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## The Power Equation: Who Really Runs Nigeria?

By Godwin Anyebe and Nathaniel Gumniba

In Nigeria, the question of who truly holds the reins of power goes far beyond the occupants of elected offices. While the President, governors, and lawmakers may serve as the public face of governance, the real power equation in Africa's most populous nation is far more complex, layered, and, at times, opaque. It is a web spun from political alliances, economic interests, ethnic considerations, religious influences, and deep-rooted patronage networks.

On paper, Nigeria is a democratic republic with power theoretically vested in the people, who exercise their will through elected representatives. The President of Nigeria wields significant executive power, controls the military, appoints ministers, and drives national policy. Governors also enjoy sweeping powers at the state level. But elections in Nigeria are often marred by allegations of vote-buying, rigging, and voter suppression, raising questions about the legitimacy of those who emerge victorious.

Beneath the surface, political godfathers and

kingmakers often dictate who gets what, when, and how. These influential figures—former presidents, ex-governors, and wealthy elites—use their resources and networks to install loyalists into office, expecting unwavering allegiance in return. The godfather-godson relationship has shaped political outcomes across Nigeria's states, from Lagos to Rivers, and from Kano to Anambra.

Bola Tinubu, before becoming President, was famously known as the "Lion of Bourdillon," a kingmaker whose influence in Southwest Nigeria's politics was undeni-

able. Similar power brokers exist across the North and South, each playing pivotal roles in shaping the political narrative.

Power in Nigeria is also tightly interwoven with control over the security apparatus. The military, police, and intelligence agencies are not only tools of statecraft but also instruments of political leverage. Those who command loyalty from security chiefs often wield significant power behind the scenes. In times of crisis, security forces have been known to tilt the balance in favor of particular factions or regimes.

The term "cabal" has

become synonymous with the shadowy circle of unelected individuals who exert enormous influence over state matters. Though difficult to define precisely, the cabal is believed to comprise a mix of powerful businesspeople, family members of leaders, and close political allies. During President Buhari's tenure, rumors about the cabal controlling key decisions—even health-related ones concerning the president—abounded, fueling public distrust.

Nigeria's power dynamics are deeply colored by ethnicity and religion. With over 250 ethnic

groups and a near-even split between Christians and Muslims, there is a constant push-and-pull for representation and control. Zoning arrangements and the informal North-South power rotation have become unwritten rules in attempts to manage the country's fragile unity. This balancing act often takes precedence over merit, competence, and national interest.

Big business also plays a critical role. Nigeria's richest individuals—many of whom are deeply embedded in the oil, banking, and

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3...Members, Church Denominational Lead (CDL) and Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) Plateau State Chapter, during a peaceful rally to protest the alleged killings, in Jos...recently

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# The Power Equation: Who Really Runs Nigeria?

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telecommunications sectors—frequently influence government policy through lobbying, campaign funding, and strategic partnerships. Multinational corporations and foreign governments, particularly China, the United States, and the United Kingdom, also wield soft power through investment, aid, and diplomacy.

Ironically, the Nigerian populace—the supposed source of all democratic power—often finds itself sidelined. Mass protests like #EndSARS show that the people can challenge the status quo, yet systemic barriers, poverty, and political apathy often hinder sustained civic engagement. Still, in an age of social media and youth mobilization, the power of the people may be the sleeping giant that could yet reshape Nigeria's future.

Speaking to The Abuja Post on this issue, Paul Amodu, a political analyst, commentator, and governance consultant based in Abuja, said, "as someone who has observed Nigeria's political landscape for over two decades, I can tell you with certainty that the question, 'Who really runs Nigeria?' is not as rhetorical as many assume. It's one of the most important inquiries of our time, and the answer reveals just how much of our national destiny is steered outside the ballot box."

According to him, "in theory, power lies with the people. In reality, power lies in the hands of a deeply entrenched elite—an interlocking group of political godfathers, security operatives, bureaucrats, and economic interests who operate in shadows and boardrooms, not necessarily in the chambers of the National Assembly."

"Every four years, Nigerians head to the polls with high hopes. Yet, what follows is often a cycle of disappointment. Why? Because elections in Nigeria are rarely about competence or ideas. They're about loyalty to political structures, access to financial war chests, and endorsements from key powerbrokers. The real decisions—on who gets nominated, which region produces the next president, or who controls the

economic levers—are made long before the first vote is cast." He added.

He stressed that, "Let's talk about the so-called 'cabal'—a term many brush aside as conspiracy theory, but which is all too real for those of us who follow governance closely. These are not officeholders in the traditional sense. These are individuals with direct access to power: relatives, loyal aides, former military generals, and businessmen who never appear in official

statements but whose fingerprints are on every major policy shift."

He further stated that, "during President Buhari's tenure, the cabal was said to wield significant power, sometimes even sidelining the Vice President and ministers. That's not new—it's been a pattern since the days of military rule. Even under democracy, Nigeria's real power often rests with those who control the president's ears, not necessarily those in the cabinet."

"Another pillar in the power structure is Nigeria's security apparatus. The military may no longer be in power officially, but make no mistake—they've not gone anywhere. Former generals and serving intelligence chiefs remain central to national decision-making, especially on matters of security, national unity, and elections. When power is contested or in flux, these institutions often serve as kingmakers or enforcers."

"Ethnicity and religion play a subtle yet powerful role. Nigeria's unwritten rules—like zoning and rotational presidency—are concessions to our deeply divided national identity. While intended to promote inclusivity, these arrangements are often exploited by elite actors who use them to negotiate power, not necessarily to foster unity or development."

"We also can't ignore the power of wealth. From oil barons to telecom magnates, Nigeria's billionaire class funds elections, influences policies, and often dictates economic direction. Sometimes, these interests override the will of the people, especially in matters like subsidy reforms, deregulation, or trade policies." He noted.

Here's the most tragic part, he continued, "the ordinary Nigerian is powerful in theory but powerless in practice. Protests like #EndSARS, voter turnout, and social media activism show signs of awakening, but structural suppression—through poverty, fear, and disinformation—often mutes the people's voice. Until we address this, real power will continue to reside with those who were never elected."

"So, who runs Nigeria? My answer: a coalition of the powerful

few—politicians, businessmen, godfathers, and security chiefs—who are often more accountable to one another than to the Nigerian people. Democracy exists here, but it's filtered through a patronage system so thick that true representation is rare. If we want to change the power equation, we must strengthen institutions, demand transparency, and empower citizens—not just to vote, but to hold the system accountable every single day." He noted.

"If we truly want to reclaim Nigeria, we must stop romanticizing the system. We must educate ourselves on how power works—not how it should work, but how it actually works. We need civic education at every level. We need to organize, not just protest. We need to demand transparency, not just complain online. And most of all, we need to understand that no godfather is greater than the collective will of an awakened people." He noted.

So, who really runs Nigeria? The answer is not straightforward. Power is dispersed among formal institutions, informal networks, and shadowy influences. Until systemic reforms enhance transparency, accountability, and citizen participation, the power equation will remain skewed—largely favoring the few at the expense of the many.

## Write the opinion of Comrade Akeem Ogundimu, a public affairs commentator on: The Power Equation: Who Really Runs Nigeria?

By Comrade Akeem Ogundimu, Public Affairs Commentator

Also speaking on this issue, Comrade Akeem Ogundimu, a public affairs commentator, grassroots mobilizer, and social justice advocate states that, "let's stop pretending. Nigeria is not run by the people. It is not truly run by the men and women we queue to vote for every four years. It is certainly not governed by the constitution in spirit. Nigeria, as it stands today, is run by a combination of entrenched political cabals, economic warlords, and an elite class that thrives on the confusion and silence of the majority."

According to him, "as a student of history and a passionate observer of the Nigerian socio-political terrain, I say without hesitation: we are in a capture state—where public institutions have been hijacked by private interests. And until we come to terms with this, we will keep mistaking figureheads for power holders."

"We often talk about the President, the governors, the senators, as if they are

the true power holders. But in Nigeria, office does not always equal power. In many cases, those elected are mere frontmen for deeper, more entrenched interests. Some cannot even appoint their own aides without consulting their political benefactors. Others operate under strict "guidelines" dictated by the same men who sponsored their campaigns and manipulated their emergence." He added.

Further, he disclosed that, "the Nigerian political godfather is more than just a mentor—he is the puppet master. He decides who gets tickets, who gets contracts, and who gets protected. These godfathers don't contest elections because they don't need to. Their power lies in their control of political structures, party machineries, and, in some cases, electoral umpires."

"Look around: in many states, former governors still control the political direction long after leaving office. In Abuja, there are men you will never see on TV who have more influence than half the cabinet."

We must also speak plainly about the so-called cabal. Whether it is during Obasanjo's time, Jonathan's

era, Buhari's regime, or even now—there's always an inner circle that operates behind closed doors. They determine ministerial appointments, major policy directions, and, crucially, who gets to be in or out of favour." He noted.

Continuing, he pointed out that, "these are not conspiracy theories; they are confirmed by insiders, former aides, and the political elite themselves who whisper it when power slips from their hands."

"Our economy is not immune from this power game either. The captains of industry—especially those with oil blocks, customs waivers, and import monopolies—often dictate economic policy. Government officials don't challenge them because they fund campaigns, own media houses, and sit at the table with international partners. In some cases, they even write the policies themselves through proxy consultants."

"Nigerians are powerful only during election season, when politicians need their numbers and their noise. After that, the people are discarded—left to beg for electricity, fight over fuel, and queue for palliatives. But

## Guala Closures Opens New Manufacturing Facility in Nigeria, Strengthening Its Strategic Presence in Africa

Guala Closures, a global leader in closure solutions for spirits, wine, water, beer, non-alcoholic beverages, and edible oils, has officially inaugurated its new state-of-the-art manufacturing facility in Nigeria, marking a significant step in its long-term growth strategy across Africa.

Located in the Lagos Free Zone, the greenfield plant was inaugurated recently in the presence of Ugo Boni, Consul General of Italy in Lagos; Adesuwa Ladoja, CEO of Lagos Free Zone; Andrea Lodetti, CEO of Guala Closures; and other senior executives of the Group.

The facility, built in just 22 weeks and fully operational by the end of 2024, spans

nearly 5,000 square meters. It is designed to supply high-quality, innovative closure solutions—particularly anti-counterfeiting safety closures tailored for the local spirits market—to serve Nigeria and the broader West African region. The plant's future expansion is expected to generate significant employment opportunities in the local community.

This investment builds on Guala Closures' successful footprint in Africa, which includes operations in Kenya and South Africa. Most recently, the company expanded further by acquiring the Astir Vitogiannis facility in Johannesburg.

With over 235 million people and a median age of 18,

Nigeria is one of the fastest-growing and most dynamic economies in Africa. Rising demand for premium beverage products—driven by a growing middle class and increasing disposable income—makes the country a strategic hub for industrial and commercial develop-

ment.

"This investment highlights our commitment to Africa and to being close to our customers worldwide," said Andrea Lodetti, CEO of Guala Closures. "Our global presence, combined with local market insights, allows us to deliver tailored, high-

quality solutions while supporting our partners' growth and protecting their brands from counterfeiting."

With this latest expansion, Guala Closures now operates 37 manufacturing plants and 7 R&D centers around the world—demonstrating its

strategy of combining global scale with local service.

"We are proud to welcome Guala Closures to the Lagos Free Zone," said Adesuwa Ladoja, Managing Director and CEO of LFZ. "Their investment underscores the value of our ready-to-lease Standard Industrial Facility and reaffirms LFZ as a key platform for industrial growth in West Africa."

Guala Closures is a global leader in high-performance closure solutions, offering innovative designs that protect product integrity and enhance brand value. With 37 production plants across five continents, the Group serves global and local clients in the spirits, wine, water, beer, oil, and condiments sectors.





L-R: CEO, Jessy Technologies Ltd, Engr Jude Onaibre; Mrs. Omowunmi Kalejaiye, Regional Director Lagos, First City Monument Bank; Engr Olusegun Okedoye, MD/CEO Mountains Energy Solutions Ltd and Mr Ahmed Audu, Brand Manager, Seplat Energy at the opening of Mountains Energy Solutions' Office in Lagos recently.

## Abuja Raid Attack: 3 NDLEA Officers Sustain Gunshot Injuries, Hospitalized

By Sam Orji

Three officers of the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency, NDLEA, have been hospitalized for gunshot injuries sustained after they came under attack from some armed men during a raid operation in Jahi area of the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja on Thursday night.

The incident occurred when a team of NDLEA operatives acting on intelligence and surveillance

report raided an uncompleted building at NNPC area of Jahi where 74 bottles of codeine, 10 litres of codeine syrup, 48grams of tramadol 225mg and 4.9kilograms of skunk, a strain of cannabis, as well as five android phones were recovered.

As the NDLEA team made their way out of the location, they came under gun attack.

Three of the NDLEA personnel involved in the raid sustained gunshot injuries: one in the rib and two others on their

back and leg.

The wounded officers were initially stabilized at the Police Clinic in Garki Area 1 before they were transferred to the National Hospital Abuja for further medical attention.

Chairman/Chief Executive Officer of NDLEA, Brig Gen Mohamed Buba Marwa (Rtd) expressed appreciation to the staff of the Police Clinic for their prompt support. He also thanked the Chief Medical Director of the National Hospital who

was personally reached by him for overseeing the treatment of the wounded officers.

The NDLEA boss who is in Kano on official engagements also spoke on phone with the injured officers to wish them quick recovery. He assured them that the Agency will deploy every means at its disposal and work in collaboration with other security agencies to fish out those responsible for the attack on them.

## NDLEA Recovers 563kg Skunk, Others In Bayelsa Warehouse, Arrests 4

By Nathaniel Gumniba

The National Drug Law Enforcement Agency, NDLEA, has recovered no fewer than 557.2kg of skunk, 5.6kg of methamphetamine and 29.8grams of heroin from a warehouse in Bayelsa.

This is contained in a statement by the NDLEA director, Media and Advocacy, Femi Babafemi in Abuja on Sunday.

Mr Babafemi said that the drugs were intercepted along Major General Isaiah Allison Street, Opolo, Yenagoa, Bayelsa, adding that four suspects were arrested.

This, he said was when NDLEA operatives raided the premises on Wednesday, April 16.

"The four suspects arrested during the raid include: Kurtis Sarimiye, 46; Roland Prosper, 34; Paul Sarimiye, 45; and Fidelis Ugbesla, 46," he added.

Meanwhile, a total of 1,100 kilograms of skunk were recovered from a delivery van with the driver, Ismail Abdullahi arrested in Surulere area of Lagos on Thursday, April 17.

Mr Babafemi said that NDLEA operatives in Kaduna on Friday, April 18 raided the hideout of a suspect, Ike Ani, 30, in Zaria, where no fewer than 31,950 pills of tramadol 225mg and diazepam were recovered.

Also, in Kebbi, NDLEA operatives on patrol along Bagudo road on Friday, April 18 intercepted a vehicle loaded with bags of charcoal coming from Malabil, Benin Republic.

"A search of the vehicle led to the recovery of 97kg skunk concealed in the sacks of charcoal.

"Three suspects: Abubakar Ibrahim, 50; Mustapha Aliyu, 32; and Bashir Lawali, 28, were arrested in connection with the seizure.

"In a related development, the NDLEA arrested a 48-year-old, Okafor Marcel with 11.5kg skunk at Abatete, Anambra state," he said.

Mr Babafemi said that the NDLEA operatives in Oshogbo, Osun state, on Tuesday, April 15 also arrested Ajala Mercy, 27, with 43 litres of skushi, a mixture of black currant, cannabis and opioids.

"The NDLEA operatives recovered all from her room at Dada estate, Halleluyah area of the state capital," he said.

## Rights Group Sues Nigerian Govt Over Ban Of Eedris Abdulkareem'ha Anti-Tinubu Song

The Socio-Economic Rights and Accountability Project (SERAP) has filed a lawsuit against the National Broadcasting Commission (NBC) over what it describes as the "arbitrary and unlawful" ban of Eedris Abdulkareem's politically charged song, Tell Your Papa.

The song, which takes a critical swipe at President Bola Tinubu's economic policies, was recently prohibited

from airing on broadcast stations across Nigeria, with NBC claiming it violated "public decency standards." Nigerian cultural tours

In response, SERAP is now challenging the ban in a suit marked FHC/L/CS/797/2025, filed at the Federal High Court in Lagos.

According to the group, the NBC's directive not only suppresses artistic freedom but also violates Nigerians'

constitutional rights to freedom of expression, access to information, and media freedom.

In a statement signed by SERAP's Deputy Director, Kolawole Oluwadare, the organisation is asking the court to issue an order setting aside NBC's ban as unconstitutional and unlawful.

SERAP also wants the court to grant a perpetual injunction restraining NBC or any government agency from stopping the broadcast

## Tinubu Cannot Solve Nigeria's Worsening Insecurity — Atiku

By Nathaniel Gumniba

Amid ongoing violence in Benue State and across parts of Nigeria, former Vice President Atiku Abubakar has again sharply criticised President Bola Tinubu, accusing him of being incapable of addressing the country's deepening security crisis.

