

Yahaya Bello's govt  
paid tax consultant  
N1.1bn in 8 months  
-Witness

Anambra introduces  
entrepreneurial subjects into  
JSS curriculum

Shettima flies to Guinea  
for President Doumbouya's  
inauguration

WWW.justliberationnews.com

# Just Liberation


...News, Entertainment, Investigative

## Newspaper


January 17, 2026 / Vol. 4 No. 114

 www.justliberationnews.com

 @justlibnews

 Justliberationnews

 @justliberationnews

 Justliberationnews

**N200**

**FROM THE  
ARCHIVE**

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

**Court restrains Rivers CJ  
from receiving notice to  
impeach Fubara**

# Rivers state of emergency: Is Nigeria's democracy safe with its courts?



**TACKLES AT ADC: Group seeks de-  
listing of party in court, mobilisation  
process disrupted by thugs in Borno**

# Rivers state of emergency: Is Nigeria's democracy safe with its courts?



BY IKEDDY ISIGUZO

**N**IGERIA'S democracy swooped into the unease mood after the 2023 elections. The state of emergency in Rivers State raised more questions about the extent of presidential powers when declaring emergency rule.

Section 305 of Nigeria's 1999 Constitution sets out those powers with striking clarity. Yet time and again, Nigerian courts have avoided definite answers, finding refuge in procedural hedges and technicality. In doing so, they dodge their most solemn duty: safeguarding constitutional democracy.

Nigeria is run on a written Constitution. The boundaries of separation of power are known. Disputes are to be resolved by courts applying settled principles of interpretation. When judges refuse to engage the substance of constitutional questions, the consequences are grave. Their indecisions also become precedents - dangerous precedents.

Afam Osigwe, SAN, President of the Nigerian Bar Association, NBA, has warned that judicial silence in the face of emergency rule litigation "erodes public confidence" and emboldens executive over-reach. He urged Judges to rise above political pressure and rule without fear or favour.

The Federal High Court in Abuja, maybe, in reaction to Mr. Osigwe's remarks swiftly heard several suits that challenged President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's proclamation of a state of emergency in Rivers State.

Again, the courts declined jurisdiction; reclining on a supposed Emergency Powers (Jurisdiction) Act, 1962 said to have been modified by presidential order in 2025 and

avoided ruling on the merits of the matters. The pattern is familiar or a precedent.

In *Plateau State v. Attorney-General of the Federation* (2006), the Supreme Court similarly refused to determine the scope of presidential emergency powers, citing procedural defects.

A decision then, could have saved Nigeria from the spectacle of an elected President suspending an elected Governor and legislature, as occurred in Rivers State in March 2025.

The matter is still alive. On 16 January 2026, an NGO, the Incorporated Trustees of the Civil Society Observatory for Constitutional and Legal Compliance, CSOCLC, returned to the Federal High Court, Abuja, urging Justice J.K. Omotosho to revisit his earlier decisions on emergency rule in Rivers State.

In Suit No. FHC/ABJ/CS/1148/2025, with the President, the Attorney-General of the Federation, Rivers State, electoral authorities and others as defendants, the group argues that the Court has jurisdiction, and that the President's emergency powers do not include suspending elected officials.

Crucially, the plaintiffs do not deny the President's authority to declare a state of emergency. Their case is narrower and more fundamental. Section 305, they argue, authorises a proclamation, not the removal of a Governor, Deputy Governor or State Legislature.

Their counsel, Nnamdi Nwokocha-Ahaawe, contends that under the doctrine of "covering the field," once the Constitution has exhaustively regulated a subject, neither Parliament nor the executive may add, enlarge or subtract from it. A proclamation that

purports to do so, he argued, is void, citing Supreme Court precedents, including *A.G. Abia v. A.G. Federation* and *INEC v. Musa*, in support of their position.

Even on a political precedent, former President Goodluck Jonathan declared state of emergency in May 2013 on television, "I hereby declare a state of emergency in Borno, Yobe and Adamawa States. The Governors and other political office holders in the affected States will continue to discharge their constitutional responsibilities".

Jonathan made the correct interpretation of the Section 305, a fact that is barely acknowledged and a counterpoise to the two instances that former President Olusegun Obasanjo imposed emergency rules in Plateau 2004, and Ekiti 2006, and removed their elected officials.

There is also a jurisdictional elephant in the room. Government's lawyers insist that only the Supreme Court may hear emergency-related disputes, relying on colonial-era statutes from 1961 and 1962.

But those laws were omitted from Nigeria's revised statutes as "spent" long before the 1999 Constitution came into force. Would the government lawyers not know?

Section 315 of the Constitution permits modification only of existing laws. How is a non-existent law modified?

Amending a dead statute, the plaintiffs argue, is a constitutional impossibility. An Executive Order that strips the Federal High Court of jurisdiction and transfers it to the Supreme Court would amount to an unconstitutional usurpation of powers of Parliament and Judiciary.

In anticipation of a technicality, the plaintiffs invoked *Adesanya v. President* (1981),

where the Supreme Court affirmed that citizens have not only the right but an obligation to challenge unconstitutional acts. More recently, in *Okonjo-Iweala v. Fawehinmi* (2025), the court reaffirmed liberal standing for public interest litigation by civil society groups.

Once a President can suspend elected governments and rewrite court jurisdiction by executive fiat, separation of powers collapses, authoritarianism beckons and democracy would have departed.

Nigerians now wait to see whether the courts will confront this question at last, rein in the President or once again look away, as Nigeria's democracy totters.

Finally...

A YOUNGER colleague reacted to my column on Mrs. Kemi Adeosun saying it was "written in a hurry", and "uniformed". When I engaged him, I found out that he was determined to hear nothing other than that Mrs. Adeosun was clean, as sparkling as crystal. I asked him to send a rejoinder. He countered that he was not working for Mrs. Adeosun. By Friday night I again asked for the rejoinder. "Good evening Oga. I didn't promise any rejoinder sir. I just made a comment based on what I know. I am sorry if you feel offended by my comment". "You are insisting that Mrs. Adeosun did not submit a forged NYSC certificate of exemption?," I asked him. "Yes, because she had no reason to," he retorted. I am still in shock about how some individuals make their decisions. I didn't name him, because I didn't think there was any point in making the fellow involved more popular.

ISIGUZO is a major commentator on minor issues

# It's Your World

## Get Informed, Get Inspired & Get Going!

With Just News Communication Company Limited (JNCCL) Services



### SPEAK ON THE ISSUES



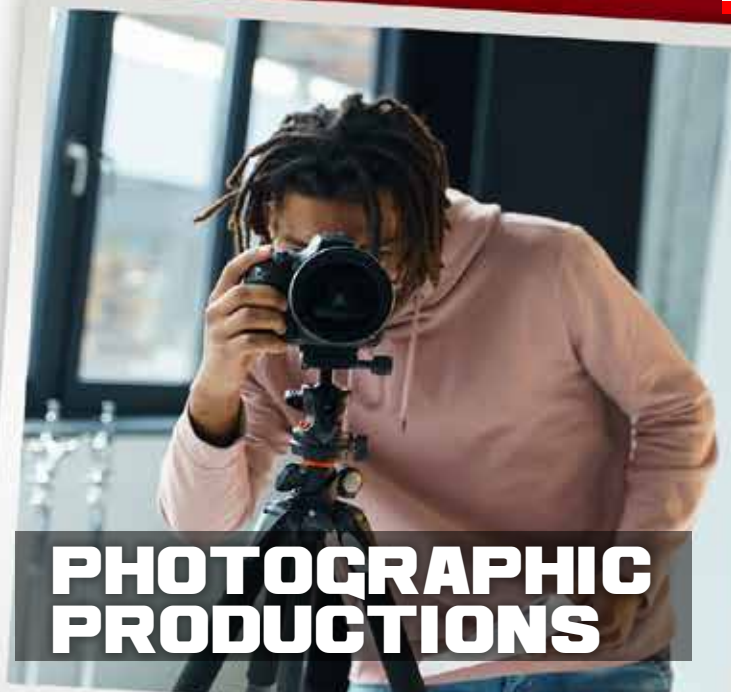
### EVENTS PROJECT



# JUST-GPD

JUST GREAT PEOPLE OF DESTINY MAGAZINE

Entertainment & Celebration



### PHOTOGRAPHIC PRODUCTIONS



LIVE COVERAGE OF EVENTS



### RADIO STATION

Amb Fanny Ikhayere Amun **MON**  
Founder



### TELEVISION STATION

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

## TACKLES AT ADC: Group seeks de-listing of party in court, mobilisation process disrupted by thugs in Borno

BY ORIAKU IJELE

The hopes of having a viable opposition ahead of the 2027 general election is still in limbo as several dark forces seem to be battling the ADC, both legally and physically. In the past 2 days, several frightening developments have surfaced on Nigeria's polity, which suggest that some interests are disposed to having a system without a vibrant opposition.

Only yesterday, a group consisting of former legislators were in court to seek the de-listing of some opposition parties with ADC featuring prominently in the prayer to the Abuja court.

The group, National Forum of Former Legislators (NFFL) in its suit cited alleged constitutional and electoral infractions against the parties.

The court has, therefore, fixed February 16 for the hearing of the constitutional suit, which seeks to compel the enforcement of provisions governing the registration and continued operation of political parties in Nigeria.

The suit, marked FHC/ABJ/CS/2637/2025, was filed by the NFFL against the ADC, Accord Party, Zenith Labour Party, Action Alliance (AA) and the Action Peoples Party (APP).

The forum of former federal and state lawmakers is asking the court to order the deregistration of the affected parties, alleging persistent failure to meet mandatory constitutional and electoral benchmarks as stipulated in the 1999 Constitution (as amended).

Central to the suit is Section 225A of the Constitution, which empowers relevant

authorities to withdraw recognition from political parties that fail to satisfy prescribed performance standards and statutory obligations.

The NFFL is seeking what it described as a "clear and authoritative judicial interpretation" of the section, with a view to strengthening constitutional compliance within the nation's multi-party system.

National Coordinator of the NFFL, Raphael Igbokwe, argued that the continued existence of political parties that consistently fall short of constitutional thresholds undermines democratic accountability and weakens the country's electoral process.

The forum stressed that the legal action is not driven by partisan considerations but by a broader concern for constitutionalism, electoral integrity and democratic consolidation.

Meanwhile in Borno, another attack was directed towards the ADC, when suspected hired thugs disrupted a programmed geared towards mobilising membership for the opposition coalition.

Condemning the incessant attacks at the opposition coalition, called on the police to investigate the alleged disruption of the inauguration of the party's transitional and membership registration committees in Borno on Friday.

The ADC National Publicity Secretary, Mallam Bolaji Abdullahi, in a statement issued on Friday in Abuja, condemned the alleged disruption of what he called the party's lawful activities, insisting that the programmes were duly authorised.

