island, Lagos on Wednesday this week, (December 3, 2025). The presentation of Hallmarks of Labour Special Edition Series featuring the iconic Philip Asiodu was well attended by many senior citizens who would make us relive Nigeria as it used to be before the rains began to beat us.

Sadly, the event by the author, Chief Patricia Otuedon- Arawore was poorly reported by the news media operatives who were apparently unaware. You could spot only publisher of Vanguard, Prince Sam, Amuka Pemu 90+, and former Managing Director and Chairman of the organic Daily Times, Akogun Tola Adeniyi, 80+, Chairman of the Editorial Board of The Nation, Sam Omatseye, and yours sincerely. The landmark event was also attended by even great captains of industry including Fola Adeola of GT, Bank, Atedo Peterside of Stanbic, IBTC, great scholars including Professor Suleiman, Elias Bogoro, former Executive Secretary, TertFund, many retired federal permanent secretaries, former Head of the Civil Service of the Federation, Professor Oladapo Afolabi, representative of the current Head of the Civil Service of the Federation, and representative of Governor of Delta State; Senator Ede Dafinone, representing Delta State Central Senatorial District, and many other icons including former President of Court of Appeal, Justice Ayo Salami.

One of the most respectable last men still standing, General Yakubu Gowon, Ph.D who has some remarkable stories to tell about the good old days of public and civil service in Nigeria, was the Chairman of the book launch. Besides, one of the most significant in the rank of retired permanent secretaries, Goke Adegoroye, Ph.D, reviewed the book so constructively that the work began to raise diverse curiosities including how a country that once produced some of the most brilliant public officers, in their thirties under the same Yakubu Gowon, is today generally believed to be unable to raise a competent civil service. The review raises thorny questions and contrasts about the years the locusts ate our democratic infrastructure that would have supported a strong superstructure of a capable nation. The book review and talking points again remind us of the late General Murtala's deadly blows on sanctity of civil service. It deconstructs the very short but consequential six months of the impetuous soldier and leader, Murtala who dreamed of and proclaimed today's capital of the federation, Abuja 49 years ago. You will relive in the book through the epic review, how the wind of Murtala's change within a few days blew away all the Asiodus, whose foundation of efficiency, accountability, integrity would have built Africa's foremost civil service.

In the main, the book on Asiodu reopens our eyes to how leaders after Gowon even in a democracy, threw away the principle and discipline of National Development Plans, which no one remembers anymore in our new dispensation of leadership. There are therefore so many deliverables from the book as revealed by the reviewer who has written three books on the same public service and its leadership. Let's open some interesting excerpts from the reviewer:

…The thesis of PC Asiodu at all the gatherings where he has discussed these topics have centred on 4-5 critical issues and propositions, namely:

The 1975 Purge of the Federal Civil Service

The Tragedy of Abandoning the 3rd National Plan 1975-1980

A Language Policy to Foster National Integration

The National Vision Imperative

A Great Role Waiting For A Player

The 1975 Purge of the Federal Civil Service

The 1975 Purge is a recurring decimal throughout the book, because of its impact on the federal civil service ever since. However, I want to quote from pages 113 and 114, which provide the best description of what took place.

"The traumatic massive purge of about 10,000 officials over a period of two months, without due process, involving officials from the rank of Permanent Secretary to the class of messengers being retired or dismissed, including some obvious leaders and role models, some without any terminal benefits or pensions destroyed the professional, non-partisan, fearless, prestigious, merit-driven Civil Service and Public Service inherited from the British Colonial Administration. In the process, the nation lost a great deal of institutional memory and international connections.

The more senior ones, who inspired the ideals of the Pre-Independence movement and the patriotic commitments of the leaders of the First Republic, were still energetic in suggesting and developing policies, programmes and projects and who also imbued, as they were, with the old core values would be able to provide some checks and balances were swept away. The suffering, including premature death of scores of officials affected by the purge fuelled the resort to "make hay while the sun shines", an obvious euphemism for corruption which now threatens the future of the country.

The Tragedy of Abandoning the 3rd National Plan 1975-1980

"How did Nigeria find itself in the situation of stagnated economic development and failure to create jobs during the rapid global economic expansion of the last four decades" was the question he asked on page 134. The answer, which he recalls every time "with great pain and regret" was that the 3rd National Development Plan 1975-1980, which was launched in April 1975 was abandoned. Stressing the point further he says:

"The great tragedy is that the Murtala/Obasanjo Administration which replaced the overthrown Gowon Administration in July 1975 effectively abandoned the 1975-1980 Plan with its great promise of creating the basis for economic diversification and industrialization, and also abandoned indeed, the principle and discipline of Planning". "We may recall the impressive average annual growth rate of 6% achieved under the 1st Plan 1962-1966, later extended to 1968; and after the Civil War, the average annual growth rate of 11.75% from 1970-1975. Ten more years of growth at that rate and Nigeria would have exited from underdevelopment and poverty" (p. 134-135; also p. 52, 68, 120, 140, 144-145, 196). According to him, "abandoning the Planning and the Discipline of Planning in 1975 resulted in over four decades of floundering" (p.140).

As he said on page 114 "The Pre-Purge independent, prestigious, fearless, Civil Service might have been able to succeed in advising against such anti-plan policies and Nigeria's economic history in the last two decades of the 20th century would have been very different".

A Language Policy to Foster National Integration

Asiodu sees language as a unifier, a vehicle for national integration. His advocacy in this regard can be found on pages 93 -94 and on page 178. On page 93 he states: "I had hoped following on the early success of the National Youth Service Scheme that we would be able to persuade the Government to introduce a Language Policy to foster national integration. That was before the termination of the Gowon Administration by the Coup of July 1975.