In a strongly worded statement posted late Saturday on X (formerly Twitter), Atiku condemned what he described as Tinubu's "disturbing indifference" and failure to lead with empathy in the face of national trauma.

The former vice president's remarks come after dozens were killed in fresh attacks on the Logo and Gbagir communities in Ukum Local Government Area of Benue State.

While the country mourns, President Tinubu has remained abroad, prompting Atiku to call into question not only his absence but his administration's overall capacity to respond meaningfully to the crisis.

"The Tinubu administration has proven, time and again, to be utterly incapable, wholly incompetent, and completely devoid of any coherent ideas for tackling Nigeria's deepening security crisis," Atiku said.

He added that the view was not his alone, claiming that "a growing consensus" of opposition leaders, security experts, and even some members of the ruling party privately agree with this sentiment.

Leadership, Atiku argued, demands not just action but presence. Drawing comparisons with global leaders, he noted that U.S. President Barack Obama once cut short a diplomatic trip after a mass shooting, and South Africa's President Cyril Ramaphosa returned home during an electricity crisis.

Even controversial figures like U.S. Senator Ted Cruz, he said, faced public

backlash for leaving their constituents behind in a moment of crisis.

"In our own history, President Goodluck Jonathan returned from Equatorial Guinea in 2014 following a deadly bomb blast in Abuja. That is the expected minimum in moments of national trauma," Atiku added.

"Yet President Bola Tinubu, incapable of solving Nigeria's worsening insecurity, chooses instead to gallivant across Europe — governing Nigeria in absentia as if from a holiday perch."

Benue State has been a flashpoint of deadly attacks over the years, with communities in the Middle Belt often bearing the brunt of clashes between herders and farmers, banditry, and other forms of organized violence. The latest killings in Logo and Gbagir have reignited national outrage and calls for urgent action.

Despite rising insecurity, the presidency has not issued a detailed public response to the Benue killings as of Sunday morning.

Meanwhile, Atiku insists that Nigerians deserve not just better security, but a president who can be physically and emotionally present in moments of national pain.

"If Tinubu cannot act, the least he can do is show up. If he cannot lead with empathy, he should at least attempt the performance of it. Nigeria is bleeding. Nigerians are dying. The president is nowhere to be found," Atiku wrote.

He extended his condolences to the people and government of Benue State, expressing solidarity and grief while reiterating his commitment to holding the administration accountable.

"An inept administration may not suddenly discover competence. But we will not stop calling it out," he said. "If Tinubu cannot deliver safety and dignity to Nigerians, the very least he can do is pretend to care — regardless of ethnicity, religion, or political affiliation."

of the song on radio, TV, and other media platforms. Nigerian cultural tours

SERAP argued that NBC's letter dated April 9, 2025, which ordered the ban, fails the legal test of necessity and proportionality under both Nigerian and international human rights law.

"Section 3.1.8 of the Nigeria Broadcasting Code is vague, overbroad, and violates artistic and media free-

dom," SERAP stated.

They warned that censorship like this not only stifles creativity but also undermines democratic debate.

The group further referenced Article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, to which Nigeria is a signatory.

It stated that any restriction on freedom of expression must be clearly defined by law and necessary for a legitimate purpose — not a political tool to suppress dissent.



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L- R: Chairman, Board of Trustees, Lagos Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI), Chief John Odeyemi; Hon. Minister, Federal Ministry of Industry, Trade and Investment, Dr. Jumoke Oduwole; President and Chairman of Council, LCCI, Mr. Gabriel Idahosa; Director-General, LCCI, Dr. Chinyere Almona, and Deputy President LCCI, Mr. Knut Ulvmoen, during the visit of Hon. Minister, Federal Ministry of Industry, Trade and Investment to LCCI Commerce House, in Victoria Island, Lagos

## Nigeria Gradually Becoming A National Morgue – Kukah

By Nathaniel Gumniba

The Catholic Bishop of Sokoto Diocese, Matthew Hassan Kukah, has expressed deep concern over Nigeria's deteriorating security situation.

In his Easter message delivered on Sunday, Bishop Kukah warned that the country is slowly turning into a vast national morgue due to incessant killings and widespread violence.

He lamented the scale of human suffering across the nation, describing the current climate as marked by "a culture of brutality and savagery never witnessed in the history of our dear country."

Kukah used the metaphor of the crucifixion to illustrate the extent of national pain, calling on President Bola Ahmed Tinubu to urgently intervene and res-

cue citizens from what he termed "this cross of evil."

"Mr. President, we all admit that you neither erected this cross nor initiated our collective crucifixion. However, Nigerians have been left bleeding and dangling on this cross of pain and mindless suffering for far too long," he said.

The Bishop condemned the increasing frequency of kidnappings, killings, and other forms of violent crimes across the country, stating that no household or community remains untouched by the wave of insecurity.

"A dark pall of death hangs languidly from north to south. Every day, innocent citizens are kidnapped and held under the most inhuman conditions. Nigeria is reaching a breaking point," Kukah warned.

He further criticized the

government's approach to economic hardship, particularly the reliance on palliative distributions, which he said erodes the dignity of citizens.

"While we agree that removing fuel subsidies was a necessary decision and acknowledge the availability of more domestic resources, the reality is that farming has become one of the most dangerous occupations in Nigeria for over a decade. Mere palliatives are insufficient. What Nigerians need is sustainable access to food and security," he stated.

Calling for urgent reforms, the Bishop urged President Tinubu to enshrine food security as a fundamental human right.

"Make food security a constitutional right for all citizens. Mr. President, please bring us down from this painful cross of hunger," he

appealed.

Despite the grim picture, Bishop Kukah encouraged Nigerians to hold on to hope, reminding them of their collective responsibility to drive out the darkness engulfing the nation.

"The structural deformities, iniquities, and corruption of our country must not be an excuse to lose hope. We are the light of the world, a city set on a hill. With the light of Christ, we can build a society that reflects the will of our Creator," he said.

He concluded his message with blessings for the nation and a call for renewed faith in the country's potential.

"I wish you, Mr. President, and all Nigerians, a blessed and happy Easter," he added.

## FEC Extends Easter Greetings to Christians, Urges Prayers for National Unity

By Nathaniel Gumniba

The Secretary to the Government of the Federation (SGF), Senator George Akume, CON, has extended heartfelt Easter greetings to Christians across the country on behalf of the Federal Executive Council (FEC), emphasizing the importance of the season in promoting hope, peace, and unity.

In a statement issued in Abuja, Akume felicitated with Nigerians, particularly the Christian faithful, as they commemorate the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ during the Easter celebrations. He

described Christ's sacrificial love as a powerful symbol of salvation and liberation for believers, urging all Christians to reflect on His teachings.

"The sacrificial death and resurrection of Jesus Christ represent a beacon of hope and a call to selfless living," Akume noted. "Christians are encouraged to emulate His virtues—love, forbearance, selflessness, and forgiveness—in every aspect of their lives."

He also called on Nigerians to continue to uphold prayers for the nation's peace and unity, stressing the need for collective support for President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's Renewed

Hope Agenda aimed at building a more prosperous and inclusive Nigeria.

The FEC concluded by

wishing Christians a reflective Good Friday and a joyful Easter celebration.



## Flood alert: FENRAD advocates for proactive measures to reduce flood risks

Nigeria is bracing for potential flooding in 2025, with warnings from the Nigeria Meteorological Agency (NiMet) and the Nigeria Hydrological Services Agency (NIHSA) indicating that many states may be affected.

Over 1,200 communities in 30 states are at high risk of flooding this year.

Foundation for Environmental Rights, Advocacy & Development (FENRAD) has called on the Abia State Government to implement early mitigation and adaptation strategies in response to the Federal Government's alert that 31 states, including Abia, are at high risk of flooding in 2024.

FENRAD emphasizes the need for a comprehensive baseline study of vulnerable communities to inform targeted interventions and enhance resilience against climate-induced disasters.

According to the Executive Director of the group, Com. Nelson Nnanna Nwafor, in alignment with these concerns, the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) has initiated sensitization programs across all 17 local government areas of Abia State.

"These programs aim to downscale flood early warning strategies to the grassroots level, ensuring that communities are equipped with the necessary knowledge and resources to respond effectively to potential flooding events. The 2024 Annual Flood Outlook predicts high flood risks for

31 states and moderate risks for 35 states, underscoring the urgency of proactive measures.

"Governor Alex Otti has acknowledged the flood risks facing 11 out of Abia's 17 LGAs and has pledged to address the issue through infrastructural development and community engagement. His administration aims to eliminate flooding in Abia within 18 months, focusing on constructing durable access roads and implementing a zero-pothole policy to improve drainage and reduce flood risks," he said.

FENRAD's call to action underscores the importance of collaborative efforts between government agencies, civil society organizations, and local communities.

"By conducting baseline studies and implementing early mitigation strategies, Abia State can enhance its preparedness and resilience against the impending flood crisis," he explained.

FENRAD emphasized the necessity for both federal and state governments to implement early mitigation and adaptation strategies.

"These strategies should include the establishment of community-based early warning systems, enhancement of public awareness campaigns, and the development of flood-resilient infrastructure. The organization advocates for a collaborative approach involving all stakeholders to ensure sustainable development and the protection of human rights

## DG NCSP highlights potentials in Nigeria's digital Assets Market

Experts and policy makers have stated that the Investment and Securities Act (ISA) 2025 has placed the country as a major player in the 4th Industrial Revolution.

This was at the recent 'Digital Asset Markets Strategy Masterclass Series' held recently in Lagos, where deliberations were held on the landmark legislation signed into law in March 2025, by the Federal Government in March 2025, which empowers the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) to oversee digital assets, virtual asset service providers (VASPs), and tokenised securities, bringing clarity to a space that has operated in a legal grey area for years.

Speaking at the event, the Director-General of the Nigeria-China Strategic Partnership (NCSP) Joseph Tegbe, noted the importance of leveraging Chinese technology, particularly in digital asset market and knowledge transfer.

He assured that the NCSP is dedicated to sup-

porting the globalization of Nigeria's capital market. He outlined the impact of the digital RMB, explaining how Nigeria can leverage and benefit from it.

Tegbe revealed that Nigeria has received over \$30 billion in investment commitments and 300 expressions of interest from different Chinese companies within the last five months and will soon sign a pact on 'Digital RMB' with China to enable a direct conversion of Naira to Chinese Yuan, thereby reducing the country's dependency on the Dollar.

This is in furtherance to the transition of Nigeria's relationship with China from a trade relationship to a mutually-beneficial development partnership. He concluded by emphasizing the objectives of the Nigerian-China Strategic Partnership to drive infrastructure development, scale up investments from China, strengthen Nigerian-China trade and economic relations, promote knowledge and economic transparency, and also advance cultural exchanges between the two nations.

# FGN Strengthens Ties with World Bank as Economic Reforms Gain Momentum

By Sam Orji

A high-level delegation from the World Bank, led by Ousmane Diagana, Vice President for Western and Central Africa, met with the Honourable Minister of Finance and Coordinating Minister of the Economy, Wale Edun, to reaffirm support for President Bola Tinubu's economic reform agenda and development priorities.

Diagana praised Nigeria's recent GDP growth of 3.4% — the strongest since 2014 — and commended the government's progress in stabilising the economy and improving portfolio performance. He stressed

the need to maintain reform momentum to achieve inclusive, job-creating growth, and highlighted Nigeria's position as the World Bank's largest portfolio in Africa, with commitments totalling around \$17 billion.

He also welcomed Nigeria's leadership on the M300 initiative — a pan-

African drive to expand energy access to 300 million people — and urged faster implementation of social protection measures, particularly targeted cash transfers, following recent discussions with World Bank President Ajay Banga.

The CME reiterated the government's focus on

three key areas: improving project delivery speed, scaling up biometric verification for 15 million individuals on the national social register, and accelerating implementation of the M300 compact. He announced the establishment of a Compact Delivery and Monitoring Unit and requested a status

update to ensure the nation stays on track to set new records in project approval and execution.

Key areas of collaboration also include increased agricultural productivity, improved access to finance for SMEs, enhanced digital transformation, and broader financial inclusion.

## FG commits to raising tech workforce for national development

By Nathaniel Gumniba

Federal Government has stated its determination to raise a new generation of technological workforce that will drive development.

Speaking at the launch of MTN Foundation Digital Skills Academy, recently in Abuja, the Minister of Communications, Innovation and Digital Economy, Dr Bosun Tijani, said the administration would position Nigeria as the next exporter of technical talents.

The Digital Skills Academy is a free, tech-driven learning platform, designed to equip Nigerians with digital and financial skills for the modern economy and also to tackle Nigeria's growing youth unemployment crisis.

Bosun stated that President Bola Tinubu intended to deepen the economy and provide job opportunities for Nigerians.

He said: "This is why at the Ministry of Communications, Innovation and Digital Economy, we have also prioritised building capacity through the three million technical talent programme, which is the largest of its sort worldwide. The world is becoming a lot more complex that there is no economy in the world today that can actually drive economic prosperity without also investing in its own complexity; and there is no society that can become complex when your citizens cannot interact with technology."

The minister observed that the MTN Digital Skills Academy would not only raise digital literacy, but also broaden the possibilities for youths in Nigeria, including the opportunity for young people to launch their technology careers, start their own technology businesses and eventually also solve the challenges that we all face in the country or the world.

In his remarks, the Minister of Youth Development, Ayodele Olawande, described the platform as a "timely and practical intervention" in the face of a youth unemployment rate of 6.5 per cent, according to the latest data from the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS).



L-R: Logan Cordy, partner, international project sales, Knight Frank London; Lanre Sonubi, head, marketing and corporate communications, Knight Frank Nigeria; Ben Woodhams, partner, Africa Desk, Knight Frank London; Frank Okosun, senior partner/CEO, Knight Frank Nigeria; and Jon Hall, group sales director, Mount Anvil London during the launch of London's newest boutique development, The Edit, crafted by Mount Anvil, held in Lagos recently.

## Lagos, India, To Partner For Improved Economic Benefits

By Sam Orji

The Lagos State Government and Republic of India have resolved to explore enduring investment and business opportunities that will be mutually beneficial to both parties across various sectors.

This followed the State Government's successful hosting of the business delegation from the Confederation of Indian Industries (CII) in collaboration with the Indian High Commission, Abuja, led by Indian Consul General in Lagos Chandramaouli Kumar Kern and Second Secretary (Commerce), Abuja, Pranay Sinha.

Speaking during the visit held at Alausa recently, Lagos State Commissioner for Commerce, Cooperatives, Trade and Investment (CCTI), Folashade Ambrose stated that Nigeria and India have a lot in common, describing the business visit as timely.

Her words: "The essence of continuous engagement with investors is to promote focal sectors that the State government has identified with projects listed for potential investments. These

include rail transportation, development of Lagos State Medical Industrial Zone with focus on health, biotechnology and others, development of Omu Creek, finance and technical expertise in the operation of cyber security and knowledge information technology entrepreneurship, including expansion of the real estate sector, amongst others."

Ambrose remarked that the Ministry's strategy is driving economic prosperity and growth, focusing on trade, and strengthening the organised private sector through the development of the industrial sector, along with the NANOs and informal sector, in line with 30-year Lagos State Development Plan (LSDP) 1952 and T.H.E.M.E.S Plus Development Agenda that guide the administration's policies, programmes and projects towards achieving a greater Lagos.

"One of the things the State is doing to enable business is building massive infrastructure. We have projects like the Light Industrial Estate, Imota, which we are developing into a complete business zone. There are abundant opportunities at the Lekki Economic Zone to

be explored. We are also working with Federal agencies to harmonise our positions relating to removing barriers to trade and investments. We have concluded plans to train hundreds of MSMEs in export readiness, and we invite CII to partner with us to achieve this.

"We can have conversations around these opportunities and facilitate engagement with specific ministries in charge of the projects or sectors in which you are interested. Your team is in the right place as Africa is the next frontier for development, and Lagos is a leading player across sectors," she said.

Indian Consul General in Lagos, Chandramaouli Kumar Kern, described the visit as exploratory, as some members of the team were in Nigeria for the first time.

"We have come to understand how we can collaborate with the State to enhance business prospects, and instead of coming and going for trade activities, I have advised the team to focus on building long-standing relationships by considering the establishment of their manufacturing businesses here. I will also advise the CII to send the prospectus for train-

ing for review and alignment with the State's plan towards capacity building of MSMEs," he said.

Permanent Secretary, MCCTI, Olugbemiga Aina, observed that Nigeria and India, in view of the ongoing global policy shift, have to embrace a paradigm shift by looking beyond increased trade to have stronger economic relations through the deepening of manufacturing activities.

"Lagos State is the champion of Ease of Doing Business in Nigeria, it is the fiber optic capital of Nigeria and it is currently creating a new investment horizon in the generation, transmission and distribution of energy through the recently passed Lagos State Electricity Law. We need to develop local capacities to maintain middle-level technicians for maintenance services in sectors like the light rails and power, and Lagos would need the support of India to grow the MSMEs. They are small and are developing, and we need to ensure both local and Indian businesses are integrated in the same value chain instead of competing with each other," he said.