Abdullahi described the disruption as inconsistent with party values, urging the police

and other security agencies to investigate the attack.

He said the inaugurations complied fully with the guidelines and authorisations issued by the party's National Working

Committee (NWC), dismissing claims of irregularity in the conduct of the exercise.

Abdullahi condemned those engaging in violence to frustrate lawful exercises,

maintaining that such actions violated the ADC constitution, values, democracy and political engagement.

He said that the party would not allow its affairs to

be hijacked by persons without mandate and those pursuing personal interests at the expense of ADC's unity and stability.



Vice President Kashim Shettima, departing Abuja to represent Nigeria at President Mamadi Doumbouya's inauguration in Guinea—Conakry, from where he billed to attend the 56th Annual Meeting of the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland.

### Court restrains Rivers CJ from receiving notice to impeach Fubara

A High Court in Rivers has granted an interim order restraining the Chief Judge, Justice Simeon Amadi from receiving any notice to impeach Gov. Siminalayi Fubara.

The court presided by Justice F. A. Fiberesima, restrained the chief judge from receiving,

forwarding, considering or acting on any request concerning the governor's impeachment, Fubara and his deputy, Prof. Ngozi Odu had gone to court seeking to stop the ongoing impeachment process by the state assembly.

The court also granted Fubara and Odu the leave to

serve the interim order and the originating processes on the assembly by posting it on the gate of the Rivers State Assembly quarters.

It would be recalled that the assembly, on Friday requested the chief judge to constitute a investigation panel on the allegations of gross misconduct

against the governor and his deputy.

The lawmakers who reached the decision to continue the impeachment process through a unanimous vote, said that the constitutional breaches by the governor and his deputy could not be overlooked.

### Shettima flies to Guinea for President Doumbouya's inauguration

Vice-President Kashim Shettima has arrived in Conakry, the capital of Guinea, to represent President Bola Tinubu at the inauguration of President-elect, Mamady Doumbouya.

Mr Stanley Nkwocha, Senior Special Assistant to The President on Media and Communications, Office of the Vice-President, made this known in a statement on Friday.

Nkwocha said, on arrival, Shettima was received by senior Guinean government officials and members of the Nigerian diplomatic corps ahead of the ceremony, scheduled to take place on Saturday at the GLC Stadium in Nongo.

He said the inauguration of President Doumbouya follows his victory in the December 2025 general elections, signalling the formal end of a four-

year military transition.

The presidential aide also said that Vice-President's attendance at the inauguration affirms Nigeria's leadership role within the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS).

He added that Shettima's attendance at the event demonstrates Nigeria's commitment to the restoration of constitutional order across the sub-region.

Nkwocha said under President Tinubu's Renewed Hope agenda, Nigeria had continued to position itself as a stabilising force, advocating democratic governance as a prerequisite for regional prosperity.

He said that the visit also serves as a strategic mission to expand the economic corridor between the two West African nations.

### Yahaya Bello's govt paid tax consultant N1.1bn in 8 months -Witness

An Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) witness told an Abuja Court that the Kogi State Board of Internal Revenue (KSIRS) paid over 1.1 billion in commissions to a tax consultant, Bespoke Business Solutions Limited.

David Ajoma, who made this known while testifying in the going trial former, Kogi governor, Yahaya Bello and two others, said the amount was paid within eight months in 2019.

Bello is being prosecuted before Justice Maryanne

Anenih, alongside Umar Shuaibu Oricha and Abdulsalam Hudu by the EFCC.

They were alleged to have committed criminal breach of trust in respect of the sum of N110,446,470,089, among others.

Bello and his co-defendants, however, pleaded not guilty to the charge.

The witness presented bank statements for the account of the tax consultant, Bespoke Business Solutions Limited, detailing several large credit entries from the KSIRS in 2019.

### Anambra introduces entrepreneurial subjects into JSS curriculum

The Anambra Government has introduced 15 entrepreneurial subjects into the Junior Secondary School (JSS) curriculum to enhance students' practical skills and foster an entrepreneurial mindset.

The new subjects include solar installation, garment making, GSM repairs, agriculture and processing, plumbing, tiling, POP installation and event management.

Others are bakery, hairstyling, make-up, interior design,

CCTV/intercom installation, digital literacy, information technology and robotics.

Prof. Nkechi Ikediugwu, Chairperson, Post Primary Schools Service Commission (PPSSC), while speaking at the occasion in Awka on Friday, said the initiative was aimed at repositioning education to meet contemporary needs.

Ikediugwu noted that in a rapidly changing world, education should go beyond theory and examinations to equip students with practical skills,

creativity, innovation and an entrepreneurial mindset.

"The goal of the programme is to prepare learners, not only to seek jobs but to create value, generate employment and contribute meaningfully to the economic development of the state," she said.

Mr Cyril Nwuche of Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, delivered a paper titled "Building Entrepreneurial Secondary Schools: Why Every School Needs an Entrepreneurship Club".

Nwuche said the introduction of entrepreneurial subjects showed that the government was on the path to transforming the state's economy.

"Traditional academic instruction alone is no longer sufficient to prepare children for the future.

"There is the need for schools to embrace practical and skill-based learning to enable students to thrive in a dynamic global environment," he said.

### Kaduna Electric on collision course with rights group over alleged exploitation

IDIBIA GABRIEL, KADUNA

A Human Rights Organization (HRO) has asked Kaduna Electricity Distribution Company (KAEDCO), to provide a detailed written explanation and documentary evidence justifying alleged violations of customers rights and regulatory obligations by the company, within fourteen (14) days of receipt of its letter.

The body also raised concern of alleged arbitrary and unilateral upward review of agreed monthly debt repayment amounts (from the agreed N1,000.00 to between N3,000.00 and N33,000.00) without any prior notice, consultation, justification or regulatory approval.

Eagle Brain Human Rights Organization (EBHRO), a civil society organization dedicat-

ed to promoting transparency, accountability, and the rule of law in Nigeria, disclosed these in its letter Ref: EBHRO/KED/Complaint /001 /2026, made available to newsmen in Kaduna penultimate Wednesday.

In the letter signed by its Executive Director Com. Daniel Ejembi, he explained that the demands are based on the formal wide range of complaints received from the customers

against the company.

Entitled "Formal complaint and demand for immediate explanation, cessation and remedial actions regarding systemic violations of customers rights and regulatory obligations," the letter also accused KAEDCO of alleged customers rights violations.

It stated "Our organization has received numerous complaints from customers across your franchise area, corroborat-

ed by documentary evidence and firsthand accounts, highlighting exploitative practices".

The body in a complaints letter addressed to the Chairman and Board of Directors, Kaduna Electricity Distribution Company (Kaduna Electric), stated that "It submits this formal complaint and demand for immediate explanation on behalf of thousands of affected electricity customers within the

Kaduna Electric franchise area".

The complaints letter addressed a number of persistent and multi-faceted pattern of grave violations of consumers rights and regulatory standards, including wrongful and coercive collection of payments for electricity meters that were officially declared to be provided free of charge under government policy and NERC directives;



## Delta begins construction of 10.1km Aboh-Akarai Road, Okiri River Bridge in

The Delta State Government has commenced work on the construction of the 10.1-kilometre Aboh-Akarai Road, including a major bridge across the Okiri River, in Ndokwa East Local Government Area, at a total cost of 29.8 billion.

The Commissioner for Works (Highways and Urban Roads), Comrade Reuben Izeze, disclosed this during an inspection visit to the project site, where he was accompanied by the Director of Highways, Engr. Solomon Aghagba, and other top officials of the Ministry of Works.

According to the Commissioner, the project is designed to open up Akarai community and its environs by providing a direct road link to Aboh, thereby eliminating the long-standing dependence on river transportation.

He noted that Ndokwa East is predominantly agrarian, with residents largely engaged in farming and fishing, but poor access caused by difficult terrain has over the years hindered economic activities and business growth.

"This project is intended to open up more avenues for the people of Akarai to link Aboh without having to sail through the river. Because of the nature of the topography, it has been very difficult for the people to do business and succeed as entrepreneurs," Izeze said.

He explained that the road and bridge project aligns with Governor Sheriff

Oborevwori's MORE Agenda, stressing that the "O" in the agenda represents opportunities for all Deltans, regardless of whether they live in riverine, rural or urban areas.

The Commissioner revealed that the bridge component of the project spans seven sections, an upgrade from the initial five-span design, to ensure durability and resilience against flooding.

He said the redesign was informed by the 2012 flood level, which was used as the benchmark to guarantee that the bridge would withstand future flooding and outlive changing environmental conditions.

Izeze added that contractors had returned to site immediately after the Christmas holidays and that preliminary works, including bush clearing, had been completed.

He stated that piling would commence once the water level of the river recedes further, expressing optimism that substantial progress would be achieved before the end of the year.

"This is one of the many promises of His Excellency that are being kept across the 25 local government areas of the state," he said.

Also speaking, the contracting engineer, Lichaa Geagea, confirmed that preparatory works were ongoing, including site clearing, access opening, and arrangements for key facilities such as the batching plant, iron bending yard and beam seating areas.

## Akpabio, Eno synergy in Akwa Ibom, legendary - Etiebet

STEPHEN GBADA-MOSI, IBADAN

Former Petroleum Minister and chieftain of the ruling All Progressives Congress (APC) in Akwa Ibom State, Atuekong Don Etiebet, has described the working relationship between the Senate President, Godswill Akpabio, and Governor Umo Eno as legendary, since the governor joined the party in June last year.

Etiebet stated this in a congratulatory message he personally signed on the birthday celebration of Senator Akpabio, who recently marked his 63rd birthday anniversary.

According to Etiebet, "Your zeal and dedication towards a just, equitable and prosperous Nigeria as well as joining hands with our excellent governor, Pastor Umo Eno, to bring about a stable, united and peaceful Akwa Ibom State on the platform of the APC are profound which synergy has never been seen in the state

before.

"It, therefore, gives me immense pleasure to join several of your well-wishers, family and friends to rejoice with you on the auspicious occasion of your birthday. You are an enigma and great man indeed and in truth.

"We celebrate your steadfastness, uncommon leadership and selfless service to humanity. You have brought remarkable initiatives, robust and effective legislative performance as the President of the Nigeria Senate, which has significantly advanced the way Nigeria works, towards a great and enduring democracy in the African continent.

"May God continue to bless you with good health, strength and wisdom to continue in your uncommon services to the development of our dear country, Nigeria. Your footprints will be hard to erase forever and as you attain this new age, may the Almighty God continue to uplift, uphold and strengthen you for the task ahead and abundance of good health."