Such a policy would require each child to learn to read and write in the local language where he or she begins schooling, even in private schools. By the age of 10, the child begins to receive instructions in English as is the practice now. The new policy would be that by the age of 12 or 13 when he or she enters a secondary school, he/she has to make a choice. If he is in the North, he must choose one Southern Language, which he will be taught to speak, read or write. The chances are that the child will choose either Igbo or Yoruba. In the South, the child will likely choose Hausa as the Northern Language. All secondary schools will have the necessary language departments. . . .For the avoidance of doubt, English will still remain the official language of the Federal Government.

The National Vision Imperative

His distaste for the way succeeding administrations after that of Gowon have discarded the 1975-1980 Plan and while not being able to develop an alternative have either displayed a lack of interest in the Vision 2010 which they met or simply enjoyed what he terms the "flirtations of Vision 2020" explains why he started advocating for a National Vision and Agenda 2040. This, readers will find on pages 54, 64, 83, 84, 138, 139. The essential elements of the National Vision 2040 and how it will be broken into 4-5 years National Economic Perspective Plans are on pages 55 and 56

The Search For A Leader, arising from his defined hypothesis of: "A Great Role Waiting For A Player" PC Asiodu, a great planner and man of vision himself has always been conscious that a good national vision needs a committed leader. Like someone on a treetop or on the pulpit he declares, in the manner of John the Baptist's "Voice of one crying in the wilderness" (Isaiah 40:3), in his paper titled "Re-Positioning Education In Nigeria For Peace and Development" at the Hallmarks of Labour Re-Union Lecture on 14 September 2017 and I am quoting from page 83 of this book :

"There is a great role waiting for a player in Nigeria. There is a need for a great patriotic and visionary leader to articulate a National Vision and Agenda of where Nigeria should be by 2040, to be at least a top middle income nation of over 300 million people and to quote from Vision 2010: "A united, industrious, caring, God-fearing democratic society committed to making the basic needs of life affordable for everyone and creating Africa's leading economy". Such a leader he says "will need to lead a revolutionary change of attitude, beyond party, tribal and religious divides, amongst leaders of all sectors of government and society to embrace all aspects of good governance and relaunch Nigeria irreversibly on the path to unity and greatness. He must be ready to commit his life to this great cause".

He noted on page 123 that Chief Olusegun Obasanjo who came in in 1999 as President "unfortunately completely set aside Vision 2010". We can only imagine, as only God knows, the amount of pressures he must have placed on the President to implement that Vision, given that he was his Chief Economic Adviser. Having failed in convincing President Obasanjo, he nonetheless relaxed to see how the Vision 2020 that Obasanjo instituted was going to be implemented. He witnessed during 2009 and 2010 that Government at the Federal and State levels, with the active participation of a broad spectrum of Nigerians, including public and private sector experts and representatives of NGOs elaborated the Vision 2020. However, he soon discovered that it was, in his words, all "flirtation".

His persistent advocacy for a new leadership that will drive Vision 2040 led him to speak to audience across generations. Whether he was speaking to the very mature audience in top positions or to secondary school pupils, as he did to the Chrisland Schools Limited Class of 2016 at their Prize Giving Day in 2016, the message is the same: Things must change. … Things will only change when, through the right type of education, Nigeria produces the leadership to develop and inspire us with vision to greatness (p. 272). His advocacy also drove him to tailor his presentations to speak to the sitting presidents to heed his call to a National Vision.

Governors mobilise lawmakers for special seats for women



Nigerian Governors' Forum (NGF) has vowed to mobilise federal and state lawmakers to support the passage of the bill for special seats for momen in the National and State Houses of Assembly.

The News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) reports that the move is at boosting women's political representation in the country.

Chairman of NGF, Gov. Abdulrahman Abdulrazaq of Kwara, made the pledge at the 6th Annual Summit of the forum on Thursday in Abuja.

NAN also reports that the theme of the summit was: "United for Change: Men and Women Ending Digital Violence Together."

Abdulrazaq, who was represented by the Governor of Plateau, Caleb Mutfwang, said that NGF would mobilise their members at the 10th National Assembly to act on the HB 1349—the Reserved Seats for Women Bill.

"We are equally supportive of the initiative and campaign for women to have special seats in the Nigerian Parliament.

"We believe in it, and we are supporting it whole-heartedly. I want to assure you that the governors will mobilise their members in the national assembly to do the needful," he said.

In her remarks, Chairperson of Nigeria Governors' Spouses Forum, Olufolake Abdulrazaq, called for action beyond parliamentary votes to achieve special seats for women in the parliament.

"We hear the debate for the special seat bill has been postponed again. The call is for more than just legislation. We want our political parties to engage with us and ensure that women are not targets in this process.

"We also have a personal responsibility to raise awareness and prevent digital violence. Studies show that one in five women in the UK face such abuse, but in Nigeria, the figure is as high as 63 per cent," he said.

Osun LG Dispute: Govt, ALGON differ on S'Court ruling

MIKE DIKE

The Supreme Court's ruling on Friday has deepened the ongoing dispute over local government administration in Osun State, as the state government and the Association of Local Governments of Nigeria (ALGON) expressed differing interpretations of the judgment.

In its landmark decision, the apex court ruled that only local government chairmen elected after the exit of former Governor Gboyega Oyetola have the legal standing to challenge the handling of Osun's local government allocations. The court affirmed that only Local Government Areas—not state governments—can institute such cases, noting that the proper dispute should be between the LGAs and the Attorney General of the Federation.

The court further stated that chairmen elected after the nullification of the Oyetola-era local government elections ought to have filed the suit. It added that those who won the 2025 local government elections and have since been inaugurated are the legally recognized officials with the right to sue and be sued.