## FCCPC Seals Shops Engaged in Deceptive Rice Rebagging in Utako Market, Abuja

By Sam Orji

The Federal Competition and Consumer Protection Commission (FCCPC) has sealed several shops in Utako Market, Abuja, after uncovering deceptive practices involving the rebagging of locally produced rice as foreign brands.

The enforcement operation, which took place on Tuesday, April 15, 2025, was prompted by complaints from brand owners and concerned consumers.

The affected shops were found to be rebagging and marketing rice under popular brand names that have been out of circulation for nearly a decade, including Royal Stallion and Mama Gold. The Commission confiscated the counterfeit products and sealed the stores involved in the illicit trade.

Speaking to journalists during the operation, Mrs. Boladale Adeyinka, Director of Surveillance and Investigation at the FCCPC, revealed that the action followed verified reports from brand owners. "We received credible information indicating that certain rice brands, including Royal Stallion, are no longer available in the Nigerian market, she stated.

Mrs. Adeyinka further explained that the persistent demand for foreign rice has created an avenue for unscrupulous traders to deceive consumers by rebagging local rice as imported varieties. "Because of the demand for foreign rice, some market cartels have resorted to rebagging local rice and passing it off as imported. This is a clear case of deception," she said.

The Commission's intervention is part of its broader mandate to protect consumers from misleading and unfair trade practices and to ensure transparency in Nigeria's markets. The FCCPC reiterated its commitment to sustaining surveillance and enforcement activities to safeguard consumer rights and uphold market integrity.

# 'Nigerian firms recorded 4,388 attacks per week in Q1'

By Paul Onehi

Nigerian organisations experienced 4,388 attacks per week in the first quarter of 2025, representing a 47 percent increase year-on-year (y-o-y), a cybersecurity platform, Check Point Software, has disclosed in its 'Global Cyber Attack Report' for Q1.

In Q1, global cyberattacks recorded a 47 percent surge, with organisations averaging 1,925 attacks per week. It noted that this spike highlights the growing challenge businesses face in maintaining robust cybersecurity postures amid a constantly evolving threat landscape.

Africa recorded the highest average number of cyberattacks per organisation, with 3,286 weekly attacks, reflecting a 39 percent y-o-y increase.

Other regions, such as the APAC region, recorded an average of 2,934 attacks, a 38 percent increase; and Latin America recorded a 108 percent increase, reaching 2,640 attacks per organisation per week.

Top African countries featured on the list included South Africa with 1,884 attacks per week, a 69 percent y-o-y increase; Angola with 4,727 attacks per week (a +32 percent rise); and Kenya with 4,004 attacks per week on average (a +14 percent increase).

Sector-wise, the educational sector was the hardest hit in Q1 2025, averaging 4,484 attacks per organisation per week, a 73 percent increase from Q1 2024.

Other sectors included the government sector with 2,678 attacks per organisation per week, and the telecommunications sector with 2,664 attacks per organisation weekly.

Lionel Dartnall, country manager SADC, Check Point Software Technologies, added, "The continued rise in cyber-attacks underscores the need for more robust security measures."

"Organisations must prioritise strengthening their cyber security postures, including deploying advanced threat detection systems, training staff on cyber security best practices, and ensuring rapid incident response capabilities."

## FG Shuts down Enugu Airport for Emergency Repair of Runway

By Sam Orji

The Federal Government has announced the temporary closure of the Akanu Ibiam International Airport in Enugu, Enugu State, for emergency runway repairs.

Director, Public Affairs and Consumer Protection, Federal Airports Authority of Nigeria (FAAN), Mrs. Obiageli Orah, explained that there was a sudden and significant rupture in the asphalt surface at a critical section of the runway and that was why the federal government decided to shut it down for rehabilitation.

Repair work would take off from April 22, 2025 to May 6, 2025, after which the airport would be reopened for flight operation.

"In compliance with Nigerian civil aviation regulations, the Federal Air-

ports Authority of Nigeria has, therefore, closed the runway during this period. As part of FAAN's commitment to passenger safety and the modernisation of airport facilities, the runway will not be open for landings or takeoffs during the rehabilitation period," Mrs. Orah said.

The agency therefore appealed to all airport users and stakeholders for their understanding and cooperation during this time, disclosing that flights to the airport would be diverted to nearby airports.

At the weekend, Nigeria's major carrier, Air Peace, announced withdrawal of its operations to the Enugu airport and said it was diverting flights to Asaba airport and would resume service to Enugu when the runway had been repaired and certified.



R - L: Taiwo Joda, MD/CEO, Accion MFB; Joseph Osanipin, Director General of the National Automotive Design and Development Council (NADDC); Uzoma Nwagba, MD/CEO of Credicorp; Mr. Vinay Grover, MD of Simba Group and Kunle Egbe Kunle, CFO at GIGMIL, during the presentation of tricycles and motorcycles to Credicorp's first wave of beneficiaries of its ₦20 billion mobility credit fund, held at Simba Group, Ikeja, Lagos State recently.

## Money Supply Hits N114.2trn Despite CBN Tightening

By Anyanwu Theresa Ijeoma

Despite sustained monetary tightening by the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), the country's money supply reached a historic high of N114.2 trillion in March 2025, reflecting continued liquidity growth in the financial system.

According to the latest data released by the CBN, the broad measure of

money supply (M3) grew by N3.86 trillion between February and March. This marks a significant increase from the N110.3 trillion recorded in February 2025. On a year-on-year basis, the money supply rose by an astonishing N35.5 trillion or 45.2 percent, compared to the N78.63 trillion recorded in March 2024.

Analysts say the increase in money supply, despite aggressive rate hikes and other tightening measures by the apex

bank, raises concerns about the effectiveness of monetary policy tools in curbing inflationary pressures and managing excess liquidity.

The CBN had earlier raised its benchmark interest rate—the Monetary Policy Rate (MPR)—to 24.75 percent in March, following a 400 basis points hike in February, in a bid to rein in inflation and stabilize the naira. However, the persistent rise in money supply suggests that other

structural and fiscal elements may be contributing to the liquidity surge.

Economists warn that continued expansion in money supply without corresponding productivity could fuel inflation and undermine the CBN's stabilization efforts. They stress the need for coordinated monetary and fiscal policies to ensure macroeconomic stability in the face of rising prices and exchange rate volatility.



## Cardoso Vows to Sustain CBN's Monetary Policy Overhaul

Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) Governor, Olayemi Cardoso, on Friday, held an insightful discussion with renowned economist and Nobel laureate, Dr. James Robinson, a professor at the University of Chicago and Director of the Pearson Institute for the Study and Resolution of Global Conflicts.

The conversation, which was highlighted in

a statement shared on the CBN's official X account on Saturday, focused on Nigeria's economic direction and the apex bank's ongoing monetary policy strategies.

Cardoso emphasized that the CBN remains deeply committed to restoring economic stability and public trust through transparent and consistent monetary reforms.

"We inherited a trust

deficit, but we have chosen a disciplined, transparent approach — and we're staying the course," he stated, receiving commendation from an audience that included key economic players and policy influencers.

The event featured opening remarks from Nasdaq President, Tal Cohen, and attracted significant attendance from global financial leaders and Nigerian profession-

als. CBN's Adviser on Stakeholder Engagement, Dr. Nkiru Balonwu, hosted the discussion, while the Q&A session was led by Nigerian Exchange Group CEO, Temi Popoola.

Dr. Olubukola Akinniyi Akinwunmi, who heads the CBN's Banking Supervision Department, delivered the closing address.

The session also reinforced the bank's efforts

to strengthen relationships with the Nigerian diaspora. Board members and members of the Monetary Policy Committee — including Mr. Robert Agbede, Prof. Melvin Ayogu, and Dr. Aloysius Ordu — were present, highlighting the CBN's commitment to leveraging local and international expertise to foster sustainable economic growth.



CBN Gov. Cardoso



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# Benue Valley Bleeds: The Cost of Neglect

In the fertile heart of Nigeria lies the Benue Valley — a region of quiet strength, agricultural abundance, and cultural richness. But today, it stands as a symbol of tragedy, where the silence of neglect has spoken louder than the screams of its people. The cost? Lives lost. Communities destroyed. A future threatened.

Benue State, long known as the nation's "food basket," now reels under a humanitarian crisis that has become too common, too normalized. Villages are attacked in the dead of night. Families are torn apart by violence. Children grow up in Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) camps instead of classrooms. And while the people cry out, what they receive in return is a deafening silence from those in power.

This is not merely a crisis born of conflict — it is a crisis deepened and sustained by neglect.

Year after year, reports of deadly attacks on farming communities are met with condolences and vague promises. Little changes. Perpetrators often go unpunished. Survivors are left to pick up the pieces without adequate support. And the land — once tilled to feed millions — now lies fallow under the shadow of fear.

The Nigerian state has failed

Benue in the most fundamental way: by not protecting the lives and livelihoods of its citizens. Security presence is sporadic, underfunded, and often arrives too late. Resettlement plans for displaced communities remain on paper. And in Abuja, the urgency of the Benue tragedy seems to fade behind the noise of politics and power plays.

Neglect has a price. It shows up in the form of trauma that spans generations. It shows up in the decline of food production, worsening hunger and poverty. It shows up in the erosion of trust in government, and in the rise of communal tensions that threaten the fragile threads holding Nigeria together.

Benue doesn't need pity; it needs protection, policy, and political will. The government must prioritize restoring security in rural areas, ensuring justice for victims, and rebuilding livelihoods. Beyond that, a long-term plan for peace, reconciliation, and sustainable land-use management is essential.

The bleeding in the Benue Valley cannot be allowed to continue. The longer we ignore it, the higher the cost — not just for Benue, but for the entire nation.

The question now is: how much more must the valley bleed before Nigeria truly listens?







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# 2027: APC Forum slams Malami for dismissing Al-Makura-led CPC Bloc

The North Central All Progressives Congress (NC APC) Forum has criticized former Attorney General of the Federation and Minister of Justice, Abubakar Malami, over his comments questioning the credibility of the Congress for Progressives Change (CPC) bloc led by former Nasarawa state governor, Tanko Al-Makura.

Malami had argued that Al-Makura's group lacked the authority to speak for

CPC legacy members, insisting that only the faction aligned with former President Muhammadu Buhari—to which Malami belongs—could determine whether or not to engage with the emerging opposition coalition spearheaded by former Vice President Atiku Abubakar and the former Kaduna State Governor Nasir El-Rufai.

In a swift response on Saturday, the NC APC Forum, through a statement signed by its Chairman, Saleh

Zazzaga, rejected Malami's assertions and accused him of lacking the credibility to represent the CPC bloc or comment on critical national issues.

"Nigerians are still grappling with the aftermath of the impunities that occurred under his watch," the Forum said.

The Forum further accused Malami of undermining the anti-corruption war during the Buhari administration, alleging that

he interfered with anti-graft fights and appointments, citing a particular high profile appointment leading to compromise of high-profile cases.

Additionally, the Forum suspected Malami as part of those responsible for the controversial Naira redesign policy and the resultant cash crunch and widespread hardship that gripped the nation in the lead-up to the 2023 general elections.

The Forum also alleged Malami of covertly working

against Tinubu during the 2023 election and aligning with those seeking to undermine the current administration.

"He and others from the former President's camp did not support Tinubu then, and now they're upset because they have no role in the present government.

"His legacy is one of disruption and hardship, not leadership or credibility," the statement said.

Reiterating support for

President Bola Tinubu, the North-Central APC Forum hailed Al-Makura as a leader of integrity, whose rejection of the opposition alliance reflects his commitment to progressive ideals.

"Al-Makura is a founding figure in the APC merger talks and the only sitting CPC governor during that period. His voice carries more weight than Malami's when it comes to the party's history," the Forum added.

## Shettima Appeals For Unity In Kano, Warns Against Political Division

By Nathaniel Gumniba

Vice-President Kashim Shettima has called for unity and reconciliation in Kano State, warning against political divisions that could threaten the peace and historical significance of the state.

Speaking during a condolence visit to the family of the late Galadiman Kano, Abbas Sanusi, Shettima emphasized the importance of preserving peace and cohesion in Kano, describing the state as a pivotal center of influence in Northern Nigeria.

"Kano is not to be played with. I understand the depth and devastating consequences of conflict. I was the manager of Zenith Bank in Borno when insecurity sets in, we were the single highest cash-processing unit in West Africa at the time, processing between N1 billion to N1.5 billion daily."

Reflecting on the socio-economic toll of conflict, the Vice President added, "Once peace is lost, even proud cities are reduced to begging. That is the danger we must avoid in Kano."

In a heartfelt plea, Shettima urged political stakeholders to rise above party lines and prioritize the collective interest of the state.

"Please, I am begging you in the name of God, let us not allow politics to divide us. Let

us look at the bigger picture. Let us look at Kano."

He reminded the gathering of Kano's geographic and economic centrality to Northern Nigeria, describing it as a gateway to surrounding states.

"Whether you are going to Borno, Bauchi, or Sokoto, you must pass through Kano. Jigawa is practically an extension of Kano. This city is a city for all."

Shettima also took a moment to urge forgiveness and reconciliation, acknowledging the wisdom of the elders present.



Senator Natasha Akpoti-Uduaghan; her Husband, Chief Akpoti-Uduaghan with the lawmakers led by former Bayelsa State Governor/Senator representing Bayelsa West, Seriake Dickson at her residence.

## 2027: 'My Support For Tinubu Does Not Affect My PDP Membership' – Gov Eno

Akwu Ibom State Governor, Umo Eno, has addressed the controversy surrounding his open support for President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's second term bid, insisting that his stance is a matter of conviction and not a betrayal of his party, the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP).

Speaking to a crowd of supporters at a rally in Ikot Ekpene Local Government Area, Governor Eno said his decision to back the President is deliberate and born out of sincerity, not political opportunism.

Governor Eno revealed that while some political actors secretly pledge allegiance to Tinubu behind closed doors but act differently in public, he chooses to be upfront about his position.

"The other day, I said I was going to support Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu, people said 'why do I say so?' In the night, they go there and go and tell the baba 'we will support you', in the afternoon, they do another thing," he stated.

"Me I'm supporting baba Bola Ahmed Tinubu

for second term. When the time comes, I will tell you the reason, the time has not come yet. But let me keep it first. There's no point lying to yourself."

Eno hinted that his reasons would become clearer in the near future, suggesting that Tinubu's developmental efforts in Akwa Ibom would speak for themselves.

"You will see what he is

doing for our state and you will know why we should not go elsewhere," he said. "So if you want another support, wait — when he finishes, we will now support another person."

He was quick to clarify, however, that this position does not amount to abandoning his PDP roots.

"Akwa Ibom does not know how to flip-flop," he said. "That does not stop me

from being a member of my party. I am entitled to my own opinion."

The governor also received a political boost during the rally, noting that his second-term ambition has been affirmed by none other than Senate President Godswill Akpabio, who publicly expressed his support.

"The senate president has told me in many fora," he said. "It has been con-

firmed today by the vote that has been moved, and our mother has also spoken, that they will support Pastor Umo Eno for a second term."

Closing on a light but meaningful note, Eno said: "So if you take your own, I take my own. You fall for me, I fall for you. Na play, not be fight. If you fall for me, I fall for you."

## 2027: Isoko nation backs Oborevori, Tinubu for re-election

In a deft political move ahead of the 2027 general elections, the Isoko nation has pledged its support for the re-election of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu and Delta State Governor Sheriff Oborevori, committing to deliver at least thousands of votes for the two leaders.

The endorsement, which cuts across party lines, was made during the 'Isoko Meet Interactive Session,' on Saturday at the Uzere country home of retired Chief of Defence Staff, Gen. Alexander Ogomudia.

While support for Gover-

nor Oborevori was largely anticipated, pundits say Tinubu's recent endorsements from Delta and Akwa-Ibom States may significantly alter South-South voting dynamics in the 2027 presidential election.

The event, tagged 'Uzere Declaration for Tinubu and Oborevori,' attracted a large turnout of political stakeholders from various parties, youth leaders, and supporters from both Isoko North and South Council Areas, as well as members of the diaspora.

The motion for endorsement was initiated by

renowned businessman, Chief Eta Enahoro and seconded by Dr. Emmanuel Okoro, Pioneer Speaker of the Delta State House of Assembly.

In his remarks, President-General of the Isoko Development Union (IDU), Prof. Chris Akpotu, emphasized the need for unity among the Isoko people, especially in navigating the evolving political landscape.

"When we speak of the Isoko nation, I do so with pride and precision. Our human capital is unmatched, and we are capable of facing any political chal-

lenge," he said.

Gen. Ogomudia, the Chief host of the event, commended Governor Oborevori for the numerous infrastructural projects underway in Isoko communities. He stressed the importance of unity as a foundation for progress.

"Our gathering today symbolizes our shared desire for a united Isoko. Back in 1962, Isoko had a minister—where are we now in 2025? Unity of purpose, vision, and action is the only way forward," Ogomudia noted.