## Alleged lawlessness: Ossiomo Power Plant blames Chinese firm for power outages in Edo

BY TITUS AKHIGBE, BENIN

Following the recent incessant outages in EDO, the management of Ossiomo Power plant has condemned the alleged illegal activities of a Chinese firm, CCETC in its facility.

The Communication Director of Ossiomo Power Plant, Mr. Jonathan Ukidi in a terse statement raised grave concerns about respect for the rule of law, corporate responsibility, and the protection of host communities.

According to Ukidi, "this represents not only a breach of commercial agreements but a direct challenge to constituted authority and the judicial pro-

cess in Nigeria. Since October 5, 2025, operations at the Ossiomo Power Plant have been repeatedly disrupted, including the unlawful disconnection of the 33kV transmission line supplying several communities. These actions are carried out with the aid of hired thugs, have resulted in prolonged power outages lasting several months, crippling businesses, disrupting healthcare and education services, and threatening the economic survival of thousands of residents who depend on stable electricity for their livelihoods.

"The economic impact is significant. Estimates suggest losses exceeding 1.5 billion

to the power plant alone, not to mention the indirect losses suffered by traders, manufacturers, and small-scale enterprises across affected communities. In a nation already grappling with economic challenges, such disruptions deepen hardship and erode public confidence in the ability of institutions to protect lawful enterprise. Even more troubling are claims that CCETC, working with elements of law enforcement, sought access to Ossiomo Power Company's bank accounts through what is described as an improper court process, despite an existing Federal High Court order in Abuja.

"The alleged refusal of the company to honour invitations

from security agencies, including the Nigeria Police and the Department of State Services is worrisome. No corporate entity—foreign or local—should be permitted to operate above the law or disregard lawful summons with impunity.

Continuing, Ukidi said, "Nigeria welcomes foreign investment, and rightly so. But investment must go hand in hand with respect for local laws, court orders, and community welfare. When corporate disputes escalate into actions that harm entire communities, the state has a duty to intervene decisively, not only to protect infrastructure but also to preserve public trust in governance.



Scene as Minister of Defence, General CG Musa paid a courtesy visit to the Minister of Interior, Hon. Olunmi Tunji-Ojo, to strengthen collaboration between Nigeria's defence and internal security agencies. The meeting was attended by the Commandant General of the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC), Ahmed Abubakar Audi, and other Heads of Agencies under the Ministry of Interior Nigeria.

## DTSG urges traditional rulers, LG chairmen, faith-based groups to support vaccination exercise

BY NOSA AKENZUA, ASABA

The Delta State Government has called on Traditional Rulers, Local Government Chairmen, Community leaders and faith-based organisations across the state, including parents and all citizens to embrace child-immunisation against the Measles/Rubella disease, as its containment would promote a healthy and productive population in the state.

Speaking during an advocacy visit from the Delta State Primary Health Development Agency on Thursday in Asaba, Commissioner for Works, Rural Road and Public Information, Mr. Charles Aniagwu called on the Traditional Rulers to mobilize their people to actively participate in the immunisation exercise which is scheduled to

begin on the 31st of January, 2026, and last for ten days.

The commissioner directed state-government owned media houses to collaborate with the Primary Health Care Development Agency in propagating information on the Measles/Rubella vaccination. Mr. Aniagwu assured the Agency that the Ministry of Information is willing to "go the extra mile," and partner with the agency to ensure that information on the vaccination gets to the grassroots, and that communities buy in to it as, according to him, "this is an exercise that is key to the well-being of our people and the state government is solidly behind this critical health outreach. Be rest-assured that we will partner with you all the way."

"The issue of resistance to the vaccine by individuals is one that I know we can tackle with sensitization. And as we have

committed, we would do our best with our media contacts to ensure that the message gets out to the target audiences and direct beneficiaries of the vaccination."

Commissioner Aniagwu commended partners such as the World Health Organisation, WHO, UNICEF, and other agencies involved in the advocacy and immunisation campaigns, describing their efforts as selfless and worthy of support by the state government.

Speaking earlier, leader of the delegation and Executive Director of the Delta State Primary Health Care Development Agency, Dr. Paul Yinkore emphasised the importance of carrying out a hitch-free immunization exercise, describing the Measles/Rubella disease as "an enemy of children that can be defeated by immunization."

Dr. Yinkore lamented what

he termed "pockets of refusals and resistance to the vaccine" in certain quarters, appealing to the commissioner to assist in sensitization as well as reaching out to influential community leaders to support the immunization process.

He revealed that the scope of the immunization would cover children between the ages of 9 and 14, and children from 9 months of age who go for routine immunization.

Yinkore stated that the Agency was targeting 42% of the state's population, or about 3 million beneficiaries. He appealed for logistical and other forms of support from well-meaning community leaders, faith-based organisations and good-spirited members of the public to support the vaccination exercise. According to him, the goal is to achieve Universal Health Coverage.

## Delta APC bans private residence as venues for LG e-registration meetings

BY NOSA AKENZUA, ASABA

The All Progressives Congress (APC) in Delta State has directed that all Local Government stakeholders' meetings convened to drive the ongoing

e-registration exercise must hold strictly at approved public venues, warning against the use of private residences.

The directive, issued by the party's state leadership, follows an earlier instruction mandating Local Govern-

ment Party Chairmen and Local Government Council Chairmen to convene stakeholders' meetings to boost mobilisation for the e-registration process.

In a statement signed on Thursday, by the State Publicity Secretary, Valentine

Onojeghuo, Esq., said he was "directed by the State Chairman of our great Party, Elder Omeni Sobotie, to inform all Local Government Party Chairmen that such stakeholders' meetings must be convened strictly" at designated venues.

# When flying becomes unaffordable luxury



The outrage trailing the recent spike in domestic airfares is both understandable and justified. Tickets hitting N400,000 to N500,000 for flights of less than one hour, particularly to Eastern routes, underline a troubling reality: air travel, once a critical connector in a vast country like Nigeria, is fast becoming an elite privilege. In a country where distances are long, roads are dangerous and rail connectivity remains limited, flying should be a practical option for citizens, not a symbol of exclusion.

The protests on social media, as well as the unusually blunt complaints from members of the National Assembly, reflect a wider public frustration. When senators themselves balk at the cost of flying from Abuja to Enugu, Ilorin, Lagos or Kebbi, it is clear that something is deeply amiss. For the average Nigerian worker, civil servant or small business owner, such fares are not merely unaffordable; they are inconceivable. A return ticket priced at hundreds of thousands naira now rivals the cost of international travel in some cases, raising serious questions about equity and access within the country.

The Minister of Aviation and Aerospace Development, Festus Keyamo, is technically correct in stating that aviation operates in a deregulated market and that government does not fix prices for private airlines. However, that argument, though convenient, is incomplete and risks sounding evasive. A government that plays such a dominant role in determining the cost structure of aviation cannot simply wash its hands of the outcome. Deregulation does not absolve responsibility, especially when government policies, charges and inefficiencies significantly inflate operating costs and are ultimately passed on to passengers.

By the airlines' own admission, more than 50 different charges and levies are imposed

by multiple agencies, including the Nigerian Civil Aviation Authority (NCAA), the Federal Airports Authority of Nigeria (FAAN), the Nigerian Airspace Management Agency (NAMA) and the Federal Inland Revenue Service (FIRS).

Industry operators allege that as many as 18 separate taxes can apply to a single ticket. When taxes, charges and levies reportedly account for over half of the cost of a ticket, it is disingenuous for authorities to claim they are powerless. If government-created costs are driving prices through the roof, then government has both the leverage and the obligation to intervene.

Airlines have also pointed to other undeniable challenges such as exorbitant aviation fuel prices outside Lagos and Abuja, high maintenance costs worsened by foreign exchange pressures, expensive passenger service charges at certain airports, and the inefficiencies of operating routes with low return traffic, especially during peak seasons like Christmas. These realities cannot be dismissed, and airlines cannot be expected to operate at a loss. But neither can these costs be endlessly transferred to passengers without serious policy correction, particularly in a country already grappling with widespread economic hardship.

What makes the situation even more troubling is that Nigerians are not choosing air travel out of luxury or whim. With worsening insecurity on the highways, flying has become a safety-driven necessity. Many travellers save for weeks or months just to avoid the risk of kidnapping, banditry or fatal accidents on the roads. For business people, professionals, families and even public officials, the decision to fly is often a matter of survival rather than convenience. When airfares then climb to half a million naira, the citizen is effectively trapped: unsafe roads

below, unaffordable skies above.

This dilemma highlights a broader failure of transport planning and national coordination. Nigeria's rail system, though improving in pockets, does not yet provide reliable nationwide coverage. Road infrastructure remains overstretched and poorly policed. Inland waterways are underutilised. In such a context, aviation becomes not just a commercial service but a public utility of strategic importance. Treating it purely as a market-driven luxury ignores the realities of national integration, economic productivity and social cohesion.

The current airfare crisis fits squarely into Nigeria's broader cost-of-living emergency. Food, housing, transport and energy costs are all rising simultaneously, eroding incomes and shrinking opportunities. Inflation has reduced purchasing power, while wages remain largely stagnant. Aviation cannot be treated as an isolated commercial problem when it directly affects national mobility, business efficiency, family life and even security decisions. Excessive airfares increase the cost of doing business, discourage investment in certain regions and deepen regional inequalities.

The way forward is neither price-fixing nor populist grandstanding. What is urgently required is a serious, coordinated review of aviation levies with the aim of streamlining and rationalising them. Multiple overlapping charges must be collapsed into fewer, transparent fees that reflect actual services rendered. The proliferation of agencies collecting fees, often for similar functions, creates inefficiency and inflates costs without necessarily improving safety or service quality.

Where possible, targeted subsidies should be considered particularly on aviation fuel or passenger charges, at un-

der-served airports. Such subsidies need not be permanent, but they can provide temporary relief while broader structural reforms take effect. Government can also incentivise competition on monopoly or near-monopoly routes, especially in the East, where limited operators worsen price pressures. Encouraging more airlines to service these routes, or supporting regional carriers, could help moderate fares over time.

Beyond levies and fuel, government must address the foreign exchange challenges facing airlines. Maintenance, spare parts and leasing are largely dollar-denominated, making airlines vulnerable to currency volatility. A more stable and predictable forex policy for the aviation sector, possibly through special windows or support mechanisms, would reduce uncertainty and operating costs.

Aviation policy must ultimately balance market principles with public interest. Left entirely to its harshest logic, the market will simply exclude most Nigerians from air travel. That outcome is neither sustainable nor acceptable in a country of Nigeria's size, diversity and aspirations. Mobility is not a luxury; it is a catalyst for economic growth, national unity and social inclusion.