The Supreme Court, which indirectly upheld the earlier





Court of Appeal judgment, relied on its prior decisions that barred state governments from administering local government allocations. The appellate court had earlier affirmed the mandate of the chairmen elected on February 22, 2025, who were subsequently sworn in by Governor Ademola Adeleke.

Emphasizing its stance on upholding local government autonomy, the Supreme Court held that the Osun State Attorney General cannot act on behalf of an already elected local government leadership.

The six-to-one judgment suggests that the duly elected LG chairmen must now decide whether to pursue the matter directly as the affected parties or rely on ongoing cases to present the issue again before the Supreme Court.

Legal experts at the hearing explained that the judgment effectively reaffirms the Court of Appeal's position recognizing the 2025 elected chairmen.

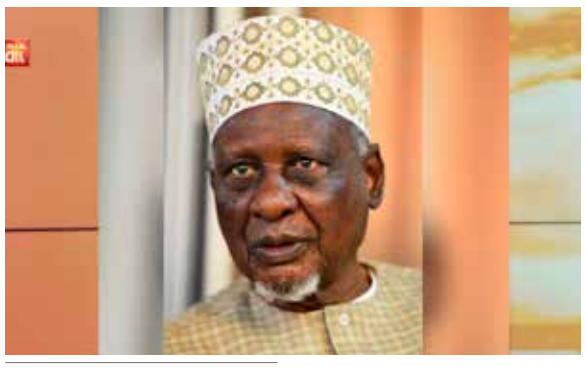
"I think the Supreme Court has just pointed out the way out of the imbroglio. The people affected are those they call 'sit-at-home chairmen.' They should have been the ones to bring the case. Indirectly, the Supreme Court has recognized the 2025 elected chairmen. It also implies confirmation that only one set of LG leadership exists today—and that is the 2025 set.

"Also, the ruling sustains the order on banks never to release money to any fake chairmen. It means the 'Yes/No' people who had no tenure in the first place can never touch the money. So what is next is for the authentic ALGON to rise to the occasion and push for their rights," one of the legal analysts said.

Meanwhile, reports indicated that Governor Ademola Adeleke has congratulated the elected chairmen and councillors following the pronouncement. The governor was said to have personally called the Chairman of Osun ALGON, Hon. Sarafadeen Awotunde (Spain), shortly after the judgment, describing the outcome as "a big plus for grassroots democracy."

"Mr. Governor has congratulated ALGON on the outcome. He told us to be happy that finally our mandate has been affirmed by the Supreme Court. The Governor asked Spain to tell his people to give glory to God. Today, Spain-led ALGON remains the authentic LG leadership according to the apex court," a chairman who was with Spain confirmed.

Speaker Abbas eulogises elder statesman Alhaji Tanko Yakasai at 100



MARK ABA

Speaker of the House of Representatives Rt. Hon. Abbas Tajudeen, GCON, has eulogised the founder of the Northern Elders' Council, Alhaji Tanko Yakasai, who clocked 100 on Friday, describing him as an elder statesman and a living legend.

In a message on Friday, the Speaker said the Kano-born founding member of the Arewa Consultative Forum is a 'living library' whose active participation in Nigeria's socio-political and cultural affairs predates the country's independence.

Speaker Abbas, in the tribute issued through his Special Adviser on Media and Publicity, Musa Abdullahi Krishi, recalled how Alhaji Tanko Yakasai joined the struggle for Nigeria's independence from British colonial rule and remained patriotic to the country ever.

While also eulogising Alhaji Yakasai for his reputable public service, including being a presidential liaison officer in the defunct Second Republic, the Speaker said the centenarian committed his life to his fatherland and the people.

"Alhaji Yakasai's records of leadership and statesmanship have made him one of the most respected Nigerians who provide wise counsel to Nigerians in different sectors and divides," he said.

Speaker Abbas prayed to Allah, SWT, to grant Alhaji Tanko Yakasai sound health as he continues serving his people.

Jega urges youth involvement in politics to strengthen Nigeria's democracy

Prof. Attahiru Jega, former chairman of the Independent National Election Commission (INEC), has advocated increase involvement of youths in politics to entrench Nigeria's nascent democracy.

Jega said this on Thursday at a public lecture organised by Federal University of Kashere (FUK), Kashere, in Akko Local Government Area of Gombe State.

The theme of the event is: "Elections and Good Governance in Nigeria."

He said meaningful youth involvement was crucial for strengthening and sustaining democracy in Nigeria.

Jega said youth inclusion in politics would help tackle some of the challenges in governance and bring in fresh ideas towards solving the problems in governance.

He said that since the ballot remained a key route to renewing leadership in any democracy, the youths should not be indifferent about it but embrace the process to effect positive change in leadership.

"The participation amongst youths in politics is declining in spite of the improvement being recorded in the electoral process since 2011.

"Youths must ensure they participate by registering to get their permanent voter card for those who have turned 18, and then get involved going forward to voting and belonging to political parties.



"If you don't participate, then you will allow the prevailing bad tendency to be more consolidated and deepened," he said.

Jega said that many youths had lost faith in the electoral system because of the attitude of some politicians who do not deliver on their campaign promises.

He said that some youths had expressed frustration with governance in Nigeria, arguing that, "democracy has failed us but I tell you democracy has not failed us only the operators did."

He said that the poor performance of some public servants resulting in bad governance and lack of trust in the electoral process amongst others had discouraged youths from participating in politics.

According to Jega, some youths are supporting military coup whenever it happens in any African country because of the failure of politicians in various capacities.

Jega called on the government and stakeholders to work more to improve electoral integrity through good governance, transparency and efficiency of the process to encourage youth involvement in politics.