VP Shettima

## Wike Appoints Justice Dongban-Mensem Chairman IBB Golf Club Board of Trustees

By Nathaniel Gumniba

Minister of the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Ezenwo Nyesom Wike has appointed President of the Court of Appeal, Justice Monica Dongban-Mensem as the Chairman Board of Trustees for IBB International Golf and Country Club, Abuja.

The newly appointed board was inaugurated on Friday at the Minister's official residence in Life Camp.

Dongban-Mensem will now replace General I.B.M. Haruna as the Chairman Board of Trustees.

Other new members of the BOT were Otunba Olusegun Runsewe, Mrs Grace Ihonvbere, S.I. Ameh (SAN), Hamid Abbo, Admiral Victor Adedipe, (rtd), Chief Patrick Chidolue and Mr Ikokwu.

In view of the latest development, Gen Haruna, King Alfred Diète- Spiff, Dr Tim Menakaya and Ambassador Babagana Kingibe, who were members of the BoT will become Patrons of the club, while Chief Philip Asiodu will be dropped.

Wike stressed the FCT Administration's commitment to restoring order and efficiency to the prestigious club, which has recently experienced internal challenges.

"Let me on behalf of the FCT Administration thank members of the Board of Trustees that was inaugurated this afternoon for responding to the call. There has been crisis at the IBB Golf Club and as the owner of that golf course, we cannot fold our hands and see things deteriorate," he stated.

He highlighted the necessity for the new board to conduct a transparent and credible Executive Committee election, amend the club's constitution, and ensure its proper registration.

The minister also clarified the ownership status of the club, reiterating that it remains the property of the Federal Capital Territory Administration.

"You must know that we are still the owners of the golf course. It is not privatized. Some of you have held the view that because government gave you C of O, it means that the property belongs to you. No government has set up agencies and universities. Government give them C of O just to protect the property. But that does not mean that because we gave you C of O as University of Abuja, the government does not own the University of Abuja. This is not correct. Even us in FCT, we own Abuja Investment Company, we give them land, we give them C of O, but that does not mean that the agency does not belong to us. It still belongs to us," he

explained.

He acknowledged the contributions of Gen Haruna, assuring him of continued recognition as a patron of the club.

"Let me thank our dear leader who has been piloting the affairs of the Board of Trustees before crisis came up. Leadership is not easy. I know what you have passed through. We want to thank you for all your efforts and to let you know that government will not allow your services to go in vain", he said.

He expressed confidence in the new board, particularly under the leadership of Hon. Justice Monica Dongban-Mensem, and pledged the FCT Administration's support in resolving existing issues and enhancing the club's facilities.

"So, for us to have a Board of Trustees that could be led by the President of the Court of Appeal, you know that we are not joking at all. We will do everything we can to give the club the necessary support," he affirmed.

He further urged the board to demonstrate commitment to improving the club's infrastructure and services, stating that the FCT Administration is ready to assist once tangible progress is observed.

"Let it come back to what it used to be," he concluded, emphasizing the need to restore the IBB Golf Club's international reputation.

In her response, Justice Dongban-Mensem expressed the board's gratitude to the FCT Minister for his prompt action in addressing the internal crisis at the club. She emphasized the importance of maintaining the club's prestigious standing within the FCT, highlighting its international significance, excellent facilities, and vast potential.

She acknowledged the past leadership, expressing appreciation for their efforts. She also gave special recognition to the immediate past Chairman of the Board, General Haruna, for his dedication to the institution. She pledged the readiness of the new board to uphold the club's integrity and work diligently.



L-R: Mrs. Onyekachi Ayevuomwan, Program Coordinator, Heifer Nigeria; Dr. Lekan Tobe, Country Director, Heifer Nigeria; Mrs. Blessing Okpebholo, First Lady of Edo State; and Mr. Alaba Yunusa, Deputy Head of Business, natnudO Foods, during the official launch of the natnuPreneur Seller Scheme Hub & Spoke Model in Benin City, Edo State, recently.

## Wike Queries Abuja University's Acquisition of 1,000 Hectares of Land, Says It's Unfuturistic

By Nathaniel Gumniba

The Minister of the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Nyesom Wike, has described as unacceptable the acquisition of 1,000 hectares of land by University of Abuja, now known as Yakubu Gowon University.

This was as the minister on Friday officially inaugurated the Utako Farmer's Market, Abuja.

The facility, which is Nigeria's first evergreen solar powered market, was developed on 3,000 square meters of land, consisting of 50 lock up shops, 40 informal stalls and seven warehouses.

On the acquisition of 1,000 hectares of land by the University of Abuja, the minister made the observation yesterday during an inspection of ongoing infrastructure projects such as OSEX and the road leading to the EFCC Academy ahead of activities marking President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's second year in office.

He described the move as unfuturistic, excessive and a hindrance to developmental efforts within the territory.

"I have discovered and

also opened my eyes as to the kind of land that the University of Abuja has acquired. It is not acceptable. You can't deny development, where a university will go and take over 1,000 hectares of land for what purpose? We have been to universities, we have gone around to schools, just the grabbing of land is not the whole thing. It is just for development purposes," Wike said.

The minister also lampooned the institution for failing to put the land to productive use, warning any public land left fallow would be repossessed and reassigned.

"If you don't develop it, the government will take it back and give it to those who will. We must stop this idea of acquiring land just for acquisition's sake," he said.

He also questioned the underlying motive of such large-scale land acquisition saying, "Before you know it, they will begin to lease it out to people. It doesn't make sense. What makes a university is not the large expansion of land. What makes a university is the infrastructure, and the quality. It is not about land. You can have 20,000 hectares of land and the university does not have any infrastructure. So, what does it help? We must stop this idea of just acquiring land for acquiring sake. That is not the essence of it. If they give you land, if you develop it fine, if you don't develop it, the government will take it back and give it to those who want to develop. So that is our position."

Meanwhile, speaking while unveiling the market in Abuja yesterday, the FCT Minister, Wike, stated that the inauguration of the market marks a significant milestone in boosting commercial infrastructure and economic growth within the Federal Capital Territory.

Represented by the Minister of State for FCT, Dr. Mariya Mahmoud, Wike said by investing in such infrastructure, the Bola Tinubu administration has demonstrated its commitment to creating opportunities for economic expansion and improving the quality of life for residents.

The FCT Minister praised Ambassador Maureen Tamuno's leadership of Abuja Investments Company Limited for driving economic growth in the Federal Capital Territory, stressing that under her guidance, AICL has been instrumental in fostering strategic investments, promoting partnerships, and showcasing Abuja's vast investment potential.

"This initiative reflects our shared vision for a sustainable, inclusive, and resilient economy—one that supports our local farmers, empowers small-scale agribusinesses, and ensures that quality produce is readily accessible to every resident of the Federal Capital Territory."

"We are not only commissioning a market; we are unveiling a hub of economic empowerment, a centre of agricultural excellence, and a vital link between producers and consumers. This market will serve as a platform where farmers can sell directly to buyers, eliminating middlemen, reducing post-harvest losses, and boosting rural incomes."

"I must commend the visionary leadership and dedication of the Abuja Investment Company Limited under the able leadership of the Group Managing Director/CEO, Ambassador Maureen Tamuno, PhD, for her commitment to transforming the economic landscape of our modern city. This market, in addition to other markets, stands as a

demonstration of what can be achieved through public-private collaboration, strategic investment, and community-focused development," Wike said.

Earlier in her remarks, the Group Managing Director, Abuja Investments Company Limited, Amb. Tamuno applauded the FCT Minister for his visionary and unwavering commitment to making Abuja a world-class city.

She said the project aligns with Sustainable Development Goal 11, focusing on sustainable urban growth that fosters economic development, environmental conservation and improved living standards for Abuja's residents.

"Despite the huge capital costs associated with renewable energy, we at AICL embarked on this project because it combines sustainability and modern eco-friendly practices to create a market that benefits farmers, traders, and FCT residents."

"Also, this market will support the food security policy thrust of the Renewed Hope Agenda of the current administration of His Excellency President Bola Ahmed Tinubu GCFR. This is because the Market will serve as a reliable retail outlet for farmers, which is crucial in the agricultural value chain by ensuring that farm produce reaches consumers efficiently," she said.

In their separate goodwill messages, the Chairman, Senate Committee on FCT and Ancillary Matters, Sen. David Jimkuta as well as Head of Service (HoS) of the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Grace Adayilo, commended the leadership of the two FCT ministers and Amb. Tamuno for their dedication to economic development in the country's capital.



Wike

# Enugu Govt to develop 135.5km standard gauge rail line connecting South-East cities to Onne Port

The Enugu State Government has announced plans to develop a 135.5-kilometre state-owned standard gauge rail line, designed to connect key South-East cities to the Onne Port in Rivers State.

The State Commissioner for Transportation, Dr. Obi Ozor, shared this update during an interview on the Enugu Kwenu Programme aired on Afia TV on Friday, where he provided insights into the state's ongoing transport developments and the potential impact of the proposed rail project.

Dr. Ozor confirmed the completion of a feasibility

study for the Enugu rail network and South-East corridor.

He also highlighted that the Enugu Government is collaborating with the Nigerian Railway Corporation and Chinese companies on rail infrastructure, while negotiating with investors for financing.

He emphasized that the rail line aligns with the state's goal of positioning Enugu as a key hub for regional trade and logistics.

The proposed rail line will run from Enugu through Uguwoaba, connecting to Awka and Onitsha in Anambra State. It will extend

through parts of Ebonyi via the Amechi Idodo axis, link Umuahia and Owerri through Nkanu West and Isiagu, and terminate at the Onne Port.

"As part of turning Enugu State into a hub, rail is a critical part of that to enable the movement of agro commodities from wherever their sources are to all the way to the port for export and earning of foreign exchange.

"We have a lot of wealth locked underneath our soil, such as coal. We need to exploit them to be able to generate a lot of revenue, and rail is critical to it. And that rail is also important to connect all

the South Eastern cities because they have some level of affiliation to Enugu," the commissioner stated.

He added, "The line we are about to build is state-owned. It is a 135.5km standard gauge line that connects Enugu to all major cities in the South East. You are going to see a proper connection to Anambra through Uguwoaba, you are going to see a connection to Ebonyi through the Amechi Idodo axis. And of course, connecting to Umuahia, Abia and Owerri through the line that passes through Nkanu West to Isiagu and going all the way to Onne Port."

The commissioner stated that the rail line will serve both passenger and cargo services, improving goods movement and reducing reliance on Lagos ports. He added that it will also ease cargo flow from neighbouring states like Delta, alleviating pressure on Lagos' congested ports.

The commissioner emphasized that the proposed rail line is central to Enugu's vision of becoming a logistics and export hub, enabling the smooth movement of agro-commodities from across the South-East to export terminals.

Beyond agriculture, he

noted that the project would support the exploitation of untapped mineral resources, especially coal, by providing infrastructure for efficient bulk transport.

According to him, a functional rail system would unlock new revenue streams and deepen regional economic integration.

According to the commissioner, the project is part of a wider transport plan that includes a new market station at the Holy Ghost Transport Terminal in Enugu. Dr Ozor said the station, to be sited between Terminals 1 and 2, will handle both passengers and cargo.



From left: BOT Acting Chairman, Hezekiah University Umudi, Amb Onyinye Gift Uwaechia, Governor Hope Uzodimma of Imo State, his wife and awardee, Chioma, and Pro Chancellor of Hezekiah University, Umudi, Lady Ogechi Ibeagi, at the Maiden Convocation Ceremony of the University held at the University Arena, Umudi, Nkwere LGA... weekend

## Police Rescue Victims, Arrest Notorious Cultist, Recover Arms In Anambra

The police command in Anambra State has rescued two kidnap victims, arrested three suspects, and recovered 14 pump-action guns in operations across the state.

The state Police Public Relations Officer, SP Tochukwu Ikenga, stated this in a statement in Awka on Saturday.

Mr Ikenga said that the command intensified operations to provide a safe environment for residents and visitors during Easter and beyond.

Extending Easter greetings, the command noted that it increased security patrols to ensure safety across the state.

Mr Ikenga stated that during one operation, officers rescued two kidnap

victims, arrested a notorious cultist, and recovered seven pump-action guns.

He added that seven live cartridges, three handcuffs, a cutlass, an axe, a dagger, and other items were also recovered.

On April 18, a joint team from Uli Police Division and Uli Vigilantes rescued two kidnap victims in Ihiala.

On Sunday, April 13, armed men attacked Amorka Village, Uli, at 2:00 p.m., abducting victims along the Onitsha-Owerri Expressway.

The criminals forced the victims into another vehicle, abandoning the original one at the scene of the crime.

The police recovered the abandoned vehicle and took it to the station for

safekeeping.

Mr Ikenga confirmed that efforts were ongoing to apprehend the fleeing suspects.

Similarly, police from Fegge Division, Onitsha South LGA, intercepted a parked bus along Port Harcourt Road, Upper Iwaka.

During a search, officers found five pump-action guns, eight live cartridges, and two handcuffs hidden in a bag of rice.

The police said that arms and vehicles were recovered, and investigations were underway to identify those responsible.

On April 17, the Rapid Response Squad arrested a 25-year-old male suspect acting on credible intelligence.

During the arrest at Ezeigwe Street, Nkpor, offi-

cers recovered two pump-action guns, two cartridges, a cutlass, an axe, and a dagger.

He stated that the suspect confessed to being part of the Viking's Confraternity and assisting police in locating other members.

Meanwhile, the state Commissioner of Police, Ikiyeye Orutugu, urged residents to remain law-abiding, vigilant, and security conscious.

The commissioner also encouraged people to emulate Christ's humility and selflessness during and after Easter.

He urged residents to use the Easter period to pray for peace and security in the state and across Nigeria.

## Anambra Youths Urged to Enlist in the Nigerian Army, Secure their Future

By Achadu Gabriel

The youths of Anambra State have been admonished to get hold of the opportunity of enlisting in the 89 Regular Recruiting Tech Recruitment Exercise of the Nigerian Army which commences from 31st March to 17th May 2025.

Christian Aburime, Chief Press Secretary to Governor Charles Soludo, stated that this is not just another routine enlistment opportunity, but a pathway to a dignified career filled with purpose and equal opportunity.

He affirmed that partaking in the recruitment exercise means a stable career with enhanced regular pay and allowances, and an opportunity for the youths to advance their educational career.

Other benefits according to him, are the chance to

build lifelong friendships with fellow Nigerians from diverse backgrounds, comprehensive healthcare and insurance benefits, a clear path to home ownership in a desired location, and pension and gratuity for future security.

The recruitment is for Ndi Anambra that are single, of age 18-22 years of age (or up to 26 years for those with technical skills), physically fit, and free of criminal convictions, and should visit the Nigerian Army Recruitment website at <https://recruitment.army.mil.ng> to apply before the deadline.

Aburime averred that what is even more endearing is that the whole application and recruitment process is completely free, and shortlisted candidates will participate in the screening exercise in Anambra State from the 2nd to 16th June 2025.

"Ndi Anambra, our state needs you to encourage our youth to step forward and take their future by the uniform. Our country needs them. According to a Nigerian adage, if you are not present at a meeting of your people sharing some benefits, you can't complain about how the sharing is done. Let our youth step forward and claim their rightful place in Nigeria's future," he enthused.

He added that by joining, Southeast youth will not only secure their future but also ensure the region's voice and interests are represented and protected within this crucial national institution.



Gov Soludo



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**Onitsha Office:** 4, Ojuta Road, Onitsha, Anambra State. Tel: 08173519098

**Owerri Office:** 1, Tallon, No. 7, Bank Road, Owerri, Imo State. Tel: 08035768041

**Port Harcourt Office:** 245, Aba/Port Harcourt Road, Port Harcourt, (Former Shell Recruitment Centre), Rivers State. Tel: 08083134867

**Umuahia Office:** No. 3, Okpara Square, Umuahia, Abia State. Tel: 08034279188

# Kidnapper of Rivers 12-year-old girl not in our custody – Correctional Service

By Victor Peter

**T**HE Nigerian Correctional Service (NCS) has denied that the kidnapper of a 12-year-old girl in Rivers State known as Chiboy has been traced to Enugu Prison.

The Correctional Service in a statement on Sunday, April 20, by its Public Relations Officer (PRO),

Umar Abubakar, a deputy controller of corrections, said the attention of the NCS was drawn to an online publication alleging its complicity in the kidnap of a 12-year-old girl in Rivers State.

The NCS statement followed a report that the Nigeria Police Force (NPF) had tracked a prime suspect, known as Chiboy, to the Enugu Correctional facility,

in connection with the August 7, 2024, kidnaping of 12-year-old child Favour Oluwaseyi in Obio/Akpor Local Government area of Rivers State.

The suspect was allegedly linked to the crime through a phone number used to call the victim's mother and an account number used to receive a ransom of N100,000.

The Service described

the publication as false, malicious and a figment of the writer's imagination, aimed at misleading the public.

According to the NCS, available records show that the Enugu State Command has no inmate in any of its facilities bearing 'Chiboy.'