If the Federal Government truly wants to ease the burden on citizens, it must look beyond technical explanations and confront the structural drivers of these outrageous fares. Streamlining taxes, reducing inefficiencies, improving security on roads and strengthening alternative transport modes are all part of the solution. Flying should not become another symbol of exclusion in a nation already straining under economic hardship. Instead, it should remain what it was always meant to be: a bridge that connects Nigerians, not a barrier that divides them.

## Nasarawa Police arrest 12 suspects, recovers arms

BY FRANCIS NAN-  
SAK, LAFIA

The Nasarawa State Police Command have disclosed that no fewer than twelve suspected criminals had been arrested.

The command also reveals that a cache of arms and ammunitions were recovered.

At a press briefing the Commissioner of Police CP Shettima Mohammed Jau-ro told news men that the achievement was hatched by operatives of the Nigeria Police at different locations and dates across the state.

He said, "The highlights of the key successes recorded during this period are the neutralization of a Suspected Kidnapper and Recovery of Firearm on 2nd January, 2026, at about 0000hrs. Information was received that suspected kidnappers invaded the residence of one Shuaibu Umoru (not real name), aged 43, of Giza town and abducted him to an unknown destination.

"Following this, I immediately ordered a manhunt for the assailants. Subsequently, on 11th January, 2026, at about 1330hrs, information was received that an individual was sighted tied to a tree in a forest at Sabon Gida-Abuni area of Awe LGA.

"Police operatives attached to Awe Division, in collaboration with local hunters, were mobilized to the scene. Upon sighting the operatives, the hoodlums opened fire, but the operatives responded with superior firepower, leading to the neutralization

of one of the suspects and the recovery of one AK-47 rifle, one magazine, and two rounds of 7.62x39mm live ammunition," he said.

Again, police operatives attached to Nasarawa Eggon Division, while on routine patrol, mounted a snap checkpoint along the Nasarawa Eggon-Mada Station Road. Based on credible intelligence, the duo of Musa Ahmed (29 years) of Nunku Village, Akwanga LGA, and Adamu Yusuf (28 years) of Basa Village, Kokona LGA, who were riding on a Daylong motorcycle, were intercepted and arrested.

"The suspects attempted to bribe the operatives with the sum of Two Hundred Thousand Naira ( 200,000), which was rejected and recovered as an exhibit.

"Preliminary investigation revealed that the suspects had earlier kidnapped a person at Arusu Village of Kokona LGA, where the Police engaged them and rescued the victim, while the suspects escaped with bullet wounds.

Upon their arrest, one of them was found to still be nursing a gunshot injury" The CP stated.

In another development he said 1 police operatives attached to Assakio Division, in collaboration with local vigilantes, stormed kidnappers' hideouts in Angara and Fadaman Bauna villages of Lafia East Development Area, leading to the arrest of six (6) suspected kidnappers and the rescued of three (3) victims—two females and one male.

## Political scientists pick holes in implementation of new Tax Law

KEHINDE AKINPELU,  
ILORIN

The Nigeria Political Scientists Association (NPSA) has accused the Federal Government of putting the cart before the horse in the implementation of the new tax law.

The association in a statement signed by its president, Prof Hassan Saliu, said it aligned with the feeling that more avenues were being created for unaccountable governance to thrive through the new tax law.

"The idea of warehousing the collections in organisations that are already juggling a lot of responsibilities, without regard for the dangers involved, lends credence to public concerns about the aftermath of the collections.

"A critical examination

of the new tax law reveals several concerns. Firstly, the issue of multiple taxation, a longstanding challenge in Nigeria's tax system, appears to persist, with various new taxes and levies imposed on citizens and businesses," it said.

NPSA added: "Recognising the fact that citizens should fund their government through humane taxation, the NPSA would not ordinarily have issues with tax payments.

"However, given the totality of the governance environment, especially noting the self-serving orientation of most Nigerian politicians, we hold the view that the federal government is putting the cart before the horse; doing the last thing first in the circumstances."

The association insisted

that the ideal thing would have been cutting the obscene expenditure of government and rejuvenating the economy before any contemplation of an expansive tax net where all will be affected.

"How can any Nigerian avoid the petroleum tax? Also, the taxes imposed on withdrawals will ultimately be passed on to ordinary Nigerians. These are issues being downplayed by apostles of the taxes," NPSA asked.

It warned that the commencement of the taxes could lead to a cascading effect, where taxpayers would be subjected to multiple tax burdens, "notwithstanding the contrary argument advanced by promoters of the new tax law, stifling economic growth and discouraging investment".

"Every tax withdraws mon-

ey from people's pockets, and with the new law, no one can escape its net. Moreover, in an environment lacking adequate accountability mechanisms, this could exacerbate the problem.

"While the debate over the exemption of vulnerable groups is an academic exercise, the reality is that all Nigerians will be affected by the tax regime," it said.

NPSA observed that the discrepancies between the assented and gazetted versions of the tax law have raised concerns about the transparency and accountability of the legislative process.

It added that the lack of clarity could lead to confusion, disputes, and litigation, further undermining the effectiveness of the tax system.

It, therefore, urged the government to reconsider



The Corps Marshal in high level engagement with global road safety leaders at the TRB workshop, engaging David Harkey, P.E, President of the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety and recipient of this year's prestigious Safety Award, alongside Victoria F. Sheehan, Executive Director of the Transportation Research Board.

## Zamfara stadium upgrade project to be delivered in February- Official

The Zamfara Government says the Sardana Memorial Stadium upgrade project has reached 90 per cent completion.

The Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Works and Infrastructure, Mr Haruna Dikko, gave the indication while inspecting the ongoing project on Friday in Gusau, Zamfara.

Dikko, accompanied by other officials of the ministry, spoke to Reporters shortly after the inspection.

He expressed satisfaction with the ongoing work, assuring that the project would be delivered in February.

According to him, the stadium was dilapidated and out of use when the Gov Dauda Lawal administration took over office in 2023.

The government, he assured, would complete the work and open it for the Zamfara United FC among other sporting activities.

He said the facility would also be used to host other events to generate revenue

for the state government.

Dikko commended the project handlers, Monimichelle Sports Company for the quality job and assured that the government would provide all the necessary support needed for the project to be delivered in February.

Meanwhile, the Engineer handling the project, Mr Terngo Williams, who took the permanent Secretary and other officials round the project, assured that it would be delivered as scheduled.

William had taken the officials around the 1,000 seating stadium's pavilion, players' dressing rooms for two teams, sanitary facilities, referees room, medical room as well as facility for ball boys.

He also took them round the main ball of the stadium where water draining pipes were being laid before the synthetic grass would be fixed.

Williams assured that all the materials needed to complete the remaining work were already in place.

## Taraba: Participate fully in APC e-registration exercise - Gov Kefas pleads

OKERAFOR ATHANATIUS,  
JALINGO

Taraba State Governor, Dr. Agbu Kefas, Friday made a passionate appeal to the people of the Northern and Central Senatorial zones of the State to participate fully in the on-going All Progressives Congress (APC) Electronic Registration and Validation exercise.

At the ceremony held Friday at the open ground of the Jolly Nyame Stadium in Jalingo, Kefas said the official flag-off of the exercise took place at Wukari on Thursday possibly, for the people of Southern zone of the state.

According to the governor, the programme in Jalingo the state capital was a continuation of the one that took place at Wukari, saying such covered all the LGAs under the Southern zone of the State.

Kefas, who urged the people

of the three zones (Southern, Central and Northern) senatorial zones of the State to participate fully in the registration and validation exercise said, active participants of the exercise will benefit much during the forthcoming party Congresses.

Describing the exercise as part of party activities and supreme, Kefas emphasized that the APC State Chairman, Barrister Ibrahim Tukur El-sudi had his support towards ensuring that the exercise continues without hindrances. "We have discussed, we have drawn out the lists for the 3 zones to ensure that this exercise is 100% completed," he said

Kefas however, assured that the contributions of all party elected officials and members will be rewarded and be appreciated at the appropriate time.

"Those who will not contribute, their names will be published so that we know

them and tax them. Let all of us cooperate and ensure that everybody is given the opportunity to participate".

The State APC Chairman, Barrister Ibrahim Tukur El-Sudi in a remark, lauded the sportsmanship of Governor Kefas for making available all that were needed for the party in the State to compete favourably with other APC offices across the country.

While appreciating Governor Kefas for providing the party with about 800 computers, El-sudi called on members who don't have their National Identification Numbers (NIN) to visit the office of the National Identification Number and Management Commission (NINMC) in Jalingo to have theirs.

He further informed that having NIN registrations will afford them the opportunity to have manual registration which will be transcribed later to elec-

tronic registration.

Tukur El-sudi later, read the letter from the National chairman of APC to the people of the State reiterating that no party faithful should be left behind in the registration exercise. He added that the exercise was geared towards the success of APC during the 2027 general elections. "Electronic Registration is not just part of party activities but a strategic pillar for the party to win its elections come 2027," he said.

Highlights of the occasion were cultural dances and displays from the state cultural troupe, e-Registration and Validation exercise performed by the speaker of the State Assembly, Rt. Hon. John Kizito Bonzena from the Northern zone and the Secretary of the Government of the State (SGS), Barrister Gebon Timothy Kataps from the Central zone.

## Trump threatens European nations with tariffs until US can acquire Greenland

US President Donald Trump on Saturday escalated his quest to acquire Greenland, threatening multiple European nations with tariffs of up to 25 percent until his purchase of the Danish territory is achieved.

Trump aimed his ire at Denmark, a fellow NATO member, as well as several European countries that have deployed troops in recent days to the vast, mineral-rich territory at the gateway to the Arctic with a population of 57,000.

If realized, Trump's threats against Washington's NATO partners would create unprecedented tension within the alliance.

From February 1, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, France, Germany, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, and Finland would be subject to a 10-percent tariff on all goods sent to the United States, Trump said in a post on his Truth Social network.

"On June 1st, 2026, the Tariff will be increased to 25%. This Tariff will be due and payable until such time as a Deal is reached for the Complete and Total purchase of Greenland," he wrote.

"These Countries, who are playing this very dangerous game, have put a level of "Therefore, it is imperative that, in order to protect Global Peace and Security, strong measures be taken so that this potentially perilous situation end quickly, and without question."

It was not immediately clear what authority the US leader would invoke to impose the threatened tariffs of up to 25 percent.

Since returning to the presidency, Trump has unleashed sweeping tariffs on goods from virtually all trading partners, to address what Washington says are unfair trade practices and as a tool to press governments on US concerns.

## Fire destroys over 100 thatched houses in Monguno IDP camp

A fire outbreak has destroyed more than 100 thatched houses at the Water Board IDP Camp in Monguno, Borno, the police command says.

ASP Nahun Daso, the Police Public Relations Officer of the Command, disclosed this to the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) on Saturday in Maiduguri.

Daso said that the incident occurred on Friday at about 4:30 p.m. and was reported by Bukar Mbat, Camp Chairman of the IDP camp, at Monguno Police Station.