The Vice Chancellor, Prof. Umaru Pate, said the lecture was coming at a time when Nigeria continued to search for pathways to democratic renewal, institutional trust and stronger governance.

Pate said the event was part of efforts at deepening civic education, stimulating critical reflection and connecting scholarship with the lived realities of the people.

"Across Nigeria, we face a crisis of public trust, declining civic engagement, rising misinformation, and persistent governance challenges.

"Yet, we also see the resilience of citizens, the commitment of institutions, and the determined push for reforms that can strengthen our democracy.

Lagos, Kaduna, Oyo, FCT top Nigeria's 2025 ease of boing business rankings

Presidential Enabling Business Environment Council (PEBEC) has released two pivotal 2025 reports spotlighting the state of Nigeria's business climate—namely, the Subnational Ease of Doing Business (FoDB) Report and the Business Facilitation Act (BFA) Performance Report for Federal Government Ministries, Departments, and Agencies (MDAs).

Together, these reports deliver a comprehensive, data-driven evaluation of Nigeria's progress in fostering a more competitive, transparent, and efficient business environment at both subnational and federal levels.

The 2025 Subnational FoDB Report ranks Nigeria's 36 states and the Federal Capital Territory on their business competitiveness across 16 key indicators including electricity access, infrastructure quality, digital connectivity, trade logistics, land administration, taxation, and justice delivery. Lagos State emerged as the uncontested leader with an 85.6% score, followed by Kaduna State scoring 65.1%. Oyo State (62.7%), the FCT (61.0%), and Ogun State (59.9%) completed the top five, with Enugu, Plateau, Ekiti, Kano, and Nasarawa rounding out the top ten.

"These top-performing states have distinguished themselves by sustaining reform momentum, refining digital processes, and nurturing more predictable regulatory environments," Director-General of PEBEC, Zahrah Audu, said. Adding, "Their performance sets a benchmark for others to deepen reforms and enhance the business environment."

The report further identified urgent priority interventions that states should adopt, such as establishing investor aftercare systems, enabling access to credit for MSMEs, harmonising interstate trade regulations, upgrading commercial justice frameworks, and reinforcing power reliability for industrial clusters. With PEBEC's ongoing support through the $750 million State Action on Business Enabling Reforms (SABER) programme, these insights, she said are designed to guide policy decisions and attract investments that spur long-term competitiveness.

In parallel, PEBEC's 2025 BFA Performance Report evaluates 69 federal MDAs on compliance with the Business Facilitation Act, focusing on service transparency, efficiency, and technology-driven improvements from January to October 2025. The Nigerian Content Development and Monitoring Board (NCDMB) topped the rankings with a remarkable 90.6% score. The National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) followed closely at 89.3%, while the Nigeria Customs Service (NCS) secured third position with 86.6%.

Drug war: NCWS seeks collaboration with NDLEA

The National Council of Women Societies (NCWS) Nigeria has commended President Bola Tinubu over the reappointment of Brig-Gen Mohammed Buba Marwa (rtd) as the Chairman/Chief Executive Officer of the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) for another term of five years, a decision the council says will further strengthen and consolidate the ongoing effort against substance use and illicit drug trafficking.

National President of NCWS, Edna Azura, who gave the commendation when she led other leaders of the council on a courtesy visit to Marwa at NDLEA national headquarters in Abuja, called for more collaboration between the women's group and the agency in the area of joint sensitisation programmes in schools, markets and communities as well as training of women leaders in drug abuse prevention, treatment and care.

"We appreciate Tinubu for this wonderful opportunity that he has given you extra five years. We are very grateful. This renewal is a clear national endorsement of your monumental contributions to national security, public health, women and youth protection. We are confident that your continued leadership will further fortify the nation's fight against drug trafficking and promote sustainable peace and stability," she noted.

She described Marwa's leadership at NDLEA as transformative and inspiring.

"Over the years, you have demonstrated what strong ethical and visionary public service truly means. Under your leadership, the agency has recorded unprecedented achievements from dismantling sophisticated drug trafficking networks to intercepting record level quantities of illicit substances, improving intelligence-driven operations, expanding community-based preventive education and strengthening rehabilitation pathways for victims of substance abuse. We are very grateful for that. These achievements are not just institutional milestones; they represent hope for millions of families, especially women and children, who often suffer the silent painful consequences of drug-related crimes, domestic challenges and societal instability," she stated.

While seeking further partnership with NDLEA in the fight against the drug scourge, Azura said: "At NCWS, we have also been actively mobilising women, mothers, teachers and community groups to participate in the fight against substance abuse.

Our ongoing school outreach programmes, advocacy forums and community sensitisation campaigns across the states have proven that when women are fully engaged, prevention becomes more effective."

Drug war: NCWS commends President Tinubu, Marwa, seeks collaboration with NDLEA



The National Council of Women Societies (NCWS) Nigeria has commended President Bola Ahmed Tinubu over the reappointment of Brig Gen Mohamed Buba Marwa (rtd) as Chairman/Chief Executive Officer of the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency for another term of five years, a decision the Council says will further strengthen and consolidate the ongoing effort against substance abuse and illicit drug trafficking.

National President of the NCWS, Princess Edna Azura who gave the commendation when she led other leaders of the Council on a courtesy visit to Marwa at the Agency's national headquarters in Abuja on Wednesday 3rd December 2025 called for more collaboration between the women's group and NDLEA in the area of joint sensitization programmes in schools, markets, and communities as well as training of women leaders in drug use prevention, treatment and care.

"We want to appreciate President Bola Ahmed Tinubu for this wonderful opportunity that he has given you extra five years. We are very, very grateful. This renewal is a clear national endorsement of your monumental contributions to national security, public health, women and youth protection. We are confident that your continued leadership will further fortify the nation's fight against drug trafficking and promote sustainable peace and stability", she noted.