"Nigerian Correctional Service categorically states that it is not aware of any kidnap in Rivers State or

any other Command as alleged both in the press statement and the viral video nor was there any time an investigative agency tracked any kidnapper to any facility in Enugu or Delta State Commands.

"Therefore, the Service is not in the position to confirm payment of ransom or whatsoever transaction as alleged in the fictitious

report and video," the Service stated.

The NCS added that it had no role in the said kidnap story, and as a security organisation, it was not operating in isolation; but with sister agencies to ensure adequate security.

The Service said it would never turn down requests for investigation activities from sister agencies.



Commissioner of Youth and Sports Oyo State, Miss Wasilat Adegoke and other official of Oyo State Sports Management, during the final match at the Oyo State Federation Cup between the Shooting Stars of Ibadan and Crown FC of Ogbomosho, at Lekan Salami Stadium, in Ibadan...yesterday

## Rivers crisis: Reinstate Fubara now, Secondus tells Tinubu

**A** former National Chairman of the Peoples Democratic Party, Uche Secondus, has called on President Bola Tinubu to restore the suspended Rivers State Governor, Siminalayi Fubara, to power.

Secondus added that this is the only way the people's mandate would be upheld in the state.

The PDP chieftain made the call in an Easter message released through his Special Adviser on Media, Ike Abonyi, on Sunday.

According to him, the activities of the Rivers Sole Administrator, Ibok-Ete Ibas, have set the state on a keg of gunpowder.

This comes a few days after the Ad-Hoc Committee on Rivers State oversight invited Ibas to appear before

it for an interactive session regarding the state's affairs.

"The President should be guided by the voice of reason by restoring Governor Similaya Fubara, who has the mandate of the people.

"The Sole Administrator's activities have set Rivers State on a keg of gunpowder, and I weep for my state. Sadly, Rivers State has found itself on the ugly side of history over the control of Resources and the state by one man," the statement read.

Secondus further praised the Ijaw nation for their restraint, noting, "My special appreciation goes to the Ijaw nation, its leaders and people, the indisputable fourth largest ethnic group in Nigeria with over 30 LGAs across seven states, for managing the provocations."

Additionally, he urged Christians to embody Christ's love and piety.

"Easter period reminds us of brotherly love, peaceful co-existence, tolerance, honesty, humility, justice, equity and fairness to all without discrimination as contained in the Scriptures," he said.

Recall that Tinubu had in March declared a state of emergency in Rivers State following the prolonged

political crisis in the oil-rich state.

Following the declaration, Tinubu also suspended Fubara, his deputy, and the members of the State Assembly.

Adekunle, a fellow of Data and Solutions Journalism, has over four years experience with competences in data journalism and investigations.



Gov Fubara

## Uncertainty Surrounds Planned Pro-Wike Rally In Bayelsa Amid Legal Challenges

Victor Peter

**S**ix days before the much-publicised rally scheduled for April 26, 2025, in Yenagoa, Bayelsa State, doubts loom over whether the event will take place as planned.

The rally, which is organised by the NEW Associates group, is meant to show support for the Federal Capital Territory Minister, Nyesom Wike, but internal disputes and legal challenges are threatening its success.

The rally, coordinated by a key member of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) in Bayelsa, George Turnah, has already been disrupted by divisions among its organisers and a court injunction halting the event.

A High Court in Bayelsa issued an order restraining the organisers from holding the rally, citing concerns that it could disrupt the peace in the state.

Amid the legal setbacks, reports have emerged of financial mismanagement within the organising group. According to Comrade Ogedengbe, a key member of the group, there is dissatisfaction over the way funds for the rally are being managed.

According to Vanguard, Ogedengbe revealed that significant contributions had been made by political leaders and federal agencies from the Niger Delta region, but the manner in which the funds are being spent has raised concerns.

"We are not happy with the way the money is being spent. We all know how much people are contributing to it and even leaders of

federal agencies in the region. We have found out that the group was created out of the name of the minister, Nyesom Wike, NEW Associates. My group and others are opting out of the rally, since somebody wants to use others to achieve his own personal political agenda," Ogedengbe stated.

Tensions have been brewing among the organisers, with some accusing others of attempting to monopolize the rally. Disputes reportedly erupted on the group's WhatsApp platform over the disbursement of funds, with members calling for transparency.

The quarrel escalated when a former State Chairman of the PDP, who had initially supported the rally, distanced himself from the group after being sidelined in the planning process.

He expressed his anger on the WhatsApp platform, saying, "It doesn't work this way. Please forget about me. I don't want to be used and dumped."

In a statement issued by Turnah, he accused infiltrators of undermining the rally's progress and stated that a weeding process had begun within the group.

Complicating matters further, the Yenagoa High Court affirmed Turnah's suspension by the PDP State Working Committee, ruling that his removal from the party's Zonal Secretary position was in line with the party's constitution. This ruling has added another layer of complexity to the already unstable situation within the organising group.

# Minor Who Stood Before Peter Obi's Convoy Freed After Months in Kirikiri on Police False Robbery Charge

Olalekan Olaiya

Quadri Yusuf Alabi, the 17-year-old whose act of standing before the convoy of Labour Party presidential candidate Peter Obi during the 2023 general elections elicited the generosity of many Nigerians, has regained his freedom after months of wrongful detention at the Kirikiri Medium Security Custodial Centre in Lagos.

On Thursday, 17th April 2025, a Lagos Magistrate's Court sitting in Apapa discharged and released Quadri after the Lagos State Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP), Dr. Babajide Martins, found no evidence

to support the allegation of armed robbery levelled against him.

It was gathered that Quadri's legal ordeal began in January when he was abducted near his family home in Amukoko, Ajeromi-Ifelodun Local Government Area by two notorious area boys known in the community as "Lege" and "Baba Waris".

According to his legal counsel, human rights lawyer Inibehe Effiong, the duo had long harassed the teenager out of envy, demanding a portion of donations he had received following his viral encounter with Peter Obi during the last election.

Effiong revealed that the Baale of the community also pressured Quadri's family to

host a feast — complete with a cow and rice — to appease the area boys.

The teenager, who was returning from work at the time of the incident, was dragged to the Amukoko Divisional Police Headquarters, popularly known as Pako Police Station.

While the abductors initially accused him of street fighting, the narrative shifted dramatically when the police, on 26th January 2025, arraigned him before a Magistrate and claimed he was involved in an armed robbery.

"In a clear abuse of process, the police joined Quadri with four unknown adults — men he had no prior connection with — and

alleged they were his accomplices," said Effiong in a press statement released on Thursday.

The police also falsely declared Quadri's age as 18, concealing his actual age of 17 in what Effiong described as "a deliberate and sinister move to subject him to adult legal processes."

Effiong's legal team only became aware of the case last week after the matter was brought to the public's attention by Ms. Hassana Nurudeen, co-founder of Ray of Hope Prison Outreach, who raised the alarm on social media.

Following swift legal intervention, the case was brought before Magistrate A.O. Olorunfemi, who, after

reviewing the DPP's legal advice, declared there was no evidence linking Quadri to any crime. The Magistrate accordingly discharged and freed the teenager.

Effiong commended the DPP for "standing by the truth," but condemned the actions of the Amukoko Police, calling for urgent disciplinary action against those involved.

"We demand that the Commissioner of Police, Lagos State Command, and the Inspector General of Police immediately remove the Divisional Police Officer of Amukoko Division and subject him to an orderly room trial, alongside the Investigating Police Officer, Inspector Odigbe Samuel, and all officers who partici-

pated in this evil and corrupt scheme," Effiong stated.

The legal team is demanding a public apology from the Nigeria Police Force and compensation of N100 million for Quadri's unlawful detention and psychological trauma. Failing this, Effiong warned, legal action will be instituted to seek full redress.

"Quadri's case is a painful reminder of the rottenness, impunity, and injustice that plague the Nigeria Police Force. There are many other 'Quadris' languishing in cells and prison yards across the country because of unbridled corruption and a broken justice system," Effiong said.

## Oyo First Lady Praises Agboworin For Empowering Over 200 Women, PWDs Others With Start-Up Kits, Cash

The wife of the Oyo State Governor, Engr. (Mrs) Tamunominini Makinde has commended Hon Abass Adigun Agboworin, a federal lawmaker representing Ibadan Northeast, Southeast Constituency for various laudable human orientated programmes.

Mrs Makinde lauded Hon Agboworin for touching the lives of the people of his Constituency positively.

Speaking as a special guest at an empowerment program facilitated by Hon Abass Adigun Agboworin, the Oyo State First Lady linked Agboworin's empowerment initiatives to an opportunities for skills development among the women, youths and people living with disability in the state.

The empowerment scheme which was held at Apex Hall, opposite Yidi Praying Ground Agodi Gate Ibadan, the Capital City of Oyo State, on Saturday was graced by notable leaders of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) as over one hundred women and youths that have been trained on soap, toilet disinfectant and liquid bleach productions received their certificate of participation from the National Directorate of Empowerment (NDE), start-up kits such as gas cylinders and burners, soap chemical mixer machine worth N250,000 each and a fifty thousand naira (50,000) cash support.

The beneficiaries of the empowerment initiatives also included over one hundred people living with disability, as one hundred tricycles, 20 crutches, 10 walkers were freely distributed for the disabled persons to aid their daily business activities as

they move around for their lawful engagements.

Mrs Makinde in her speech said, "I thank you my brother, Agboworin, for touching the lives of the people. When we did something like this in 2023, people were not as much as this. But today, I can see much people in here. I appreciate him for doing this."

"Hon Agboworin is dedicated and committed to empower the people of his Constituency with the rightful skill acquisitions, instead of killing fish for his people, he always train them on how to kill fish by themselves, and this is a very good idea, he has been empowering them with the skills and knowledge so they too can stand on their own, this is a very good initiative, and I really commend him for bringing dividend of democracy to the people of his Constituency.

"I am glad that Honorable Agboworin always prioritize women in his empowerment initiatives, today after a two weeks training, the beneficiaries, upon their graduation today Saturday, 19th 2025 are presented with certificate, start up kits and cash of fifty thousand naira (N50,000) each to start their businesses, this will go a long way in addressing economic hardship in our country, the beneficiaries are expected to make good use of their training, their start-up kits, and the money given to them judiciously.

The Oyo state First Lady advised the beneficiaries to see the training as an opportunity to expand the business into large scale venture, in order to create more opportunities for people of Oyo state.



The Chairman of Yewa North Local Government, Hon Akinbode with the management of Star Diamond Organisation during the visit to the firm located at Aiyetoro recently.

## Easter: Abiodun, Adeola, Gbenga Danaiel seek prayers for Tinubu, Nigeria

By Olalekan Olaiya

Ogun State Governor, Prince Dapo Abiodun, has congratulated Christians on this year's Easter celebration and reiterated the commitment of his administration to development.

The governor, in his Easter message on Sunday, called on Nigerians to look forward to a brighter future in line with the Renewed Hope Agenda of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu.

"As we celebrate this joyous occasion, let us carry forward the lessons of Easter, promoting unity and goodwill in our country, state, neighborhoods, and beyond," he said.

"On our part, we will continue our developmental trajectory, which has put our state on a firm pedestal of development. We will continue to strive to provide the

best for our people to raise their standards of living," he said.

Also, the Chairman of Senate Committee on Appropriations, Senator Solomom Adeola, has called on all Nigerians to pray for President Bola Ahmed Tinubu and Nigeria for a prosperous and secure future.

Adeola, in his Easter message, appealed to all to Chris-

tians and others to imbibe Christian virtues of sacrifice, patience, love and abiding faith for a better tomorrow as exemplified in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

He called on Nigerians to remain hopeful and support Government's efforts in the challenge of building a better society devoid of rampant insecurity and economic deprivations.

Meanwhile, former Gov-

ernor of Ogun and senator representing Ogun East senatorial district, Otunba Gbenga Daniel, said the season should remind the faithful of abundant love which is represented in the sacrifice of Christ.

"This blessed season of Easter offers us another beautiful opportunity to reflect on the enduring message of love, sacrifice, and renewal. It is a time that reminds us all of the triumph of hope over despair, of light over darkness, and of unity over division."

"As we celebrate, I urge us all as citizens to draw closer in unity and compassion just as Christ taught us by supporting one another and reaching out to those in need so that we can build a stronger nation, a prosperous Ogun State and a happier Ogun East Senatorial District together."



President Tinubu

# Benue Killings: Alia Cries For Help As death Toll Hits 56

By Victor Peter

Following the endless attacks on vulnerable Benue communities with death toll rising to 56 within two weeks, Benue State Governor, Rev. Fr. Hyacinth Alia has sought the intervention of the Federal government to

end the bloodbath.

The governor made the disclosure on Saturday during a visit to the scenes of recent attacks in the state. Death toll from the attacks, allegedly carried out by armed militia in Ukum and Logo LGAs has risen to 56.

The recent attacks had occurred in the Sankera

axis of the state and dozens of dead bodies have been evacuated from the scenes. The attacks have turned the affected communities to ghost towns.

Gov. Alia who spoke to the media during the visit, condemned violent attacks on defenseless and vulnerable people and called on security

agencies to take more decisive action to end the killings.

The Governor, during the visit also engaged with traditional rulers and residents of the affected communities and assured them of government's commitment to tackling insecurity in the state.

He urged the people not to lose hope to the extent of resorting to self-help.

Emergency services have been deployed, same as relief materials are across the two affected Local Government Areas. Daily Independent was told.

The attacks in Ukum

and Logo are the latest in a series of incidents linked to suspected herdsmen in Benue State.

Wednesday's attack came hours after the Governor confirmed the arrest of three suspected herders in connection with the invasion of Otobi village on Tuesday night.



L-R Oyebola Morakinyo, GM, Cavista Technologies, Dr. Victor Odumuyiwa, Director of NitHub, UNILAG, Team Stark Underflow, Winner of the 2025 Cavista Technologies Hackathon, Nifemi Sofowora, Marketing Manager, Cavista Holdings and Dr. Bayo Oke Thomas, Head of Operations, InstantRad Nigeria and one of the Judges, at the Cavista Technologies Hackathon, which ended, in Lagos.

## Niger State Electricity Distribution Company Rolls Out Drums July 2025 NiSERC Boss

TUNDE ADIGUN,-- MINNA

Chairman of the Niger Electricity Distribution Company has disclosed that the company is to take over the role of distribution of electricity from Abuja Electric Distribution Company (AEDC) and Ibadan Electric Distribution Company (IBEDC) from 9th of July 2025

The State Chairman of the Electricity Regulatory Commission Engr Mohammed Sharu made this known during a meeting with the License Electric Contractors Association of Nigeria (LECAN) Niger state chapter in his office.

In his words during the meeting, Engr Sharu emphatically stated that "with the signing of electricity act 2023 and subsequent domestication of

the act in Niger state by Governor Umaru Mohammed Bago, the role of distribution, licensing, regulating, wooing investors and policing now lies with his commission".

He further stressed that the AEDC and IBEDC is now Sub Co to operate under the State's electricity distribution company and their names changed to Niger State Electricity Distribution Company and New Bussa Distribution company.

Sharu however advised that licensed contractors whose licenses has expired should commence register with his commission, warning that the commission will not take it lightly with any contractor who uses substandard electrical appliances and gadgets.

The Chairman stated that "any erring contractors found wanting will be

sanctioned and penalized accordingly."

Responding to the Commission Chairman's remark, the Chairman of Licensed electricity contractors Engr Godwin Azodo appreciated the commission for enlightening his members on the new development.

He assured that the executive of the associa-

tion and his members will avail the commission all the support and cooperation.

According to him "with the caliber of the commission's members who are well experienced, the power sector in Niger state will be well sanitized, organized and beneficial to Nigerlites.



Governor Umaru Mohammed Bago

## Niger State Govt Partners Overland Airways to Launch Flights From Bola Ahmed Tinubu International Airport Minna.

TUNDE ADIGUN-- MINNA

In a bid to make fully operational Niger State Government has announced the commencement of scheduled flight operations from the newly inaugurated Bola Ahmed Tinubu International Airport, Minna, with Overland Airways Limited the pioneer airline partner.

This was made known by the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Overland Airways, Captain Edward Boyo while in Minna, revealed that the flights is scheduled to begin on April 23, 2025, connecting Minna to Abuja and Lagos, Nigeria's political and commercial capitals.

According to him, the achievement comes through the visionary leadership of governor Mohammed Umaru Bago, and the strategic efforts of the New Niger Development Project (NNDP) and New Niger Aviation (NNA), a Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) created to manage and enhance the aviation ecosystem in Niger State.

Captain Boyo noted that the partnership with Overland Airways—Nigeria's longest-serving private domestic airline—represents a key milestone in actualizing Governor Bago's infrastructural development blueprint and in positioning Niger State as a regional hub for investment, trade, and tourism.

"We are honoured to be chosen as the launch airline for this historic route,

"This service underscores our commitment to expanding connectivity across Nigeria and partnering with visionary governments like Niger State to bring growth closer to the

people.

We applaud Governor Bago and the NNA team for this bold and transformational move," he stated.