"The fire engulfed over 100 thatched houses, destroying foodstuff and other household items in the

raging inferno," he said.

He added that the state fire service, police and other security agencies stationed at the camp successfully brought the fire under control.

"Supol Monguno led a patrol team to the scene to conduct an on-the-spot assessment, and photographs of the incident were taken.

"Thankfully, no life was lost, and no injury was recorded. The value of properties destroyed is yet to be ascertained," Daso said.

He added that an investigation was ongoing to ascertain the cause of the fire. (NAN)

## France to send more forces to Greenland, says Macron

President Emmanuel Macron Thursday said France would soon send more "land, air, and sea" forces to join a European military exercise in Greenland, after Washington threatened to seize the autonomous Danish territory.

"A first team of French service members is already on site and will be reinforced in the coming days with land, air, and maritime assets," Macron told troops during a speech to start the new year.

"France and the Europeans must continue to be present wherever their

interests are threatened — without escalation, but uncompromising when it comes to respect for territorial sovereignty," he added.

Germany said earlier Thursday the European mission to Greenland aimed "to explore options for ensuring security in light of Russian and Chinese threats in the Arctic."

Macron spoke as Europe's deadliest conflict since World War II grinds on for a fourth year in Ukraine after Russia invaded, and the United States has also refused to rule out military strikes in Iran over a violent crackdown on protesters.



## Venezuela demands proof of life of Maduro, wife from US govt

The Venezuelan government on Saturday demanded "immediate proof of life" of President Nicolás Maduro and his wife Cilia Flores after the US announced he had been captured and taken out of the country.

Venezuela's Vice President,

Delcy Rodríguez, has announced that she is unaware of the location of President Nicolás Maduro and his wife.

She urged the United States to provide a "proof of life" concerning Maduro and his wife.

Daily Sun earlier reported that United States President Donald Trump announced on

Saturday that Maduro and his wife have been captured and flown to the US.

The vice president said that the US must show that the President and his wife are alive.

United States Senator Mike Lee had said that Maduro will face criminal charges in the United States.

This was after Trump announced the capture of Maduro and his wife on Saturday.

Rodríguez announced on Saturday morning that she is "unaware of the location of President Nicolás Maduro and his wife", urging "the United States to provide a 'proof of life' for them.

## Iran's leader demands crackdown on 'seditionists' after protests



Iran's supreme leader on Saturday said authorities "must break the back of the seditionists", blaming US President Donald Trump for "casualties" after a deadly crackdown on protests against the country's clerical leadership.

Iran was rocked by weeks of demonstrations sparked by anger over economic hardship that exploded into the biggest protests against the Islamic republic in more than three years.

But demonstrations have subsided after the crackdown that rights groups say left thousands dead under an internet blackout that lasted more than a week.

Authorities have said demonstrations they con-

demn as "riots" are under control, with state-aligned media reporting thousands of arrests and officials vowing swift punishment for those detained.

"By God's grace, the Iranian nation must break the back of the seditionists just as it broke the back of the sedition," Khamenei told supporters during an address marking a religious holiday commemorating the Prophet Mohammed's ascension to heaven aired by state television.

"We do not intend to lead the country to war, but we will not spare domestic criminals," he added, saying that "international criminals" were "worse" and would also not be spared punishment.

Iranian authorities have blamed the United States for fuelling a "terrorist operation" that they say hijacked peaceful protests over the economy.

Trump, who backed and joined Israel's 12-day war against Iran in June, had repeatedly threatened new military action against Tehran if protesters were killed.

— 'American conspiracy' — Khamenei on Saturday lashed out at Trump, accusing him of being "guilty for the casualties, damages and accusations he has levelled against the Iranian nation".

"This was an American conspiracy," he said, adding that "America's goal is to swallow Iran... the goal is to put Iran back under mili-

tary, political and economic domination".

While Washington has appeared to have stepped back, Trump has said he has not ruled out military options and made clear he was keeping a close eye on whether any protesters were executed.

Alarm has mounted over the reported death toll during the crackdown, as verifying cases remains difficult under severe internet restrictions.

Monitor Netblocks said on Saturday that internet connectivity in Iran rose "very" slightly, more than 200 hours into the nationwide internet shutdown.

Rights groups have warned that the blackout has been aimed at concealing the extent of the violence during the crackdown.

Norway-based rights group Iran Human Rights (IHR) says 3,428 protesters have been verified to have been killed by security forces, but warns the actual toll could be several times higher.

Other estimates place the death toll at more than 5,000 — and possibly as high as 20,000, IHR said.

The opposition Iran International channel based outside the country has said at least 12,000 people were killed during the protests, citing senior government and security sources.

# Chimamanda Adichie's tragic loss and a chorus of medical negligence



The beginning of each year typically brings with it hope, a high-spirited optimism that things will only get better. For celebrated Nigerian author Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie and those who identify with her across the globe, that optimism has swiftly succumbed to a soul-wrenching grief, the extent of which no words can adequately describe.

That grief has spread like lightning. From social media feeds to newspaper pages, blogs, and across the airwaves, a heavy gloom has settled over the public, leaving a lingering, painful question: How does spending time in one's own country turn into the tragedy of a lifetime?

The news broke with a statement from the family confirming that 21-month-old Nkanu Nnamdi, the son of the novelist and her husband, Dr. Ivora Esege, died on Wednesday, January 7, after a brief illness. While the family initially requested privacy and prayers, the narrative shifted from private mourning to a public demand for accountability following the leak of a private message Adichie sent to close friends.

"My son would be alive today if not for an incident (at a Hospital) on January 6," Adichie's message read. According to her account, her son Nkanu was stable at Atlantis Hospital and cleared for medical evacuation to Johns Hopkins in Baltimore, USA, the next day. He was referred to the Multi-Specialist Hospital only for a routine MRI and a "central line" procedure.

"I saw people... rushing into the theatre and immediately knew something had happened," Adichie recounted. She alleges that an anaesthesiologist at the hospital administered her son an overdose of Propofol and, crucially, was left unmonitored. "How can you sedate a sick child and neglect to monitor him? The anaesthesiologist was criminally negligent. He was fatally casual and careless with the precious life of a child," Adichie's message noted.

Dr. Anthea Esege Nwandu, a dual-board-certified physician and the boy's

aunt, expanded on these claims to TVC News: "Standard clinical practice demands that such a baby be monitored continuously. Instead, the anaesthesiologist disconnected the child from his ventilator and carried him on his shoulders to the ICU unmonitored. He arrived pulseless. That was the beginning of his death."

Beyond a private loss: A systemic crisis  
The disclosure has sparked a firestorm of public discourse, reopening wounds for Nigerians familiar with medical failure. Celebrity stylist Toyin Lawani has shared via her Instagram handle (@tianahsplacempire) what has probably been the most damning testimonial, detailing a near-fatal medical ordeal that followed a spinal implant surgery at the Hospital. According to her, what was meant to be routine care spiralled into repeated emergency surgeries, lung complications, loss of speech and mobility, cardiac distress, and months of hospitalisation and rehabilitation. Despite spending close to N100 million, poor postoperative care and delayed responses allegedly worsened her condition, forcing an emergency evacuation abroad, where further infections were discovered and another corrective surgery was performed.

"I kept asking myself why I did my spine surgery implant in Nigeria... I did two months in total there and a month in a rehabilitation centre because I lost the use of my hands and legs. I also had a bedsore, had to learn how to walk again, speak again, bathe myself again, and I'm still in therapy for speaking till now," she wrote.

Commenting on an Arise TV post on Instagram, one user, @iammsbel, wrote: "The Hospital again? I don't want to talk about the damage they did to my uncle. People should

stop going to the hospital."

Similarly, @carameljay wrote: "My family is currently planning to travel home to bury our mom, who we lost on Christmas Day! She travelled to Nigeria for Christmas and never made it back home to us because she had a health emergency, and two hospitals turned her away because they didn't have a defibrillator. She died in the car on her way to the 3rd hospital."

This groundswell of dissatisfaction highlights a more profound anxiety that even at "world-class" facilities, several systemic shortcomings, including the regulatory accountability vacuum and a lack of adherence to safety protocols, continue to claim lives.

The Hospital's Defence and the Clinical Paradox

The Hospital's formal statement sought to frame the tragedy as a result of the child's "critical" pre-existing condition. However, their defence raises more questions than it answers:

The Referral Claim: The hospital claimed the child was referred after treatment at two other centres; Adichie's account clarifies he was at only one (Atlantis Hospital) and was stable for international travel.

The Shield of Protocol: The hospital also claimed adherence to "international standards", but, according to Dr. Nwandu, international standards demand that a child on oxygen who is given sedation must have continuous oxygen therapy. "Did the hospital do this? No! They confirmed this verbally to me when I went to the hospital to question the doctors," she wrote in a detailed rebuttal.

The Transfer Violation: International standards mandate moving sedated pa-

tients with resuscitative equipment, such as an Ambu bag. The anaesthesiologist's alleged decision to carry the child on his shoulder without oxygen is a non-standard practice that made visual and clinical monitoring impossible, yet the hospital's statement did not address that.

The Documentation Gap: The hospital claims to have commenced an investigation. Dr. Nwandu does not think that is possible. "Since there was no monitoring, is it possible to accurately document when the child stopped breathing or for how long he was pulseless before he was resuscitated? No."

Ultimately, the hospital's defence hinges on the claim that public reports contain "inaccuracies," yet has not specified which details they contest. Quite understandably, the family has vowed to pursue all necessary avenues for justice. "It is time for the public and healthcare providers to demand accountability, transparency, and consequences for negligence in our healthcare system in Nigeria," Dr. Esege-Nwadu said on TVC News.

As Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie navigates a grief beyond words, we're reminded of the ending statement in her trending leaked message: "We have now heard about two previous cases of this same anaesthesiologist overdosing children. Why did the hospital allow him to keep working? This must never happen to another child."

The onus now falls on the general public, especially the authorities and regulatory bodies, to ensure that no other parent endures a similar fate.

• Abraham Adegoke is a trained journalist with a BSc and MSc in Media and Communications.

## Police arrest eight suspects for illicit drugs, other crimes in Borno

The Borno State Police Command has arrested eight suspects and recovered illicit drugs during an operation in Maiduguri and the Jere Local Government Area of the state.

The arrest was carried out by operatives of the command's crack squad as part of sustained efforts to combat crime and other offences across the state.

The Command's spokesperson, Assistant Superintendent of Police (ASP) Nahum Daso, disclosed this in a statement issued on Saturday in Maiduguri.

According to him, "On Thursday, January 16, 2026, at 4:00 pm, operatives of the command, acting on credible intelligence, carried out an operation in an area along Baga Road, Maiduguri, and arrested eight suspects."