She described Marwa's leadership at NDLEA as transformative and inspiring. "Over the years, you have demonstrated what strong ethical and visionary public service truly means. Under your leadership, the Agency has recorded unprecedented achievements from dismantling sophisticated drug trafficking networks to intercepting record level quantities of illicit substances, improving intelligence driven operations, expanding community based preventive education and strengthening rehabilitation pathways for victims of substance abuse. We are very grateful for that. These achievements are not just institutional milestones, they represent hope for millions of families, especially women and children, who often suffer the silent painful consequences of drug related crime, domestic challenges and societal instability", she stated.

While seeking further partnership with NDLEA in the fight against the drug scourge, Princess Azura said "at NCWS, we have also been actively mobilising women, mothers, teachers and community groups to participate in the fight against substance abuse. Our ongoing school outreach programmes, advocacy forums and community sensitisation campaigns across the states have proven that when women are fully engaged, prevention becomes more effective."

She said the NCWS is eager to explore strategic areas of cooperation with NDLEA, including training of the Council's national officers and state leaders as community anti-drug ambassadors; joint advocacy campaigns targeting mothers and caregivers; rehabilitation and reintegration especially for women and youths affected by substance abuse, among others.

In his response, Marwa expressed appreciation to the NCWS leaders for the visit and their kind remarks about him and President Tinubu. He said as the umbrella body for all women societies across the country, it is imperative for NDLEA to partner with the NCWS. He said the Agency considers the drug menace as Nigeria's number one problem today because it affects everyone and every community directly or indirectly, adding that with a population of about 15million drug users, there's the need for a whole of society response.

"So, this is a big challenge and government cannot handle it alone, we have to have the whole of society to work with us. So NCWS, we don't have any bigger partners than you because you are the mothers handling families all over the country, and it is very, very critical that you stand up. You have to stand up and be part of this struggle to redeem the souls of our young boys and girls, including the women who are afflicted", he stated.

The NDLEA boss assured the women leaders that the NDLEA will not only partner with them but will equally organise Drug Use Prevention, Treatment and Care (DPTC) training to equip them for the task ahead in 2026. "We will hold a DPTC training for you, we usually to do that for governors' spouses and I think we will tailor it to exactly what you will need, so that you can also take it down to the states, and down to the grassroots."

He urged them to also buy in and take ownership of the current push for drug integrity test for intending couples as part of efforts to discourage substance abuse and encourage early detection and treatment, especially among the youth.

Bauchi police hand suspected drug dealer, seized substances to NDLEA

The Bauchi State Police Command has handed over a suspected drug dealer, Mr Ogbu Simon, together with seized substances weighing about 161 kilogrammes, to the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) for further investigation and prosecution.

Commissioner of Police, Sani-Omolori Aliyu, speaking at the Command Headquarters on Friday, said the arrest was the result of a successful operation in Ningi Local Government Area.

"Worthy of note is the successful operation that led to the arrest of a drug dealer in Ningi LGA. The Command has apprehended Mr Ogbu Simon, a suspected narcotics dealer, and recovered 161kg of illicit drugs," he stated.

According to Aliyu, the estimated value of the recovered narcotics is approximately N12.2 million. He explained that on 26 November, at about 2000 hours, operatives from the Ningi Divisional Police Headquarters acted on intelligence provided by a concerned citizen regarding suspicious sacks being unloaded at a shop owned by the suspect. A raid led by Divisional Police Officer, CSP Surajo Ibrahim Birnin Kudu, resulted in the seizure of four bags containing suspected Diazepam (D5) and Tramadol tablets.

Aliyu added that the suspect, alleged to have supplied narcotics from Onitsha in Anambra State to Ningi and surrounding areas, was arrested following further investigation by the Operation Restore Peace unit.

"The suspect confessed to being a dealer supplying drugs to various markets within and outside Ningi," he said.

The Commissioner affirmed the Command's commitment to tackling drug-related crimes.

Drug war: NCWS seeks collaboration with NDLEA
NAHCO explains role in arrest, prosecution of ex-staff over stolen drug
NEDC distributes relief materials to families of slain Bauchi police officers

"The suspect alongside the exhibit is hereby handed over to the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA), Bauchi, for further investigation and diligent prosecution accordingly," he declared. He further noted that the Command's achievements were the result of partnerships with sister security agencies, community participation and intelligence-led policing.

Receiving the substances, Deputy Commander of NDLEA Bauchi, Usaini Umaru, commended the Police for their cooperation.

"On behalf of the State Commander, NDLEA, I wish to show our appreciation to the State Police Command for the prompt transfer of the case of unlawful possession of psychotropic substances suspected to be tramadol capsules and D5 tablets," he said.

Umaru stressed the importance of community involvement in the fight against drug trafficking.

"The most challenging we have is that of the communities; NDLEA alone cannot do this job; there must be synergy, both from the stakeholders and every other person concerned. Until the communities help us to identify them, we cannot do anything, but we assure them that there will be no problem if they volunteer information about the dealers. NDLEA is a disciplined organisation; we keep the secrets of our informants," he explained.

NFF hails Ekong on international retirement



The Nigeria Football Federation (NFF) has paid glowing tribute to Super Eagles captain, William Troost-Ekong, describing him as a "committed and humble leader" following his retirement from international football.

Troost-Ekong announced his retirement on his official X (Twitter) handle on Thursday, thanking fans, teammates and coaches for their support through his 10-year journey with the Super Eagles.

The former Olympiakos and Watford defender wrote that representing Nigeria at the FIFA World Cup and multiple AFCON tournaments was one of the greatest honours of his professional career.