Earlier, the Chief Operating Officer of NNA, Alhaji Liman Katamba Kutigi stated, "This launch is more than an air route—it's a bridge to opportunity.

By partnering with Overland Airways, we are setting a new standard in regional air connectivity, with safety, reliability, and economic impact at the center.

He added that this is the beginning of a broader agenda to transform Niger State into a key player in Nigeria's aviation and logistics corridor."

In their separate remarks, the Niger State Ministry of Transport, in collaboration with the NNDP, also noted:

"The journey to make Bola Ahmed Tinubu International Airport operational has been long and deliberate—from infrastructure in compliance with aviation standards.

We are proud to deliver a world-class airport that reflects Niger State's potential and ambition.

The Governor's commitment has been relentless, and this milestone is just the beginning."

According to plans the Flight Schedules as follows; Minna – Lagos – Minna: Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays, while it

Departs Lagos to Minna: 8:00AM

Departs Minna to Lagos: 3:00PM

Minna – Abuja – Minna: Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays and to Departs Minna to Abuja: 9:30 AM as well Departs Abuja to Minna: 2:00 PM.





L-R: Deputy Speaker, Niger State House of Assembly, Mrs Afiniki Eunice-Dauda; Chairman, Gurara LGA, Niger State, Mr. Abdulim Abubakar; Director-General, National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA), Hajiya Zubaida Umar; Head of Operations, NEMA Niger/Kwara, Mr. Hassan Isah and other dignitaries, during the visit of NEMA DG to families of the Diko Petrol Tanker explosion at Gurara LGA, Niger State

## Kaduna Will Soon Become A One-Party State - Governor Sani Alleges

By Achadu Gabriel, Kaduna

Kaduna state Governor, Senator Uba Sani has said that very soon Kaduna will become a one-party state.

He made the statement against backdrop that the ruling All Progressive Congress (APC) dominated political affairs in the state.

He said that already about four members of the House of Representatives from the opposition parties decamped to APC, stating that members of the Kaduna State House of Assembly from different zones have also decamped to the party.

Sani who spoke in Zaria on Monday, argued that the defection of members of the opposition to APC "is a good sign and shows that we are doing something that is positive, we are carrying everyone along on in Kaduna state."

Besides, the House of Representatives Speaker, Tajudeen Abbas had distributed 117 vehicles, comprising 20 Hilux; 2 ambulances; 20 18-seater buses; 50 Sharon vehicles, and 25 sedan/saloon cars (Golf, Corolla & Peugeot 406), while 200 tricycles, popularly known as Keke NAPEP, and 1,000 motorcycles were given to various beneficiaries

Speaking at the event, the Governor heaped praises on Speaker Abbas, saying that Kaduna State and indeed the entire country is proud of his stewardship, adding that the laudable projects that

he attracted to the state had his blessing.

Governor Sani explained that since Abbas became speaker, "he has been able to bring many people-oriented projects to Zaria and other parts of the state, and I am happy about that.

According to him, the Speaker has brought developments in the education and healthcare and agricultural sectors, including infrastructural development in Kaduna State.

The Governor expressed that Abbas "is not not only focusing on Zaria, being his constituency, he has touched lives of other people who are not even from his constituency, particularly those from Kaduna North Senatorial Zone."

"Today, we are here to witness one of the major achievements of the Rt. Hon. Speaker, by distributing to the people who are deserving in this very constituency. However, what we are witnessing today is not only about Zaria Local Government, all the seven local government areas of zone 1 from this support and intervention by the Hon. Speaker", he said.

Sani further stressed, "he is working closely with our government and he has been the pillar not only for Kaduna State Government, but for also Mr President, Bola Ahmed Tinub.

"I met Mr President recently and he told me that he is pleased with the way the Hon. Speaker is piloting the affairs of the

House of Representatives, and I can say that all of us that had at one time being in the National Assembly are proud of what he is doing at the level of House of Representatives

"All those talking about the Speaker, let me assure you that In "Sha Allah", he will make history by being Speaker twice. We are together; we will continue to work together for the betterment of Kaduna State. All we are after is the progress of Kaduna State," he added.

Governor Sani assured that "with what we have seen here today, APC will continue to dominate Kaduna State. In the next few months, we will be running a one party state in Kaduna.

Meanwhile, in his address, Speaker Abbas thanked his constituents for their continued support, noting that he would continue to do his best to attract people-oriented projects to them.

Speaking on his journey to become Speaker, Abbas said President Bola Ahmed Tinubu was number one on the list of those who supported him despite not knowing him personally.

"The President gave me his support based on his conviction from what he read and heard about me. He never met me before supporting me. Different names were submitted to him, but he chose to support me because he was convinced by my credentials," he said.

Speaker Abbas further

asked his constituents to support and pray for the president to succeed.

The Speaker added that the next major person to support him against all odds was the current governor of Kaduna State, Senator Uba Sani, whom he described as a key figure that supported him through thick and thin.

"Governor Uba Sani supported me at a time when most officials of the past administration in Kaduna State did not support me. He declared his support for me even before he took the oath of office, and ensured he kept to his words after swearing-in.

Abbas disclosed that he vowed during the Kaduna State APC Caucus meeting last year, that "nothing will separate me and Governor Uba Sani no matter what, come rain, come sunshine, I will be the last man standing for him.

"We are pleased with his style of governance and leadership qualities, and we will support him unconditionally. I make bold to say that my constituents and I are behind our governor and wish him the best. We are his supporters today; we'll be his supporters tomorrow and beyond. Nothing will come between us In Sha Allah", he said.

"By 2027, Governor Uba Sani will see the kind of support we have for him. We will mobilize our people in Zaria and the entire Kaduna State for him," the Speaker added.

## Sultan: Nigeria Govt Condemnation Of Killings Is Enough, Let Military Kill The Killers

By Achadu Gabriel, Kaduna

The Sultan of Sokoto and the Chairman of the council, Alhaji Sa'ad Abubakar III made this known in his opening remarks at the 7th Executive Committee Meeting of the council in Maiduguri.

"How many more times do we need to condemn it before our political leaders use our security agencies to bring it to an end or at least to bring to barest minimum the killings in our country," he quizzed.

The Northern Traditional Rulers Council on Tuesday also expressed their determination to help their governors with new options in tackling the lingering insecurity in the region.

Sultan, the theme of the meeting, "Enhanced Security As A Panacea for Stability and Development of the North" said: "We will be speaking with one voice to say enough is enough of this senseless killings of innocent people, across the north, across the country".

"We have never and we will never support it. We never feel happy about it; we are also sad whenever we heard such things. And we have received so many statements of condemnation.

"How many more times do we need to condemn it before our political leaders use our security agencies to bring it to an end or at least to bring to barest minimum the killings in our country," he asked?

The Sultan said that traditional rulers would not get tired of calling the leaders to do what they believed must be done to upload the burden of responsibility given to leaders by the Almighty God.

"Every governor will account for what he did in his tenure and Sultan will not be there to defend him before God," Abubakar said.

He, however, said it was not good enough for the people to be trading blame over the insecurity challenges and other related problems in the region.

"I think it's high time we stopped making comments that insinuate that certain people are the cause of our problem, no.

"We are the cause of all our problems. If we want to resolve the problem in the north as leaders we can do so.

"How? We'll sit together and take the issues up and solve them one by one from

the governors, the traditional leaders to religious leaders to the common man on the street what he should do to help the security agencies, the governors and political leadership and all to bring to the barest minimum these killings.

"I believe we can do so, we have to look at other options. If we try one, two, three and we have not succeeded then let us try four, five, six, seven and then definitely we will succeed.

"What I mean is that bring in traditional institutions from day one and share with them what you want to achieve, then you will see how successful you will be in your governance for any state or local government.

"I believe we know the importance of some of these things. And I believe we have what it takes to bring to barest minimum insecurity in our country." Abubakar insisted.

The sultan said that the security problem was not limited to Nigeria but a global problem which could only be addressed through dialogue and diplomacy and by using arms.

"For example what happened in Plateau yesterday (April 14) and also within the week, over 100 people were killed in Plateau.

"Many people just appeared from somewhere and then killed people and went away and they were never arrested.

"Before then people where killed in Sokoto on Sallah day; People where killed in Kebbi; people were killed in so many other places.

"The number of people killed in the last one month is so high and not only in Plateau, and not only in Borno and not only in Sokoto but in so many other places.

"We are more concerned with the situation in our country than every politician because before the 1914 Amalgamation, bringing the North and the South to form Nigeria our fore-fathers where running the affairs of the present day Nigeria.

"Everybody knows the Kanem-Borno empire; of course the Sokoto Caliphate; of course the Oyo empire; of course the Benin Kingdom all of them existed before Nigeria and that is why we as traditional leaders we feel bad, we feel saddened when we see our people being killed by other people whom we don't know" he said.

# Why I Have Not Been Consistent In Movies - Yemi Shodimu

Actor, compere and radio presenter, Yemi Shodimu is an all round figure in the entertainment industry. SAM ORJI ran into him at the premiere of the block buster movie Family Wahala, where he featured as well. Enjoy the interview.

**W** have not seen much of you on screen apart from few Yoruba movies and soap operas. What has been taking your time?

I have been acting maybe not as many as you would wish. I am a bit choosy in terms of what I go into. I just don't want to be seen in every flick just for the sake of it.

However I am still very much there and intend to do much more. That's the essence of my being here for the premier of the movie 'Family brouhaha'. I have shot a few other movies that are not out yet, while I am also booked for some other productions ahead.

However I am involved in a lot of other things like broadcasting which is taking a lots of my time. I must confess that particularly radio, it's really keeping me busy these days. That's not to talk about being a compere for different events, one has been extremely busy. So, I squeeze out time out of all these to be in movies

*Nigerians still don't appreciate theatre performances, how has this affected you as an actor?*

Initially, there was a drop in patronage due to the security situation in the country. We have been undaunted and we decided to be pushing it. I can tell you that the response has been encouraging for the past few years. One is convinced that Nigerians yearn for live theatre at every point we put one or two together, the turn out has been very impressive.

I have the privilege of working with very proactive, privileged and adventurous thespians and even non thespians. It's been very encouraging and more encouraging than yester years

*The problem is that today's actors don't want to be associated with theatre. They go for movies where that fame come easily. What should be done to encourage the younger generation to appreciate theatre more?*

To be honest, this is not only associated with the theatre. It's a societal menace. You find that in other industries, quick fix, just like you said; easy road to fame and money. We need a general reorientation and this must affect all facets of our lives, for people who want to get to the top without learning the ropes making quick money etc.

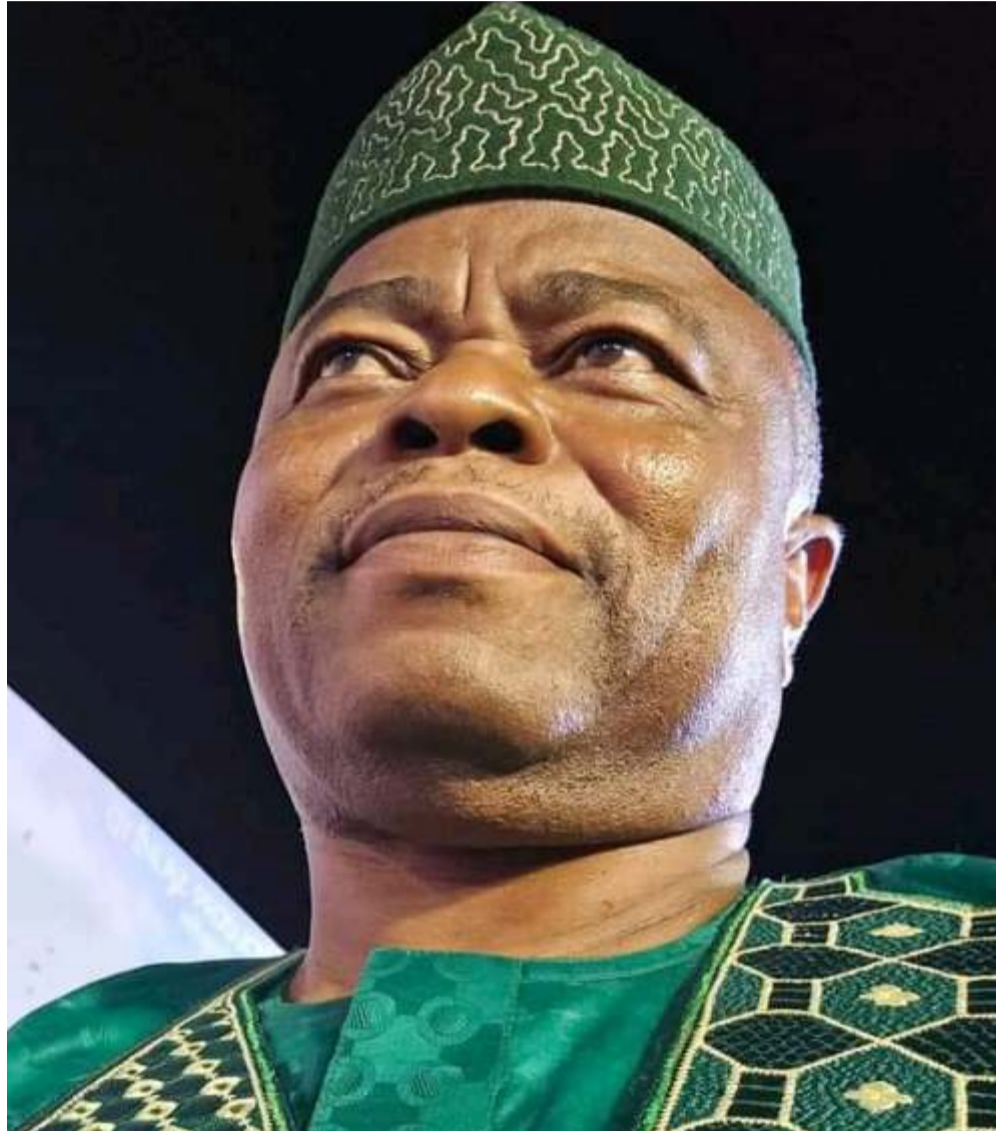
You find it in religion, everybody wants to be a pastor directing a particular church. People answer calls that are not there. People imagine that they are called but the ultimate is just to make money and fame. It's all over the sector. Somebody that have been an apprentice under someone else, he leaves and says why not, I can own my own shop

That's what you find in the industry as well.

We have seen improvement in practically all aspects of film making, is this because we have strong foreign marketing companies that have set standards.

What you are seeing is the result of hard work and perseverance. It's the outcome of commitment to a course. What you are seeing is a crop of both young and old coming together to say this is what we know how to do best, we have to give it our best.

It's also the result of healthy competition. A lot of people have done movies that are highly commended and others would



Bethel Njoku aka Senator

not want to go lower than that.

We are also open to new technicalities and technology as well. The combination of all these is what's pushing us forward. It's nice also that's we are looking inwards now. One cannot always get what he desires, but we hope that things will get better and better.

I must give kudos to the practitioners because there's a lot of development and it can only get better



*Let's take a look at government's role and that of corporate organisations in developing the industry. Who do you think has benefited especially?*

Government has not done enough and it's far from doing enough. A lot of what you are seeing is individual efforts by practitioners, let's get it clear. The corporate world is inching in bit by bit, it's not that they have solidly thrown their weight

We need to get governance better. There are too many old people in positions of authority and we must also confess that they are from us and a lot of what they're doing is a reflection of who we are. They didn't come from mars or saturn, it's just that there must be rules. That you are there doesn't mean there are no others that are better. If you cannot, leave so that those who are capable can.

behind the industry but they are realising from feedback and how this has impacted in the society generally because the image of the nation is promoted far beyond the shores of this country

Who has benefited. It's a tough questions because the benefits to the practitioners is a lot and we can only hope and wish it will get better

I am talking about government in the area of projecting the image of this country.

The government is gaining a lot from this, the industry is doing a lot of image laundering for the country because anywhere you turn, they are talking about our production and this is not just limited to Nigeria's is diaspora.

Go to any African country that's what you find there, Europe and America that's what they watch maybe Nigeria in diaspora. But there are so many friends of Nigerians in diaspora that are getting hooked to our movies and it's something very encouraging.

Honestly, government is enjoying this image laundering for peanuts. I think we should look at pay back from government

*The movie, Family Brouhaha, how did this movie reflect on the what's happening in today's family?*

The movie is just a reflection of what's happening in our families. But let's pick it up from the nuclear family which is the basic family. We have so much rancour and disjointed family. But to me, it's a microcosm of a bigger picture because there's so much disunity and we are hanging by the threads. It's a strong message to the nation and we can do a lot better

Our union is an accident but some religious people will tell you, it's God ordained. But it's an accident that could be handled better, an accident that could lead to strong unification. It's a situation that could lead us to seeing things from the same prism.

We need to tolerate each others views and accommodate one and another. We need to understand our diversity so that we can use it as a source of strength. It should not be a lip service that you find a few lines in the anthem. It can be a lot more.