Daso said the suspects are aged between 18 and 25 years.

"Besides the arrests, they were also in possession of a large cache of hard drugs and other illicit substances," he said.

He listed the recovered

exhibits as 700 wraps of dried leaves suspected to be Indian hemp, 10 packs of tramadol tablets and 2,500 tablets of Exol.

The police spokesperson added that the suspects and the recovered items are currently in police custody, while investigations are ongoing.

He assured that "upon conclusion of investigations, the suspects will be charged to court for prosecution."

Meanwhile, the Commissioner of Police, Naziru Abdulmajid, reiterated his unwavering commitment to ridding the state of criminal elements.

He warned individuals involved in drug peddling and related offences to desist, noting that the command would not relent in its efforts to ensure public safety and security.

Daso also urged members of the public to continue to support the police with timely and credible information to enable prompt action.

## Oloka killing: Three arrested as Makinde compensates victims' families

Oyo State Governor, Seyi Makinde, on Friday announced a compensation of N5 million each for the families of forest guards recently killed at the Old Oyo National Park.

The governor also approved scholarships up to university level for the children of the deceased guards.

Makinde disclosed this during an on-the-spot assessment visit to Oloka Village in Oriire Local Government Area of Ogbomosho, where the incident occurred.

He further promised to rehabilitate the road linking Ikoyi-Ile to Oloka community under the Rural Access and Agricultural Market Project (RAAMP), improve telecommunication services, and provide boreholes and solar-powered street lights in the area.

The governor also assured residents of a sustained joint security operation to protect the community.

Makinde, who commiserated with the people of Oloka and the affected families, said his administration would strengthen the state's security architecture to make the community safer.

He disclosed that he would write to military authorities in Abuja to request the establishment of a military base in Oloka to further enhance security.

While noting that security is a collective responsibility, the governor urged residents to always provide timely information to government

and security agencies whenever they notice suspicious activities.

He also commended service commanders for their dedication and commitment to safeguarding lives and property in the state.

Addressing the community, Makinde said: "I thank every one of you in Oloka and pray that we won't experience such an event again. I want to say that whatever is expected of the government to do to ensure you are all safe and secure, we will do it."

"It is quite unfortunate, and I pray that God will uphold the families left behind by those who were killed."

"The reason I decided to come by myself is for me to see the environment and the challenges our security agencies might be facing. One of them is communication. I want to assure you that we will pay for telecommunication companies to come and install masts here."

"For the bandits and those causing problems here, we will ensure that you feel the presence of our fortified security from now on."

"For the families that lost their loved ones to the unfortunate incident, each of them will be given N5 million. They should send their representatives to us on Monday."

For those who left children among the deceased, I will sign for scholarships for their children up to the university level.

# Kano Killing: Death toll rises to seven



The number of casualties in the gruesome killings of members of one family in a Kano community has risen to seven, the Kano Police Command confirmed.

Suspected assailants reportedly killed a housewife and her four children, including an infant child, in their home early Saturday in Kano.

The tragic incident occurred when the killers invaded the private residence in the Dorayi Chiranci quarter of the city, where they slaughtered the mother and three children, while the infant was dumped in a well, an eyewitness told journalists.

According to a resident,

Isiyaka Yakubu, the entire community was thrown into mourning at the early hours of Saturday when a neighbour broke out of the victim's house in loud noise, seeking neighbours' help.

Although Yakubu could not identify those behind the sad development, he lamented that the incident had triggered fear and tension in the community.

"This is worrisome and unexplained. The ugly incident occurred in the early hours, and everyone is under tense situation now. The neighbour who came out of the house told us she found everyone in the house in a pool of their

blood. Later, we discovered a small baby had been thrown into the well in the compound."

"We have reported the case to the police and I think action will be taken to unravel those behind the dastardly act. The entire Dorayi Chiranci and Dorayi Babba cannot sleep with their eyes closed. This has never happened in this area before," he said.

Spokesperson of the Kano Police Command, CSP Abdullahi Haruna Kiyawa, has confirmed the ugly development, revealing that an investigation has been launched to unravel the circumstances.

In a statement released

Saturday, Kiyawa explained that victims of brutal murder include Fatima Abubakar (35) mother and her six children, who were attacked by unknown hoodlums who broke into their house.

"The Kano State Police Command received a distress call at approximately 12:10 pm on January 17, 2025, reporting a brutal attack on the household of Haruna Bashir at Dorayi Charanchi Quarters."

"The report indicated that the victims were attacked with dangerous weapons, resulting in fatal injuries. The Commissioner of Police, CP Ibrahim Adamu Bakori, PhD, immediately mobilised a police team led by Deputy Commissioner of Police in Charge of Operations, DCP Lawal Isah Mani, to the scene."

"Bodies were evacuated and rushed to Murtala Mohammed Specialist Hospital, Kano, where they were pronounced dead. A team led by ACP Wada Jarma, Assistant Commissioner of Police, Criminal Investigation Department (CID), was instructed to conduct a thorough investigation to bring the perpetrators to justice." Kiyawa added.

## Fire guts section of Ibadan hotel



Firefighters in Ibadan averted a major disaster in the early hours of Saturday after a boys' quarters apartment within a hotel caught fire, saving properties worth millions of naira.

The Fire Services Agency received a distress call at 12:35 am from a Mr. Michael reporting the outbreak. Fire personnel, led by Chief Fire Superintendent (CFS) Dairo (Mrs), immediately mobilised to the scene.

"On arrival, officers discovered that a boys' quarters apartment located within the hotel premises was already engulfed in flames. However, through swift and coordinated action, the fire-

fighters were able to contain the blaze and prevent it from spreading to the main hotel building and adjoining properties," the agency said in a statement.

"The firemen quickly swung into action and prevented the fire from spreading to the main hotel building and surrounding properties. The operation was carried out successfully and no life was lost," the statement added.

After extinguishing the fire, officers delivered a brief safety lecture to hotel occupants and nearby residents on fire prevention and precautionary measures. The fire appliance returned to the station at 2:17 a.m. and remains

on standby for emergency response.

Special Adviser on Fire Reform and Chairman of the Fire Services Agency, Hon. Dr. Morroof Akinwande, urged the public to prioritise fire safety, particularly in residential and hospitality facilities.

"Fire outbreaks can be prevented or controlled if the right measures are put in place. Building owners and occupants must ensure that firefighting equipment such as extinguishers and smoke detectors are available and in good working condition," Akinwande said.

He commended the fire officers for their prompt response, noting that their

timely intervention saved the hotel from being razed and prevented potential loss of lives.

The incident underscores the importance of emergency preparedness and rapid response, especially in public facilities with large numbers of people. Residents and business owners were advised to remain vigilant, avoid unsafe electrical connections and flammable materials, and report fire incidents promptly.

The Fire Services Agency reaffirmed its commitment to protecting lives and property, assuring the public of its readiness to respond to emergencies at all times.

# Despite Improved Rating with Lessors, Nigerian Airlines Still Pay Outrageous Aircraft Insurance Premium



It has emerged that despite the signing of Irrevocable De-Registration and Export Request Authorisation (IDERA) by the federal government, Nigerian airlines are forced to pay outrageous aircraft insurance premium.

For instance, the aircraft insurance premium paid last year by Nigerian airlines reached over N15 billion.

Last year, there was an improved rating of Nigeria by lessors, based on enhanced compliance with Cape Town Convention, which moved from 49 per cent in 2023 to 75.5 per cent in 2024, yet Nigerian airlines paid so much for aircraft insurance premium last year.

The cost of aircraft insurance paid by Nigerian airlines is comparatively very high. According to insurance underwriters who specialise in aviation insurance, Nigerian airlines pay minimum of \$1 million per annum for the insurance of a single Boeing B737-300 classic, which is far higher than \$100,000 which airlines in Europe and the United States pay for the insurance of the same aircraft type.

Insurance stakeholders said the high cost stemmed from risk perception of operations in Nigeria, which they dubbed high country risk, but the federal government has made efforts to bring down the perception, which prompted Aer Cap to offer dry lease to leading Nigerian airline, Air Peace, last year after 10 years hiatus, when lessors blacklisted domestic carriers and only offered wet lease of aircraft at exorbitant cost.

Former President of Chartered Insurance Institute of Nigeria (CIIN) and the Managing Director, Alpha Choice Insurance Brokers, Sunny Adeda, said despite the signing of the agreement or deed, there was no guarantee that aviation insurance premium rate would come down this year or in the nearest future.

According to Adeda, there is no regular rate for aviation insurance, noting that the premium depends on the market risk at every point in time. "If the year experiences soft market (no accidents or catastrophe) then premium will be low but if there are accidents, terror attacks at the airport and other acts that threaten security and safety of flight operations, for example, the aircraft insur-

ance premium will be high," Adeda said.

He, however, said premium paid on helicopters was much higher than premium paid on fixed wing aircraft because helicopters don't fly high and they record more accidents that fixed wing aircraft and therefore attract higher insurance premium.

"Helicopter premium is high but, overall, premium is determined in foreign market and if the magnitude of losses is high then premium payable that year will be high," Adeda noted.

The Executive Secretary of Aviation Round Table (ART), Olu Fidel Ohunayo, told THISDAY that there were three factors that affect aircraft insurance premium. "One was the security of equipment itself being returned without any legal inhibitions and other dogs put in the way, which IDERA has solved. There were also the fluctuating exchange rates that were not good for the naira compared to the dollar, which was the product of measurement and the third factor was the country security rating, which currently is only that of the equipment (aircraft) that the IDERA has addressed.

"The other two are still hanging. And then, yes, there is hope if we continue to improve governance, improve administrative structures, allow the different arms of government to play their role as an institution and not as an appendage of the executive.

"That gives enough confidence in the system and helps the rating and also helps in bringing down the cost of insurance. Because it is all those three factors that affect that cost of insurance. Now the IDERA has come, yes, we could not get results because it happened in 2024 and the message is just sinking in and it is still sinking in," he said.

He also noted that the fact that the manufacturing of aircraft is not meeting the demand also has impact on insurance premium, "because major airline players who demand for new aircraft and are not getting it would naturally move into the lease market and once the dominant players move into the lease market, they get to the top of the ladder ahead of non-major players.

"Leasing the aircraft to meet their demand will still sustain the scarcity of the equipment and be-

cause of that scarcity, the insurance might not be too favourable at the moment."

"I think as things begin to improve, because as you know, aviation is universal. It is not a Nigeria thing; you just have to look at what is happening around the market worldwide and see how you can benefit from it. But for now, yes, the insurance will go down but the other external factors beyond the IDERA are some of the things that will not make us see the effect as effective as we want it. But once we can solve all the other things I have mentioned, all other things can be resolved, not by Nigeria alone, and even by the aviation community. Then you can be sure that the price will come down and be very favourable to all operators and Nigerian operators in particular," he added.