NFF Director of Communications, Ademola Olajire, said in statement on Friday that the federation received the news of Ekong's departure with deep pride and gratitude for his decade of service to the country.

"Ekong gave everything to the Super Eagles," Olajire said.

"He led with passion, calmness and responsibility, and he served Nigeria with outstanding patriotism."

He noted that before assuming the captaincy, Ekong had always been disciplined, ambitious and devoted to the green-white-green jersey.

"He was a model professional and a leader younger players should emulate," the NFF spokesperson added.

Olajire said the defender's performances at the 2019, 2021 and 2023 Africa Cup of Nations stood out, noting that his leadership was critical to Nigeria's bronze and silver medal finishes.

"His AFCON 2023 exploits — including three crucial goals and the MVP award — will remain unforgettable," he said.

He said Ekong's 83 caps, World Cup appearances and critical goals ensured he exits as one of Nigeria's most accomplished modern-era defenders.

"He leaves fulfilled, respected and forever part of our football story," Olajire stated.

He wished the former captain success in his next phase, assuring the federation's continued support.

"We wish him the very best and will always stand by him," he said.

Ekong made his debut under Sunday Oliseh in 2015 and rose from squad member to vice-captain before assuming the captaincy, leading Nigeria with consistency and pride.

He retires as one of the nation's most capped defenders in recent history, and one of only a few Nigerians to be named AFCON Most Valuable Player.

Fenerbahce captain's home raided in Turkish betting scandal

The captain of Fenerbahce's home has been raided by Turkish police in their ongoing investigation into illegal betting and match fixing.

Prosecutors in Istanbul ordered the arrest of 46 people, 29 of them players, on Friday morning as the scandal dominating the country's football landscape continues.

Midfielder Mert Hakan Yandas, 31, is accused by prosecutors of making illegal bets on matches through a third party, and reports in Turkey say he has been detained by police.

Also among those arrested is Metehan Baltaci, a 23-year-old Galatasaray centre-back, who is accused of betting on matches involving his own team and was recently suspended for nine months by the Turkish FA.

Footballers are banned from betting on matches, involving their own team or not, over match fixing and sporting integrity concerns.

Twenty-seven of the 29 players arrested are alleged to have bet on matches their own teams played in.

The prosecutor's office said 35 of the 46 people due for arrest had already been detained. Of the remaining 11, five are believed to be abroad.

"Efforts to apprehend the other suspects are ongoing," the prosecutor's office said in a statement naming all 46 of the accused. "Investigations will continue with meticulousness and determination."

Those on the list also include Ankaraspor owner Ahmet Okatan and president Mehmet Emin Katipoglu, Nazilli Belediyespor president Sahin Kaya, and two coaches, all in relation to allegations they fixed the outcome of a match between the two sides in April 2024.

Six people, including one player, are accused of attempting to fix the outcome of the game between Umraniyespor and Giresunspor in December 2023.

Also accused of wrongdoing are Adana Demirspor's former president Murat Sancak, former referee and current commentator Ahmet Çakar and his wife, and top-flight referee Zorbay Küçük, who is accused of making suspicious financial transactions via a bank account.

In November, the Turkish FA suspended more than 1,000 players from competition over alleged betting infractions, after its president Ibrahim Haciosmanoglu first accused hundreds of referees of being linked to betting accounts in October.

Galatasaray are currently top of the Turkish Super Lig, one point ahead of arch rivals Fenerbahce, after 14 matches.

Galatasaray are 14th in the UEFA Champions League rankings, while Fenerbahce are 20th in the Europa League.

NWFL Premiership: Osun Babes' Tabitha Terlumun targets successful season

MIKE DIKE

Osun Babes FC teenage sensation, Tabitha Terlumun, is confident of achieving a successful season—both individually and with her team—after an impressive performance in their victory over Ahudiyannem Queens FC in Ile-Ogbo.

Tabitha, who represented Nigeria at this year's FIFA U-17 Women's World Cup, was voted Man of the Match following her explosive display that tormented the opposition defense throughout the encounter.

The pacey forward was full of praise for her teammates and coaches, crediting them for helping her reach top form.

"Winning the Man of the Match award is a collective effort from all my teammates. The whole team played wonderfully, and every player deserves the award," she said.

"We are now looking beyond the victory over Ahudiyannem Queens. We have played only two matches, and there are still many more ahead."

Tabitha also expressed her personal ambitions for the season.

"Individually, I want to build on this award, be the best I can be, help the team win games, and push myself to the limit.

"We are a very young and dynamic team, and I am optimistic that collectively we will achieve great things together."

The 2026 World Cup debutants?

CAPE VERDE

With a population of around 600,000, Cape Verde - an archipelago off Africa's west coast - became the second smallest country to reach a World Cup finals, after Iceland in 2018, when they qualified in October, but it was a record that was swiftly taken from them by Curacao.

Cape Verde beat Eswatini to secure their place at next year's tournament and complete a remarkable rise in football over the last 40 years.

They played their first World Cup qualifiers in 1990 and their progress towards eventually qualifying for the global tournament was aided by their search for players who had links to Cape Verde from around the world.

In their squad at the moment they have six Dutch-born players and one from Ireland - Shamrock Rovers defender Roberto Lopes.

The 33-year-old was born in Dublin but qualifies for Cape Verde through his father and was recruited to play for them through LinkedIn.

Curacao

The tiny Caribbean island of Curacao will become the smallest nation to ever play at the World Cup after drawing with Steve McClaren's Jamaica to secure their place at the tournament.

The record was held by Iceland, who reached the 2018 finals, but their country is far bigger than Curacao, which has a population of just over 150,000 (similar to Cambridge or Huddersfield) and a land area of 171 square miles, smaller than the Isle of Man.