We are recognised as a nation and we need to move forward as that entity and how do you get that done? You need to get justice in place, so far there's injustice, you cannot find peace. We need to get a high level of transparency in all we do. We can decide today to make a u-turn for the better. The way we are going, there's a lot of work to be done

We need to get governance better. There are too many old people in positions of authority and we must also confess that they are from us and a lot of what they're doing is a reflection of who we are. They didn't come from mars or saturn, it's just that there must be rules. That you are there doesn't mean there are no others that are better. If you cannot, leave so that those who are capable can

The other thing I keep saying is that we inherited a political system we do not understand. As long as we shy away from getting what can suit our system or make a complete u-turn, go back to the basics and evolve our own home grown system; we will still be where we are

Back to Family brouhaha, it's a strong movie with a strong message.

# The New Cabal: Rising Forces Reshaping The Capital

By Sam Orji

The Aso Rock Villa which is the country's seat of power, has its own leadership peculiarity in terms of people that control the affairs of the state house. Their control to a large extent influence the President's style of leadership. These are his kitchen cabinet members who inadvertently decide what goes on in the Villa: Who is allowed to see the President, who gets what, either contract, political favour or appointment. These people to an extent have a strong hold on the President and to a large extent remotely control the running of the country.

During the era of immediate past President, Muhammad Buhari (rtd), the term cabal was so prominent that a lot of Nigeria's believed that it was this cabal that was actually ruling the country and not President Buhari. At a point, the President's wife Aisha Buhari, had to cry out that these unnamed set of people she termed the 'Cabal' are the one's in charge of governance and not her husband.

Fast forward to the present administration though that term 'Cabal' has not been mentioned but there are individuals that their names have been great influence and are frequently mentioned as decision makers in

the Villa.

Hon. Femi Gbajabiamila before his appointment as the Chief of Staff to the President, worked assiduously towards the emergency of Senator Tinubu as the President. Being one of the strongest foot soldiers of the President, it was not surprising when he was named, the Chief of Staff to the President.

On resumption of office, Gbajabiamila was said to have asserted his position by changing some of the key staff in the Villa. The former Speaker of the House of Representatives, is man that has the ears of the President and is said to be one of the power brokers in the villa who dictates who is to be given what.

Abuja Post reliable gathered that the former Speaker was instrumental to some of the key appointments the President made. It's also said that nothing happens in the Villa without the knowledge of 'Gbaja' as he is fondly called by close associates

Remi Tinubu, the wife of the President has been a strong pillar and an outspoken personality since she was the first lady of Lagos state. The President's wife according to those close to her is a perfectionist and said to influence some of the major decisions of the President especially key appointments in ministries and other government

parastatals.

Not all Nigerian first ladies since the inception of the fourth Republic had the budget for office of the first lady inserted in the national budget but Remi Tinubu did. She is also a major decisions maker in what happens in the Villa and have not hidden desire.

Nyesom Wike, the former River State Governor, now the FCT Minister shocked many when he accepted to be the Minister of FCT under APC haven't served eight years as a PDP Governor. Like the typical Wike, he has a firm control of the governance structure of the FCT and has taken many controversial decisions especially as it has to do with land allocation at the FCT. This has pitched him against some powerful people in the country, yet he looks undaunted.

Only a man that has the ears of the President can step on big toes as a minister and still talk with every confidence that he will take more punitive action against land defaulters without minding who is affected.

What of River State, he has demonstrated his tenacity with the power struggle that's still going on in River State where he is at war with his predecessor Sim Fugbara.

Seyi Tinubu, the anointed heir of the Tinubu dynasty is said to wield so much power in the Aso Rock Villa that even some ministers are alleged to take orders from

him. Abuja Post gathered that Seyi influenced some of the appointments that his father made. He is so powerful that at a point, he was attending the Federal Executive Council meeting and it has to take the intervention of the President for him to stop.

Seyi is said to have influence on some of the federal contracts awarded by some of the Ministers.

Aside that, it's said that he is welding his influence in the seat of power so that it would help him have a smooth ride in his governorship ambition in Lagos come 2027. Will he be able to achieve this ambition, it's a matter of time.

Senator Godswill Akpabio, Senate President is one of the strongest allies of President Tinubu. Despite the various controversies that have trailed the former Governor of Akwa Ibom state, he still remains in the good books of the President because he sees the former Niger Delta minister as a great asset to winning Akwa Ibom state, his home state.

To prove his importance, Senator Akpabio is said to be working assiduously to bring the current governor of the state Umoh Enoh to APC.

Akpabio is a major power player in the Villa and that's why he has survived every attempt to remove him



## Inside Aso Rock: The Silent Struggles for 2027

Anyanwu Theresa Ijeoma

From the cool, marbled interiors of Aso Rock to the crowded press rooms in Abuja, there's an unspoken tension—an undercurrent of political maneuvering cloaked in public denials. Though the 2027 general elections seem distant on the calendar, within Nigeria's power circles, the contest has already begun. Not with declarations or rallies, but with whispers, alignments, and subtle plays of influence.

President Bola Ahmed Tinubu, less than two years into his first term, finds his name at the center of both fierce loyalty and quiet skepticism. Officially, he remains focused on policy and reform. Unofficially, insiders say 2027 is already on the agenda—and not just for Tinubu.

"I can tell you for free, there is no vacancy in Aso Rock come 2027," said Sir Jude Idimogu, a former Lagos State lawmaker and influential APC voice. Sitting behind a large wooden desk in his Lagos office, he leaned forward, eyes fixed. "Those thinking they can unseat the president are simply dreaming. The North had their eight years. It's the South's turn to complete its cycle."

Idimogu's remarks are not isolated. Across APC strongholds, a rallying cry is

forming: consolidate, retain, extend. The logic is simple—Tinubu's administration, they argue, needs a full two terms to complete the reforms it has begun. But behind the façade of unity lies a web of internal recalibrations, ideological disagreements, and growing concerns about the party's direction.

Dr. Salihu Lukman, a founding APC member and former DG of the Progressive Governors Forum, is one of the dissenting voices. "The APC is drifting," he warned in a recent interview. "If we don't return to our foundational principles and allow internal democracy to flourish, we risk defeat in 2027."

His concerns reflect deeper currents within the party—grievances over appointments, regional balancing, and the growing perception that some power blocs are being sidelined. It's a quiet struggle, one that rarely makes headlines but simmers beneath the surface of the administration's every move.

Meanwhile, outside the ruling party, an unusual political dance is unfolding. After years of fragmentation, opposition figures are suddenly speaking the same language.

"Yes," former Vice President Atiku Abubakar said when asked about reports of an alliance with Labour Party's Peter Obi and ex-Kaduna Governor Nasir El-Rufai.

The confirmation, casually dropped during a press briefing in Abuja, sent ripples through the political sphere.

The move, if successful, could mirror the coalition that birthed the APC itself in 2013. But alliances are fragile in Nigeria, often riddled with personal ambitions and ideological contradictions. Still, the opposition is betting on shared frustration—over fuel prices, inflation, and reforms that many say have deepened hardship.

But the presidency is not idly watching. Sources within Aso Rock suggest that strategic talks are ongoing, particularly with governors from the South-East and South-South. The goal? Strike political bargains ahead of 2027—support the president's re-election, and in return, secure their political future.

"You can't ignore the political mathematics of this country," said a senior APC strategist, speaking off record. "We are building bridges—not just within the party, but across it."

And then there's Joe Igbokwe, an unapologetically vocal APC chieftain, whose social media posts often sound like declarations from the inner court.

"There is no vacancy in Aso Rock until President Tinubu completes his second term," he wrote on Facebook, dismissing

opposition ambitions with trademark bluntness. "Those of you scheming and dreaming for 2027 should go and rest. Nigeria is being reworked to work again."

It's a sentiment shared by many within the Tinubu administration, who view the current economic turbulence as necessary pain for long-term gain. The removal of fuel subsidies and the unification of exchange rates were bold moves, they argue—meant to stop the financial bleeding caused by decades of mismanagement.

"We know it's tough, but reforms take time," said a senior aide at the Ministry of Finance. "We're not playing politics here. We're rebuilding a broken economy."

Still, outside the gates of Aso Rock, patience is thinning. Markets remain volatile, food prices continue to climb, and many Nigerians feel disconnected from the "Renewed Hope" agenda they once supported. And yet, even amid the growing discontent, the political machine grinds on—quietly, steadily, strategically.

The road to 2027 will not begin with campaign flags or stadium chants. It has already begun—in backroom deals, in WhatsApp group chats between unlikely allies, in the silences between press briefings.

# Healthcare in Rural Africa: A Crisis Demanding Collective Action<sup>2</sup>

By Julius Agenmonmen

Every day across rural Nigeria and Africa, countless lives are lost—not to war or disasters, but to something far more preventable: a lack of basic healthcare access.

In villages tucked away in the heart of Nigeria's vast countryside, people fight for survival against diseases that should not be death sentences. A malaria infection should not claim a child's life. A pregnant woman should not die in labor due to the absence of a skilled health worker. A simple vaccine should not be out of reach for infants. And yet, this is the daily reality for millions.

According to recent studies, an estimated 253,000 people die annually in Nigeria due to inadequate healthcare access. The 2023 report by the Nigerian Primary Health Care Development Agency (NPHCDA) highlights an unsettling truth:

Over 60% of Nigeria's rural population lacks access to functional primary healthcare centers. Many of these facilities are either understaffed or lack basic amenities like electricity, clean water, or essential medicines.

Preventable deaths from malaria, typhoid, and diarrheal diseases remain rampant.

While urban areas witness rapid medical advancements, rural communities are left behind, suffering a silent crisis that continues to claim lives year after year.

The Disturbing Reality of Rural Healthcare

Despite global progress in medicine and technology, Africa—especially rural Nigeria—grapples with healthcare access issues that date back decades. While issues like insecurity, unemployment, and poor infrastructure dominate political discussions, healthcare remains a neglected emergency that affects millions across all demographics.

Nigeria's 2023–24 Demographic and Health Survey (NDHS) presents deeply troubling data on infant and child mortality:

Neonatal mortality (deaths within the first 28 days of life) peaked in Kano, with 59 deaths per 1,000 live births.

Infant mortality (before the first birthday) was highest in Kebbi, reaching 90

deaths per 1,000 live births. Under-5 mortality soared to 161 deaths per 1,000 in Jigawa. These are not just cold statistics. They represent real people—babies, mothers, fathers, families—lost to causes we know how to prevent.

Factors Contributing to the Crisis

1. Lack of Basic Healthcare Infrastructure

Many rural communities do not have functioning hospitals or clinics.

Where facilities exist, they are often:

Underfunded—many have little to no government support. Understaffed—with too few trained health professionals available.

Underequipped—lacking essential drugs, ambulances, electricity, and clean water.

2. Cost Barriers: Healthcare Is Too Expensive. Even where healthcare exists, the rural poor simply cannot afford it. With over 40% of Nigerians living below the poverty line, medical expenses often go ignored until an emergency strikes—when it may be too late.

3. Education and Health Awareness

Health isn't just about hospitals—it's about knowledge. Many diseases could be prevented through proper education on:

Nutrition and balanced diets. Basic sanitation and hygiene. The importance of vaccinations.

Family planning and maternal care.

Yet health education is lacking in many rural areas, leading to avoidable deaths.

4. Skilled Healthcare Workers Are Leaving Rural Areas

Doctors and nurses prefer to work in urban areas, where wages are higher and living conditions are better. Thousands migrate abroad, leaving behind critical gaps in the workforce.

Lessons from Successful Global Healthcare Models

Despite these challenges, there are solutions—and we can learn from countries that have successfully improved rural healthcare.

1. Brazil's Family Health Program

A team-based approach, where doctors, nurses, and community health workers are assigned to specific neighborhoods.

Personalized follow-ups ensure early intervention before illness escalates.

Focus on preventive care, significantly reducing infant mortality rates.

2. Rwanda's Community-Based Health Insurance (CBHI)

A government-supported health insurance scheme covering even the poorest citizens.

Funded through government subsidies and community contributions, making healthcare affordable for all.

3. Kenya's Mobile Clinics

Fully equipped mobile clinics travel to remote villages. Doctors visit communities

instead of waiting for patients to come to them. These models prove that with strong policies, funding, and partnerships, healthcare can reach rural populations effectively.

Urgent Action Needed: What Must Be Done

If Nigeria is to overcome its rural healthcare crisis, we must rethink how we work together:

Invest in primary healthcare centers to ensure basic amenities like electricity, water, and essential medicines.

Expand the healthcare workforce—train and deploy more community health workers.

Leverage technology—telemedicine can connect rural patients to doctors in major hospitals.

Strengthen healthcare education—awareness programs must teach rural families about disease prevention. Encourage the private sector to commit—beyond donations, businesses must fund long-term healthcare projects.

A Call to Action: Healthcare Must Be a Right, Not a Privilege

This crisis is bigger than statistics. It is about real lives—mothers lost during childbirth, children battling preventable diseases, families suffering in silence because the healthcare system fails them.

We can no longer afford to wait. The time to act is now.

Government, private organizations, community leaders, and individuals all have a role in reversing this crisis.

Policymakers must prioritize healthcare funding.

Healthcare professionals must bring services to rural areas. The private sector must shift from charity to investment.

Every Nigerian must demand better healthcare access. This crisis will not fix itself—but collective action can. Healthcare is not a privilege—it is a fundamental right. It's time to make that a reality.

*Julius Agenmonmen is the Group Managing Director of Brandlife Limited and Co-founder of the Julius Agenmonmen Foundation (JAF)*

Over 60% of Nigeria's rural population lacks access to functional primary healthcare centers. Many of these facilities are either understaffed or lack basic amenities like electricity, clean water, or essential medicines.

Preventable deaths from malaria, typhoid, and diarrheal diseases remain rampant.

While urban areas witness rapid medical advancements, rural communities are left behind, suffering a silent crisis that continues to claim lives year after year.

## Crimson Harvest: Bloodshed in the Middle Belt

By Godwin Anyebe

There was a time the Middle Belt of Nigeria conjured images of green fields, rhythmic festivals, and communal harmony. Today, those images are replaced by smoke rising from burnt villages, silent farmlands, and mass graves dug in haste. The heart of Nigeria is bleeding, and somehow, we've become desensitized to its pain.

I write this not just as an observer, but as a Nigerian who can no longer remain silent. What is happening in Plateau

and Benue is not a footnote in our national story—it is the headline. Yet it barely gets the attention it deserves.

Every week, new reports emerge: attacks in remote communities, scores dead, families displaced. And every week, the cycle repeats—brief outrage, government statements, then silence. Until the next massacre.

Let's call it what it is: a war on rural communities. Whether driven by herder-farmer tensions, land disputes, or deeper political manipulations, the result is the same—blood in the soil and fear in the

air. Benue, our so-called "food basket," now produces more displaced persons than produce. Plateau, rich in culture and beauty, now struggles under the weight of mass burials.

The government's response has been largely reactive, almost performative. Security is deployed after attacks, not before. Investigations are launched, but justice is never served. And those who survive are left to rebuild their lives with no support, no compensation, and no answers.

We must stop treating this crisis as distant or inevitable. It

is neither. The people of the Middle Belt are not expendable. Their lives matter. Their stories matter. And their blood, spilled in the silence of our national conscience, is a stain we all share.

This isn't just a security failure. It's a moral one. A nation that cannot protect its farmers, its mothers, its children—is a nation on borrowed time.

It's time for us to demand better. From our leaders. From our media. And from ourselves. The harvest should feed our future, not fertilize our graves.

This isn't just a security failure. It's a moral one. A nation that cannot protect its farmers, its mothers, its children—is a nation on borrowed time.



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## Laide Bakare Describes Eniola Badmus As Ugly And Obese As Their Fight Gets Messier

Stories by Sam Orji

**T**he fight between two Nollywood heavyweights Laide Bakare and Eniola Badmus, seems to be getting messier everyday as both ladies almost engaged in a fisticuffs recently. The battle ground was at the premiere of Eniola Ajao's movie premiere 'Owambe Thieves'

In the clip, Eniola was

captured walking into the event as Laide ran up to her and hurled words at her, but Eniola snubbed her.

Laide Bakare later shared a screenshot of Eniola's DM to her, in which she lampooned Laide for sharing a photo of them. She also asked Laide whom she called animal, to stay away from her. This infuriated Laide who went out for her.

Laide responded: "I

gave you the first major role in your life when no one wants to associate with you because of your ugly looks and obesity. I spent my own hard-earned money on an ingrate like you; all you could pay me back with is to call me Animal? Haaa! ENIOLA! Almighty God will judge you, Insha Allah. You have started what you can finish, and I promise you, you must collect".



## Family Brouhaha, Starring Joke Silva, Wale Ojo Hits Cinemas, Excites Film Lovers

**E**xcitement is in the air amongst cinema lovers as the Femi Adebayo directed drama-comedy (dramedy) 'Family Brouhaha' hits cinemas across the country from Friday, April 11, 2025.