Insurance industry consultant and former Rector, Nigerian College of Aviation Technology (NCAT), Zaria, Captain Sam Caulcrick, told THISDAY that IDEDRA and Practice Direction basically improve the possibilities of securing dry leases, but do not directly reduce insurance underwriting costs.

"The issue is how the international underwriters view the capacity of the Nigerian Civil Aviation Authority (NCAA). The NCAA surveillance capacity minimises underwriting instances and reduces high insurance costs for Nigerian aircraft by ensuring strict adherence to international safety and operational standards.

"International underwriters view robust safety oversight as a direct indicator of minimised risk, which lowers premiums. The NCAA's effective surveillance capacity works in several key ways: Ensuring Compliance with International Standards: The NCAA enforces all Nigerian Civil Aviation Regulations (Nig. CARs), which are aligned with the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) standards and recommended practices. Nigeria having a US Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Category 1 rating is a significant factor in assuring international underwriters of a safe operating environment," he said.

On safety oversight functions, he said the NCAA's Aviation Safety Inspectors (ASIs) conducts rigorous scheduled and unscheduled on-the-spot

inspections of airlines and service providers to ensure continuous compliance with safety regulations.

The proactive surveillance, he said, helps prevent incidents and accidents, directly reducing the frequency and cost of claims.

On mandatory training and maintenance, he said the authority must ensure that all airline personnel are adequately trained and that aircraft maintenance is carried out as required and on time.

He said adherence to stringent maintenance standards, often at foreign Maintenance, Repair, and Overhaul (MRO) centres, remained a key risk factor assessed by international insurers.

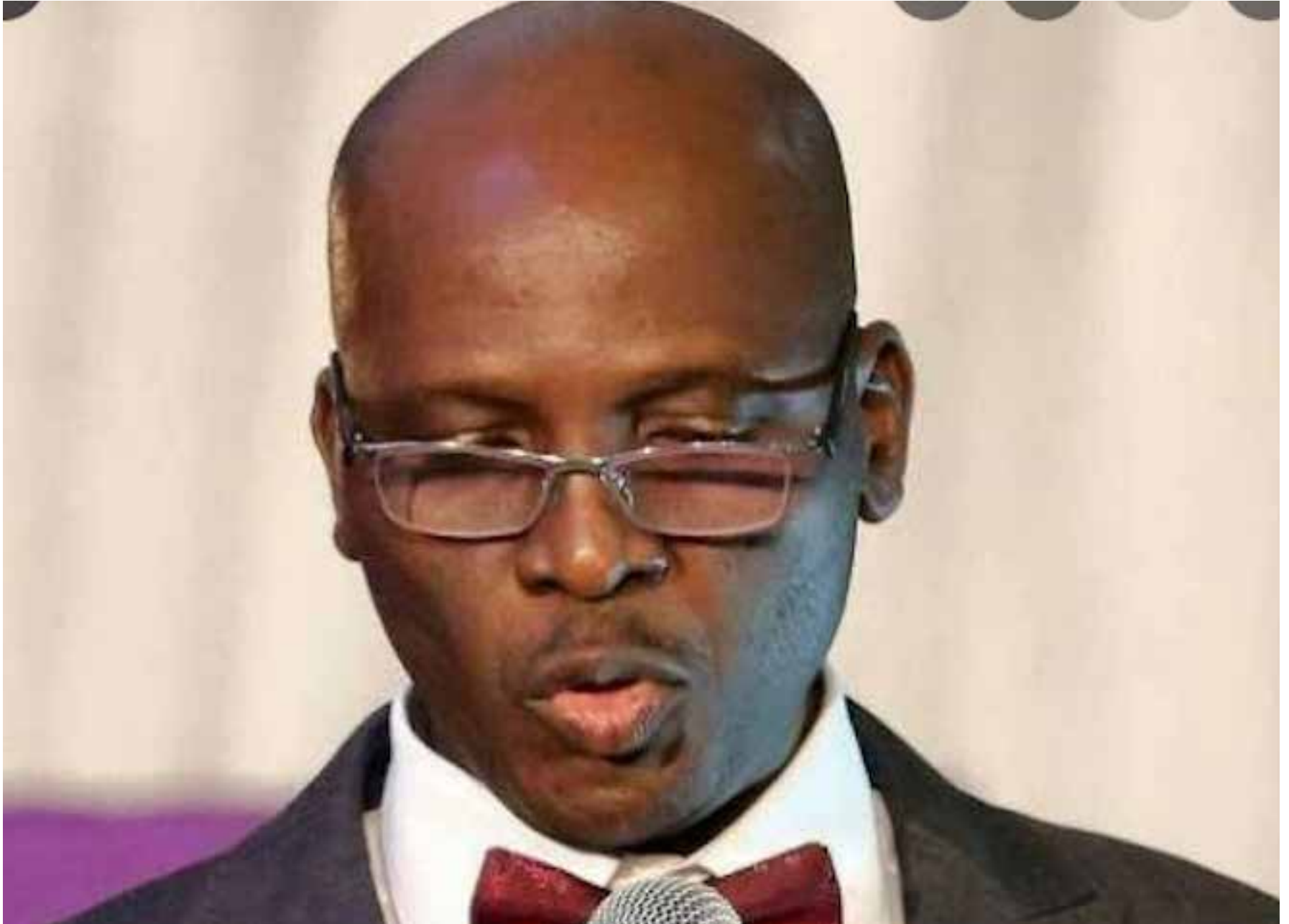
He said NCAA has moved to enforce stricter financial compliance, introducing a "Zero Debt Strategy" with mandatory Advance Payment Guarantees (APG) for airlines from January 2026; thus, demonstrating financial stability and the ability to meet obligations, including insurance premium payments, build confidence with international lessors and insurers.

On data and reporting transparency, Caulcrick said: "Compliance with regulations requiring timely and accurate reporting, such as the 72-hour occurrence-based reporting rule, ensures transparency in risk assessment."

On effective implementation of the Cape Town Convention, he also noted that the successful implementation of the Irrevocable De-Registration and Export Request Authorisation procedures provided legal safeguards for international lessors and financiers, "making them more confident in leasing aircraft to Nigerian operators. This reduced "country risk" associated with asset recovery, which directly translates to lower lease and insurance costs."

"By demonstrating a robust safety culture and regulatory environment through effective surveillance and enforcement, the NCAA directly addresses the primary concerns of international underwriters, thereby minimising their perceived risk and reducing the associated high premiums," he added.

# When a Giant Falls, the Colours Remember Him



There are deaths that announce themselves like thunderclaps, and there are others that arrive like a sudden power outage in the middle of a beautifully lit scene. Patrick Chike Nebo's passing on 14 September 2023 belonged firmly to the latter category. One moment, the set is perfectly dressed, the colours balanced, the textures authentic; the next, the lights flicker, and an unsettling quiet settles in. You then realise that the man who made the illusion seamless has quietly taken his bow and exited stage left.

On the fourth Saturday of that September, the airwaves of TopRadio 90.9 FM carried more than voices. They carried disbelief, affection, laughter, and the sort of reverent mischief that follows the memory of a man who was both meticulous and mischievous. "The Vintage TalkShow...with the FAJ" became, for over an hour, a communal sitting room where friends, colleagues and co-travellers gathered to make sense of the absence of a colossus whose work most Nigerians have seen, even if they never quite noticed him. Which, ironically, was exactly how Pat Nebo preferred it.

Present in the studio was Yemi Shodimu – actor, broadcaster, producer, raconteur – whose voice alone can animate a bare room. Joining remotely were Edmond Enaibe, Yinka Akanbi, Dayo Haastrup and Aderemi Ogunpitan: men who have walked the long, often dusty road of Nigerian film, television and stage with Nebo at different points. Others sent words when they could

not send bodies. Jimi Odumosu, indisposed but indomitable, contributed a note that reminded listeners why institutional memory matters. Jonathan Gbemuotor's recorded tribute shimmered with visual affection. A few absences were noted, with the sort of gentle sarcasm that Nigerians reserve for friends who know they should have shown up. Life, after all, happens – even to tributes.

What emerged from the exchanges was not a sanctimonious hymn but a textured portrait of an intensely private man whose public legacy is impossible to ignore. Hastrup recalled Nebo's tenacity while working with Tade Ogidan, himself a byword for perfectionism. That two such men could coexist without combusting is either a glorious proof of Nebo's patience or Ogidan's good humour – or both. Enaibe, Akanbi and Ogunpitan offered vignettes that revealed a man obsessively committed to ideas, allergic to shortcuts, and quietly amused by mediocrity. Ogunpitan, in particular, traced their creative wanderings from the late 1980s, when budgets were slim, ambition was fat, and artistry was fuelled by sheer stubborn belief.

Then there was Uncle Jimi's note, which landed like a masterclass in institutional generosity and creative audacity. Nebo, it turns out, once dragged both a producer and a Nestlé representative to the office of a Permanent Secretary because he believed – no, knew – that Odumosu should direct Sokoyokoto, a soar-away successful must-watch for foodies. That insistence yielded

not just success, but spin-offs in Igbo and Hausa. He designed the LTV/LWT news set for free when funds were scarce, because the work mattered more than the invoice. In an industry now obsessed with rates and riders, that anecdote felt almost subversive. "Pat was the very best," Odumosu wrote, reminding us that Nebo was thoroughly educated in filmmaking, not merely in production design. Specialist, yes; narrow, never.

Perhaps the most fitting description of Pat Nebo is this paradox: you see his work best when you do not see it at all. When a film promises you 1976, you expect the weight of military boots, the right camouflage, the correct posture of authority. When it offers you the eve of Independence, you demand fabrics, colours, architecture and atmospheres that smell faintly of history. Nebo delivered these not as decorative flourishes but as narrative anchors. Films soared or stumbled depending on their fidelity to such details, and Nebo was the quiet custodian of that fidelity long before "Nollywood" became a benchmark brand.

That is why his name recurs, almost ritually, in the credits of Nigeria's most discerning filmmakers: Tunde Kelani, Tade Ogidan, Kunle Afolayan, Omoni Oboli, Izu Ojukwu. From Ti Oluwa Ni Ile to October 1, from Diamond Ring to The CEO, from '76 to Mokalik, Nebo's hand is present like a signature woven into fabric rather than scrawled across the canvas. Ogidan's recollection of Hostages remains the stuff of legend (as captured in my 2021 book, *Reflections*): a rented flat

transformed repeatedly into police stations, prison cells, parlours and offices, walls repainted, dirt added and erased, landlords placated with promises of restoration. The only untouched space, apparently, was Ogidan's bedroom – curtains sacrificed on the altar of budgetary priorities. Nigerian filmmaking, ladies and gentlemen, in its most honest form.