Former England manager McClaren resigned as Jamaica boss after his side, who needed a win in Kingston to qualify for their first World Cup since 1998, were held to a goalless draw, including having an injury-time penalty overruled by the video assistant referee (VAR).

And Curacao boss Dick Advocaat, who was not at the game for personal reasons, will become the oldest coach at a World Cup, aged 78, beating Otto Rehhagel's record when he was in charge of Greece aged 71 in 2010.

Curacao, 37 miles off the Venezuela coast, only became a country within the Kingdom of the Netherlands in 2010, following the dissolution of the Netherlands Antilles.

Jordan

It has been a long road, but Jordan have finally qualified for a World Cup. The Arab nation took part in qualifying for the first time 40 years ago but had not managed to go any further until this year.

They secured their place at next year's tournament by finishing runners-up in AFC qualifying Group B, behind South Korea.

In 2016, former Tottenham, Portsmouth and QPR boss Harry Redknapp managed Jordan for two World Cup qualifying games for the 2018 tournament in Russia. Redknapp oversaw an 8-0 victory over Bangladesh, as well as a 5-1 loss to Australia.

Uzbekistan

Another one to have progressed for the first time from the Asian section of qualifying. Uzbekistan have come agonisingly close to securing a World Cup spot on a couple of occasions, namely for Germany 2006 and Brazil 2014 when they suffered defeat in the final round of qualifying.

Newcastle have money to spend in January –Wilson

Newcastle United have money to spend in January - but sporting director Ross Wilson says any mid-season moves will have to "align" with the club's summer plan.

Though January is traditionally a difficult window in which to do business, head coach Eddie Howe said earlier this week he would, ideally, "love to keep the squad fresh", stressing the "need to be prepared for all eventualities".

Howe and Wilson have not discussed incomings just yet, but the pair have talked at length about the current side and the club's recruitment team have been busy scouting potential targets for 2026 as a whole.

"It's fairly obvious to everybody given the level of club spend in the summer that we're not going to do that again in the winter window as well, for a variety of reasons," Wilson said after Newcastle spent £100m-plus net in the previous window. "But, if we want to spend, we can.

"Of course we will be creative, of course we will be opportunistic as well. But probably the most important thing is that it would have to align with what the summer plan looks like, which is the bigger squad plan.

"All of those conversations are ongoing. We will have the ones about where Eddie sees the need in the squad, if at all."

Wilson spent his first few days in the post analysing the contracts of Newcastle's current players after joining the club from Nottingham Forest back in October.

The Scot discovered Sandro Tonali's situation was "significantly better than the one he was expecting" after the midfielder previously agreed an extension during his betting ban, which means his deal could now run until 2030 if the club trigger an option, as expected.

But defender Tino Livramento - who is halfway through the five-year deal he signed after joining the club from Southampton in 2023 - has admirers elsewhere, while Sven Botman is approaching the final 18 months of his current contract.

"It's no secret at all that we would want to extend Tino's contract and we would want to extend Sven Botman's contract too," Wilson added. "Those discussions are ongoing.

"Some discussions are more difficult than others, but the desire would be to keep those players. Will they agree those contracts? At the moment, I think it's too early to say."

Chief executive David Hopkinson wants the Magpies "in the debate about being the top club in the world" by 2030, after carrying out an in-depth review since his arrival in September.

Howe said Hopkinson and Wilson are "two brilliant additions" for the club.

He added: "David has come in with a real energy and presence and ambition. I think that's great for the long-term future of this football club. Someone to really take the club forward.

"Two people that really care about Newcastle and are fitting in really, really well. Great news for everyone that they are here."



Amorim defends his use of midfielder Mainoo



Manchester United head coach Ruben Amorim has defended his failure to start any academy player in the Premier League this season and repeated his reasons for not giving Kobbie Mainoo an opportunity.

Amorim has stressed previously he feels the academy is doing a good job.

He has also said he will not break the proud record that dates back to 1937 of United having at least one homegrown player in the matchday squad.

United are paying a lot of attention to the academy. They hired Stephen Torpey from Brentford to lead it and, last night, 15-year-old star forward JJ Gabriel was in the directors' box at Old Trafford to watch the 1-1 draw with West Ham.

Yet, actual playing time for the club's academy players at first team level has been limited.

Mainoo and local-born defender Tyler Fredricson both started the EFL Cup defeat to League Two Grimsby in August.

Fredricson has not played another minute for the first team since, while Mainoo has featured for 171 minutes across nine substitute appearances in the Premier League. He came on in the final minute at Crystal Palace at the weekend and remained on the bench throughout the West Ham game, when Amorim used five substitutes.

When Mainoo was injured, Jack Fletcher, son of former United midfielder and current Under-18s coach Darren, was on the bench for the draw at Tottenham last month. For the last three games, England Under-20 forward Shea Lacey was an unused substitute.

"I just want to win," said Amorim. "I don't look (at) who it is, I don't care about that, I'm just trying to put the best players on the pitch."

Amorim has shown signs of frustration at the regular questions about a player who in 2024 scored in the FA Cup final victory over Manchester City and followed up by starting the Euro 2024 final with England.

Asked if he understood why Mainoo's status as a homegrown English player made him of specific interest, Amorim said: "Of course I understand, and my job is to answer.

"But you always ask me the same thing. I understand what you are saying. You love Kobbie. He starts for England. But that doesn't mean that I need to put Kobbie [in] when I feel that I shouldn't put Kobbie [in]. It's my decision."

Amorim offered no guarantees the situation will change even when Bryan Mbeumo and Amad Diallo leave for Africa Cup of Nations duty with Cameroon and Ivory Coast later this month.