Seen in Nollywood circles as the most star-studded film of 2025, the film written and produced by Oyinlola Lasisi, parades a galaxy of renowned thespians like: Joke Silva, Wale Ojo, Gabriel Afolayan, Jaiye Kuti, Tina Mbah, Charles Okocha, Yemi Shodimu, Shaffy Bello, Tope 'Teddy A' Adenibuyan, Layi

Wasabi, Tayo Faniran, Ejio Onojaife, Uzee Usman, Aderonke Onuoha and Deza the Great amongst others.

Set in lush urban and rural neighborhoods, the film captures the intrigues surrounding the life and activities of a wealthy matriarch (Dr. Mrs. Braimoh) of a cocoa dynasty whose generations are locked in an interplay of wits over inheritance after she dies mysteriously following a well-celebrated eightieth birthday anniversary.

Harping on the unique approach to filmmaking deployed in the production, the director, Femi Adebayo

says, 'Family Brouhaha', has something for everyone in the sense that the story is relatable to everyone.

"So much was put into this production. The story is unique and a perfect mix of drama and comedy, which is why I prefer to call it dramedy. When the producer approached me with the script and the cast involved in the project, I knew this was the kind of film I would love to get involved in. That is the reason why I gave it my all in interpreting the story. I urge everyone to go to the nearest cinema and indulge in this film".



Oyinlola Lasisi, fondly called Oyinlaz, bringing to the fore the family values entrenched in the film notes: "We have created a beautiful film, entirely compelling and chaotically relatable. It will start showing on April 11. Candidly, 'Family Brouhaha' is not just a film, it is a reflection of who we are, and the obligations, roles and duties expected of us as family members.

"There are embedded messages in every frame of this film, that will make you have an introspective moment, where you will wonder if you are the family mem-

ber who will bring peace or the one who instigates problems. I have a clear view that some human beings are manipulative in nature, but how we exhibit it makes all the difference. It is a film that will make people wonder if they have created a safe place for one another in their families," she explained.

A statement by the distribution company, Blue Pictures, urged film lovers to check the listings of cinemas close to them for the schedule of 'Family Brouhaha' which will show for 4 to 8 weeks after opening on April 11, 2025.

## Obi Di Omimi, Africa Magic's Indigenous Series Wraps Up With a Stand Against Child Trafficking

**T**he dramatic finale of Obi Di Omimi brought a conclusion to Africa Magic Igbo's series, focusing on the dark world of child trafficking. In a climactic turn of events, Officer Dele leads a successful raid on the SME Foundation, exposing it as a baby factory. The operation ends with the arrest of Madam Biliki, the syndicate's mastermind, delivering justice for the victims and their families.

Throughout its run, Obi Di Omimi boldly explored themes such as patriarchal expectations, familial obliga-

tion, and the weight of tradition. At its core is Mr. Callistus Okafor, played by Andy Chukwu, a man consumed by his desire for a male heir to inherit the family land. This obsession pushes him into a moral compromise, ultimately affecting every member of his household. His affair with Chinelo, played by Oluchi Amajuoyi, results in an unplanned pregnancy that disrupts not just his marriage but the entire Okafor family dynamic.

The ripple effects of these choices are deeply felt: Chinelo faces ostracisation,

Uchechukwu rebels in his quest for independence, and Mrs. Okafor is forced to confront betrayal and disillusionment. These storylines reveal the emotional fallout of secrets, the fragility of trust, and the destructive power of rigid gender roles and societal pressure.

What sets Obi Di Omimi apart is its unapologetic use of the Igbo language, which not only preserves linguistic heritage but also grounds the narrative in a deeply familiar cultural context. Through its characters and conflicts, the series addresses urgent social

issues: the damaging pursuit of male children, the stigma surrounding infertility, and the exploitation of vulnerable women and children through trafficking.

Obi Di Omimi is a cultural mirror, reflecting harsh truths while urging viewers to rethink outdated norms. As Africa Magic continues to champion indigenous storytelling, the series sets the stage for meaningful social reflection. The final episodes are available to stream on the DStv and GOTv Stream apps.



## MultiChoice Launches Easter Pop-UP Channel

**I**n celebration of the Easter season, MultiChoice has announced the launch of a dedicated Easter Pop-Up Channel, offering DStv and GOTv subscribers across Nigeria the chance to experience live broadcasts of key Easter events and services from the Catholic Archdiocese of Lagos. The special channel, which runs from Thursday, April 17 to Monday, April 21,

will be available on DStv channel 196 and GOTv channel 28, bringing the significance and beauty of Easter directly into viewers' homes.

Throughout the Easter period, the channel will broadcast a rich lineup of live religious events. The programming begins on Thursday, April 17, with the Chrism Mass in the morning, followed by the Mass of the Last Supper in the evening. On

Good Friday, April 18, viewers can join in the Good Friday Tenebrae and the Seven Last Words service, followed by the Stations of the Cross from St. Gregory's, and later the Passion Service. The spiritual journey continues on Saturday, April 19, with the Easter Vigil Mass late in the evening, leading into the Easter Sunday Mass on April 20. The channel's special programming concludes on

Monday, April 21, with the Easter Monday Mass from Galilee.

This dedicated pop-up channel is designed for those who may be unable to attend church services in person, as well as for anyone seeking to deepen their spiritual observance during the Easter holidays. By broadcasting these significant events, MultiChoice reaffirms its commitment to providing

content that resonates with the cultural and religious values of its viewers.

Subscribers are encouraged to tune in to DStv channel 196 and GOTv channel 28 throughout the Easter period to take part in these important religious celebrations from the comfort of their homes.



# Borno: 150 Trained Almajirai Presented With Working Tools By Gov Zulum

By Achadu Gabriel, Kaduna

**B**orno State Governor Babagana Umara Zulum has presented working tools to 150 almajirai students trained in vocational skills by his administration.

The training covered a variety of trades, including electrical installation and repair work, solar installation and repair work, leatherwork, welding, carpentry and building construction.

A statement by the Governor's media aide Abdurraman Bundi recently added that the initiative also includes cash support to

enable beneficiaries to start their trades and contribute to the society's development.

It seeks to enhance individual capabilities, uplift communities and provide almajirai with sustainable pathways to economic independence.

Delivering his address, Governor Zulum emphasized that his administration would continue to foster opportunities for the almajiri learners to secure a brighter future.

"By attending this training programme, you have taken a crucial step towards securing your future; equipped with new skills, you now have the power to trans-

form your dreams into reality.

"As the Governor of Borno State, I assure you that our Government remains fully committed to supporting the Sangaya Islamic education. We will continue investing in Sangaya educational resources to ensure every learner can access quality teaching and learning essentials," he stated.

Zulum, however, expressed concern about the rising cases of molestation of children in the guise of teaching Islamic education.

He said: "I would like to take this opportunity to address a critical concern: the safety and well-being of our

Sangaya learners. I stand firm in the commitment that the Borno State Government will not tolerate any form of molestation or violence, such as caning against any Almajiri. Every one of you, regardless of your background, deserves to be treated with respect and dignity.

"Our commitment to safeguarding children extends beyond the Almajiri; it encompasses all children. We must work collectively to ensure our society embraces every child without prejudice. This pledge is not merely a statement; it is a call to action for every parent, educator, and community leader to

safeguard the rights of our Sangaya learners."

Speaking earlier, the chairman of Borno Sangaya Board, Kalifa Aliyu Ahmad Abulfatahi, said the programme was unveiled in 2023 as part of Zulum's resolve to address the challenges faced by almajiri children who are traditionally engaged in Islamic schooling and often lack access to formal education and opportunities.

Sheikh Kalifa noted that the training was organized in collaboration with the Universal Basic Education Board.

Also speaking, the state Commissioner for Educa-

tion, Science, Technology and Innovation, Engr Lawan Abba Wakilbe, who was represented by the Special Adviser in the ministry, Dr Bukar Tijjani, said that besides the training, the ministry had partnered with colleges, including the National Board for Arabic and Islamic Studies, to provide certification for almajiri learners.

Zulum was accompanied by the members of the House of Representatives, Engr Bukar Talba and Hon Usman Zannah, the State APC Chairman, Hon Bello Ayuba, Shehu of Borno, ably represented among other dignitaries.



From left: Managing Director/CEO Temile Development Company Limited, Mr. Alfred Temile and Managing Director/CEO of NLNG Shipping and Marine Services Limited (NSML), Mr. Abdulkadir Kere Ahmed, during the signing of Letter of Intent in London for ship construction services related to the construction of a Very Large Gas Carrier (VLGC) at Hyundai Heavy Industries Company Limited at the shipyard in South Korea recently.



## Gov Zulum Orders Immediate Prosecution Of Man In Viral Video Nolesting Minor

By Achadu Gabriel, Kaduna

**B**orno State Governor, Babagana Umara Zulum, has ordered the immediate prosecution of Bukar Modu, a man shown in a disturbing viral video allegedly molesting a minor (Bashir Gaji).

Following the Governor's directive, Bukar Modu was arrested by the security operatives on Saturday night at Umarari in Maiduguri.

Zulum gave the prosecution order on Sunday when he received little Bashir Gaji, who's father was killed by Boko Haram, at Government House, Maiduguri, according to statement by his media aide, Abdurraman Bundi.

The video which sparked outrage across social media platforms, highlights a grave violation of children's rights and the urgent need for a robust response from law enforcement and judicial authorities.

Governor Zulum has emphasized that his administration will not tolerate any form of abuse or exploitation of minors and directed swift action to bring the perpetrator to justice.

"This heinous act is an affront on our values and a

betrayal of our duty to protect our children, students and minors who are under our guardianship," Governor Zulum said.

"We cannot tolerate such actions perpetually repeating itself. I am directing the relevant authorities to move swiftly and ensure that this individual faces the full extent of the law. Our children deserve a safe environment to grow and become meaningful members of society", he said.

The Governor, however, directed the Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development to devise modalities for increased community awareness programmes to educate families and local traditional teachers and guardians on the proper means of enforcing discipline on children.

Meanwhile, Governor Zulum met with the little Bashir Gaji on Sunday at the Government House. He announced that he would provide a fully furnished house for Bukar and his family and a scholarship to cover his education.

"Little Gaji's family currently live in an IDP camp in Monguno after his father was assassinated by Boko Haram insurgents", it stated.

## Bauchi Deputy Gov Denies Slapping Foreign Affairs Minister

**A**uwal Mohammed Jatau, Deputy Governor of Bauchi State, has denied slapping the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Yusuf Maitama Tuggar.

He said this while reacting to unconfirmed reports that he attacked the the minister on the way to the palace of Emir of Bauchi for the turbaning of former Governor Muhammad Abdullahi Abubakar, SAN, as Makama Babba 1 of Bauchi Emirate, and the wedding Fatiha of his daughter, Khadija Muhammad.

Speaking through Mus-

lim Lawal, his media aide, Bauchi's number two citizen said, "No, no, how can a deputy governor slap a minister? I don't think such ever can happen in Bauchi because I know my principal as a responsible leader and number two citizen in Bauchi can never slap a minister or any person."

"I am not aware about that and I am hearing it for the first time. If there is any evidence that the deputy governor did that you can speak on that. We don't know about it. The deputy governor cannot do that and that is our position," Lawal said.



Minister of Foreign Affairs, Yusuf Tuggar



## No NFF Connections: Eric Chelle Reveals How He Landed Super Eagles Job

Stories by Paul Onehi

**S**uper Eagles head coach Eric Chelle has refuted speculation that he secured the Nigerian senior national team job through any form of personal connections.

The Nigeria Football Federation (NFF) appointed Eric Chelle as the new head coach of the Super Eagles, succeeding interim coach Augustine Eguavoen. Eguavoen had successfully led the team to qualify for the 2025 Africa Cup of Nations (AFCON).

In an interview with Brila FM, Eric Chelle emphasized that his appointment as Super Eagles coach was transparent and merit-based. He revealed that he applied for the position through a formal process, just like other candidates.

"When I left the Malian team, there was a call for applications from the NFF, from the Nigerian Federation and so I applied like any other coach and then interview came," Chelle explained.

Eric Chelle further explained the appointment process, highlighting that he presented his footballing ideas and vision as part of the selection process.

"I was invited to a coaches' conference where I presented my project, my vision, and philosophy," Eric Chelle explained. He added that although he initially thought the process would move faster, delays occurred, and he had to wait. Despite leaving for Rouen, he returned when the opportunity resurfaced, eager to take on the significant project of leading the Super Eagles.

Eric Chelle cited the Nigeria Football Fed-

eration's (NFF) determination during the final negotiation stages as a decisive factor in his decision to accept the Super Eagles coaching position.

"The determination in the final moments of negotiation was palpable, and that's what ultimately brought me on board," Chelle said. He noted that discussions had been ongoing for a while, but the process accelerated rapidly towards the end, generating significant attention. Despite the swift conclusion, Chelle emphasized that he was aligned with the project's vision from the start.

Chelle secured four points in his first two games as Super Eagles coach, with a 2-0 win against Rwanda and a 1-1 draw with Zimbabwe in World Cup qualifiers.

## "I was like his senior brother" - Jay-Jay Okocha opens up on relationship with ex-Barcelona star Ronaldinho

**S**uper Eagles legend Austine Jay-Jay Okocha has revealed that he played the role of a senior brother to Brazil football icon Ronaldinho during their time at PSG. Soccer.net.ng reports.

Okocha and Ronaldinho are two of the greatest dribblers in the history of the game. And interestingly, both of them played together at French Ligue 1 giants PSG for two years between 2001 and 2003. Okocha joined PSG from Fenerbahce in 1998, while Ronaldinho joined the club from Brazilian club Gremio in 2001.

Due to their style of their similar styles of play, there have always been talks that both Okocha and Ronaldinho used to practice tricks together at PSG. In fact, since Okocha had more visibility than Ronaldinho at the time, as he had been in Europe

way earlier, some fans believed that the Super Eagles even thought the Brazilian star was trying to copy Okocha.

However, Okocha has now revealed some details about his relationship with Ronaldinho. The former Super Eagles star was like a senior brother to the former Selecao star.

"I was already a household name at PSG when he came, and PSG was his first team in Europe or outside Brazil, and he was 20 years old," Okocha told OmaSports.

"So, of course, it takes a while for one to settle in to learn about new cultures. Yes, at some point, I was a bit like a senior brother, talking to him and encouraging him because his talent was obvious for everyone to see. But sometimes you need time to adjust. That was where I played a role, and I'm glad that he appreciated."

Although both of them had similar playing styles, Ronaldinho was more effective and went on to play for some of the best clubs in the world. Ronaldinho also had a trophy-laden career, winning the World Cup and the Copa America with Brazil. He also won multiple trophies at club level, including the UEFA Champions League. Ronaldinho also won the FIFA Best Player, Ballon d'Or, UEFA Best Player, and South American Best Player Awards.

Meanwhile, even though Okocha did not have as many trophies or awards, he is highly revered in the world. Although he did not play for the biggest clubs in the world, he played at Fenerbahce, Eintracht Frankfurt, and Bolton.



## Morocco 2025: Nigeria's Flamingos thrash Algeria, Zambia edge Benin as Cameroon face Kenya test

**N**igeria's Flamingos are on the verge of making it to the 2025 FIFA U-17 Women's World Cup after cruising to an excellent 4-0 first-leg victory over Algeria in Ikenne on Saturday, Soccer.net.ng reports.

The Flamingos, runners-up at the last tournament in the Dominican Republic, delivered a dominant display at the Remo Stars Stadium to put themselves firmly in control of their final qualifying tie.

Queen Joseph started with a brace, while Zainab Oluwaseun Raji and Aishat Animashaun also got on the scoresheet in a one-sided affair.

It took just one minute for Nigeria to get going, with Joseph calmly finishing off a low cross to open the scoring.

Raji doubled the lead in the 13th minute, showing fine close control to get past her marker before releasing a thunderous shot past the goalkeeper off the crossbar.



Joseph then produced the moment of the match four minutes later with a thunderous 25-yard strike that cannoned in off the underside of the bar to make it 3-0.

The fourth came shortly after the break, with Animashaun smashing a delightful half volley into the far corner from the edge of the area.

The second leg will be played on April 25 at the Stade Mustapha Tchaker in Blida. With a 4-0 cushion, Nigeria need only avoid a major collapse to confirm their place at Morocco 2025.

Elsewhere, Zambia battled to a narrow 2-1 home win over Benin at the Levy Mwanawasa Stadium in Ndola.

Mercy Chipasula scored both goals for the Copper Princesses, giving them a slender advantage ahead of next week's second leg.

Chipasula opened the scoring in the 16th minute, but Benin hit back after the break through Romaine Gandonou. With the game

finely poised, Chipasula struck again in the 66th minute to restore Zambia's lead.

The return fixture will take place at the Stade de Kégué in Lomé, Togo, where Benin are using as a temporary home ground.

Meanwhile, Cameroon – qualifiers to the World Cup in 2016 and 2018 – will aim to return to the Mundial when they battle against Kenya on Sunday at the Nyayo National Stadium in Nairobi.

Kenya, who qualified for their first U17 Women's World Cup last year, will be looking to make history again.

Ivory Coast and Guinea will also meet on Sunday in Abidjan, as both sides seek to qualify for the U17 World Cup for the first time.