"I don't know, I don't know," he said.

"It's the same question. I don't know what is going to happen. It depends. I've seen the training, if it's the best thing for the team, I will put [him in], that is the only way I know how to respond to that."

Amorim has opted not to give Lacey his senior debut even though United have failed to win two of the three games he was on the bench for and the Liverpool-born player was the only attacking option with Benjamin Sesko and Matheus Cunha both missing games through injury.

The lack of involvement gives the impression Amorim doesn't trust the academy to develop players to the standard he needs.

"Any players?" he said. "We have Kobbie Mainoo…"

When asked specifically about Lacey, he added: "So you are asking me why I don't put Lacey (on) to play, when I have other guys that are internationals who are also on the bench.

"I try to put (on) the best guys, the prepared guys, for this moment of the club, in trying to win the game. That's the only thing."

Norris fastest as he makes good start in Abu Dhabi

McLaren's Lando Norris got his bid to clinch his first world title off to the best possible start as he set the pace in Friday practice at the Abu Dhabi Grand Prix.

Norris headed the Red Bull of Max Verstappen, who is 12 points behind the Briton heading into the final race of the season, by 0.363 seconds as they took the top two places at Yas Marina.

The third driver in contention, McLaren's Oscar Piastri, was 11th fastest after encountering traffic on his fastest lap.

The Australian is 16 points adrift of Norris and faces a stiff task to enter into serious title contention.

Norris will win the title as long as he finishes on the podium on Sunday, regardless of anyone else's results.

Verstappen needs to win the race with Norris lower than third, or be second with him lower than seventh.



While Verstappen appeared to be lagging a little behind Norris on single-lap pace, the race simulations later in the session offered a different picture.

These runs are usually a more accurate picture of competitiveness as there is less possibility for the teams to play with car specification.

On the race runs, Norris was still faster than Verstappen - but only by hundredths of a second, not 10ths.

Piastri, though, was again not quite in the same ballpark as his rivals.

On headline times, Mercedes' George Russell was third fastest, from Haas driver Oliver Bearman, who said over the radio that he could not believe just how good the car was feeling.

Nico Hulkenberg and Gabriel Bortoleto were fifth and sixth in Sauber's final race before they morph into Audi for the German manufacturer's debut season in F1.

Racing Bulls' Isack Hadjar was seventh in his final race before his promotion to Red Bull in 2026, followed by Ferrari's Charles Leclerc, Aston Martin's Fernando Alonso and the second Mercedes of Kimi Antonelli.

Mejbri given four-game ban for spitting at fans

Burnley midfielder Hannibal Mejbri has been handed a four-match ban and given a £15,000 fine after spitting at Leeds United fans in October.

Mejbri, 22, admitted to the misconduct charge from the Football Association and will not be able to return until his club's Premier League home match against Newcastle United on 30 December.

The incident occurred in the 67th minute of Burnley's 2-0 win over Leeds on 18 October.

Lancashire Police looked into the matter after a complaint was made by a Leeds fan in the away section of the ground.

In announcing Mejbri's sanction, an FA statement said: "It was alleged that the player acted in breach of the laws of the game and/or in an improper manner and/or used abusive and/or indecent behaviour by spitting at or in the direction of Leeds United supporters around the 67th minute.

"Hannibal Mejbri subsequently admitted the charge, and the Regulatory Commission imposed a four-match ban and £15,000 fine following a hearing."

Mejbri has made 50 appearances in all competitions for Burnley, scoring one goal.

The Tunisia international joined the Clarets from Manchester United in August 2024 in a deal which could eventually be worth £9.4m.

WWW.justliberationnews.com

Just Liberation Newspaper

...News, Entertainment, Investigative

December 6, 2025 / Vol. 3 No.108 www.justliberationnews.com @justlibnews Justliberationnews @justliberationnews Justliberationnews ₦200

Fanny Amun Raises Alarm Over Psychological Crisis in Super Eagles Camp



Former Super Eagles coach and renowned youth football tactician, Fanny Amun, has expressed serious concerns about the psychological state of Nigeria's national team players during the recently concluded 2026 FIFA World Cup qualifiers.

Speaking in an exclusive interview with JerseyNumber12 on Thursday, Amun revealed that several players struggled mentally and emotionally, which directly impacted their performances on the pitch.

"Many people don't understand that a good player sometimes may play badly due to family problems or pressure from fans and pundits," Amun stated.

The 1993 FIFA U-17 World Cup-winning coach emphasized the need for a more transparent and mentally supportive environment within the Super Eagles setup. He urged the technical crew to be honest and constructive with the players to build confidence and mental resilience.

"If we used four different coaches during the qualifiers, what does that tell you about the players? Are they good enough? The coach should be blunt with his players when the standard is low," Amun added.

Notably, the Super Eagles have not had a publicly known team psychologist since the 2014 World Cup in Brazil, where Dr. Robinson Okosun was engaged to support the players' mental preparation and manage performance anxiety.

Amun also appealed to Nigerians not to direct their frustrations solely at the Nigeria Football Federation (NFF) following the team's failure to qualify for the 2026 World Cup.

"I will not be part of the people criticizing the NFF. I think we should go back and see where things went wrong and find a lasting solution to the problem," he said.

Nigeria missed out on a World Cup spot for the second consecutive time after losing to DR Congo in the African play-off final on penalties. The match ended 1-1 after extra time, with the Super Eagles falling 4-3 in the shootout.

Just Liberation Newspaper, Weekly Sports Review (WSR), TV and Radio are the media arms of Just News Communication Company Limited. No 17 Dipo Abbey Street , Ojodu -Berger, Lagos. **Tel:** +2348033461662, 09055222998.