In 1986, Nebo took the brave, unfashionable step of leaving the security of NTA to embrace the uncertainty of independent practice. The rest, as they say too easily, is history – but it is a history written in sets, textures, and worlds that convinced audiences to suspend disbelief. Twice, just twice, age or mischief tempted him in front of the camera: as a marriage registrar in *The Figurine* and as Colonel Aliu in '76. Even then, he seemed amused by the novelty, like a magician briefly stepping into his own trick.

Yemi Shodimu closed that radio tribute by reminding us of the woman who stood beside Nebo to the end, bearing the quiet weight of genius with grace. It was a necessary reminder that behind every towering creative figure is often an unsung stabiliser, ensuring that brilliance does not tip into chaos.

Pat Nebo is gone, but his colours remain stubbornly alive. In every convincingly aged wall, every authentic costume, every space that feels lived-in rather than dressed-up, his spirit lingers. Giants do fall, yes – but in Nebo's case, the echo is not a crash. It is the soft, satisfied sigh of a job impeccably done.

## Carter Efe lied, we had sex some days ago -Emmanuella

**E**mmanuella, the baby mama of skit maker Carter Efe, has responded to the streamer's claims that she frustrated his life. She noted that Carter Efe's claims that he has not had sex since they separated for close to one year, is a lie because they had one just three days ago.

Her words: "Honestly I never knew there would be a day like this, sitting in front of camera to talk about my private life?"

"It's well, sadly, this is my reality, I have seen everything Carter posted about us. However, the way he posted it was weird because we were literally together 3 days ago and we had it. We have a baby together and for you to cater for your child, I will have to come to you before you can give me money even though we aren't together anymore like you claim"

She claimed that Carter Efe killed her dream of becoming an actress nor can she work in the hospital because he be-

lieves she will sleep with the doctors.

She explains more: "You stopped me from working, I've always wanted to become an actress but Carter doesn't want that, I had to kill that dream. I can't even work at the hospital because he said, I would sleep with the doctors at the hospital."

"This same person blocked all my female friends because he knows I would confide in them. Going ahead to post a video of my female friend's brother is crazy and if people try to contact me, he blocks it. He made sure I kept my family away. Honestly, when I saw his post about me, I was shocked."

"He called me this morning and told me he was about to post something calling me a prostitute and that he would make sure I don't ever post myself ever again. Since he was the one that gave me the platform, he would also take the platform from me, God knows everything", she lamented

## Seven years after my arm amputation, life has been fair to me - Oluchi Mary (Digital creator)



**O**sabouhien Oluchi Mary, a digital content creator and influencer, took a retrospect of how she became a left arm amputee.

The mother of three said, it's seven years since she lost her arm due to strange ailment. The influencer said when she was amputated, she thought that was the end of her life. She felt that people will now see her differently and what she thought was to get an apartment and stay on her own and wait for anything that comes her way.

She said: "I became a full amputee. By full, I mean I had already lost half of my palm before the rest was finally removed."

"How time flies. In a few days, it will be exactly 7 years of navigating life left-handedly."

"Who would have thought I would be here? After the amputation, I truly felt people wouldn't see me as me again. I had already prepared my mind for that reality."

"My only plan then was simple: get a small apartment, start anything at all,

## Thank you for taking care of me - Simi tells Adekunle Gold

**S**inger Simisola Bolatito Kosoko aka Simi, has penned a heartfelt emotional message for her husband Adekunle Gold, as they celebrate their seven years of marriage.

The singer said, she is grateful and happy to marry someone like him. Simi remembered being asked by someone why she chose to marry Adekunle. She also thanked him for the joy and peace of heart he gives her.

Simi said: "You're still the one. I'm grateful for the joy and peace you bring to my life. I remember when we

were still dating and a friend asked me, 'why him?' I said 'we just fit'. We still fit."

"You see me. You're mindful of me. You love me. You know I'm not a gentle lady. I'm a fighter, but thank you for not letting me have to fight to be seen and loved. Thank you for being a good man, because those are hard to come by."

"Thank you for taking care of me. Thank you for being worth the sacrifice it takes to be a wife and a mommy. I love you. Husband of my youth."



## Jesus doesn't care about my tattoos - Tonto Dikeh

**N**ollywood actress Tonto Dikeh has shared her decision not to remove the tattoos on her body, even after committing herself again to her Christian faith.

Since reconnecting with her faith, Tonto has been open about her spiritual journey, sharing videos of her prayers and speaking in tongues, showing the changes in her life.

During an interaction with a fan online, she was asked if she would consider removing her tattoos now that she has renewed her faith.

Tonto explained that although she once thought about removing them, she does not want to risk harming her skin with laser procedures.

She added that her spiritual beliefs do not require her to erase the tattoos,



stating that her faith is not affected by the ink on her body.

"Mama, if it was possible to take off tattoos, would you have taken yours off?" the fan asked.

"Yes, love, I would have, but I'm stuck with them and I ain't doing no laser to

spoil my good skin. And the good thing is Jesus don't care," she responded.

The mother of one also recently announced that she will be more careful about the people and brands she works with this year.

She stated that respect is

essential and that she will not promote or support anyone who shows hostility or disrespect toward her, her faith, or her spiritual leaders.

Dikeh also said that she will avoid being part of projects or collaborations that do not value her contributions or protect her work.

## Blessing CEO attacks Phyna for calling VDM, a 'dirty boy'



**R**elationship therapist Blessing Okoro, popularly known as Blessing CEO, has told reality TV star and actress Phyna, to shut her mouth before she will start the year with her. Blessing told Phyna to go straight to her senior colleague Iyabo Ojo and apologize to her if she has offended the veteran actress, instead of using social activist, Very Dark Man as an excuse.

"Will u shat up before I use you open this new year."

"Shat up. Apologies to Aunty Iyabo Ojo, if u want too and stop using VDM to manipulate", she said.

Blessing was responding to Phyna's allegation that because of her association with VDM, Iyabo Ojo, has stopped following her

on the social media or commenting on her post. Phyna in her explanation tagged VDM as "dirty boy"

Phyna said: "I feel Mama doesn't like me that much anymore because before, she used to comment on my posts and like them. Now, she no longer does, she's no longer following me and I'm very sure it's because of that dirty boy. I even went as far as confronting Vee Iye because of that dirty boy."

Phyna had asked for VDM's help after her late sister, had a terrible accident with one of Dangote's trucks.

Phyna said the issue concerning her sister, affected her relationships with others as well, and this also caused tension. It also led her to confront fellow reality TV star Vee, online.

# VICTORY APARTMENT



## FACILITES & SERVICES

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



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

**BOOK NOW**  
**+234(0)9166622224**  
[victoryapartment647@gmail.com](mailto:victoryapartment647@gmail.com)

# Industrial Harmony as a Catalyst for Nigeria's Health Renaissance



The struggle between two critical pillars among the four factors of production—labour and entrepreneurship or leadership—is a historical constant. Across centuries, labour and leadership have repeatedly found themselves in cycles of disagreement and contestation.

In the health sector, particularly over the past 50 years, labour–management disharmony has been a recurring global phenomenon. Notable examples include the United Kingdom's Consultants' and Junior Doctors' strikes of 1975; Canada's Ontario Doctors' Strike of 1986; and the United States' California Physicians' Strike of 1975, among others.

More recently, crippling labour actions have occurred even in some of the world's most advanced healthcare systems. In 2023, the United Kingdom experienced the largest strike in the history of the National Health Service, involving nurses and ambulance workers. In October 2023, more than 40,000 Kaiser Permanente workers across four U.S. states embarked on a major strike. Overall, over 75,000 healthcare workers—including EMTs, nursing assistants, and pharmacists—participated across multiple states to protest wages and staffing levels. Similarly, nurses' strikes have persisted in New York City over stalled contract negotiations.

These examples illustrate that labour–management conflict is not a discriminatory phenomenon; it is a global reality. The contrast becomes even more striking when healthcare spending in these countries is compared with Nigeria's. For instance, the United States spends over \$12,000 per person on healthcare, the United Kingdom

about \$6,700 per person, while Nigeria spends approximately \$90–\$100 per person.

Yet, despite this stark disparity in health expenditure, Nigeria is steadily building a more robust and resilient healthcare system, undergirded by improved infrastructure and an expanding pool of skilled manpower.

Under the Health Sector Renewal Initiative, several landmark programmes and reforms have been introduced. Primary and secondary healthcare facilities have been rehabilitated; strategic agreements to promote local pharmaceutical manufacturing have been signed; thousands of health workers have been trained and others newly recruited; and health infrastructure has received significant upgrades, including the establishment of new top-tier cancer centres across the geo-political zones. Hospitals have been revamped, and multiple turnaround policies have been implemented.

Nationwide, over 60,000 health workers have been trained, enhancing both confidence and quality of care delivery.

In parallel, the federal government has taken critical steps to improve labour relations within the health sector. A new hazard allowance for all health workers is currently being processed, while more than 10 billion owed under the 2025 Medical Residency Training Fund has been paid in recent months.

Furthermore, the government is institutionalising salary relativity adjustments demanded by health unions for CONHESS-aligned workers and CONMESS-aligned doctors. It has also fully paid the seven months' arrears of the 25%/35% CONMESS adjustment, aside from minor omissions and bank-related errors

that are already being addressed. Additionally, the 2024 accoutrement allowance for medical officers has been fully disbursed.

Recognising the critical importance of manpower, the Federal Ministry of Health and Social Welfare has granted more than 23,000 recruitment waivers for health professionals in federal hospitals. To further retain specialised skills, strengthen manpower capacity, and ensure employment security, the federal government has approved an upward review of the retirement age for skilled clinical health professionals in federal tertiary hospitals and centres—from 60 to 65 years of age, or from 35 to 40 years of service, whichever comes first.

It is important to emphasise that under the Tinubu administration, the 2024–2025 period heralded a historic pivot of our health sector towards a more self-reliant and industrialised system.

Despite the obvious challenges, Nigeria's health sector continues to make significant progress and is considered a high-potential frontier among emerging peers like Brazil and Indonesia, principally owing to the strategic reforms that have resulted in over \$2.2 billion in investment commitments as of late 2025.

Recently, Nigeria and Brazil signed a Memorandum of Understanding to strengthen local pharmaceutical manufacturing and industrial cooperation. The MoU was signed by the Presidential Initiative for Unlocking the Healthcare Value Chain (PVAC), EMS Brazil, and Oaks Medical Limited.

This MoU is one of over 20 that PVAC has recently signed with world-class companies to implement impactful projects.

Under PVAC, \$1 billion in investment-guarantor financing has been secured from AFREX-IMBANK, while the European Investment Bank's Human Development Accelerator (HDX) is also providing a €1 billion pool for investments in the health sector.

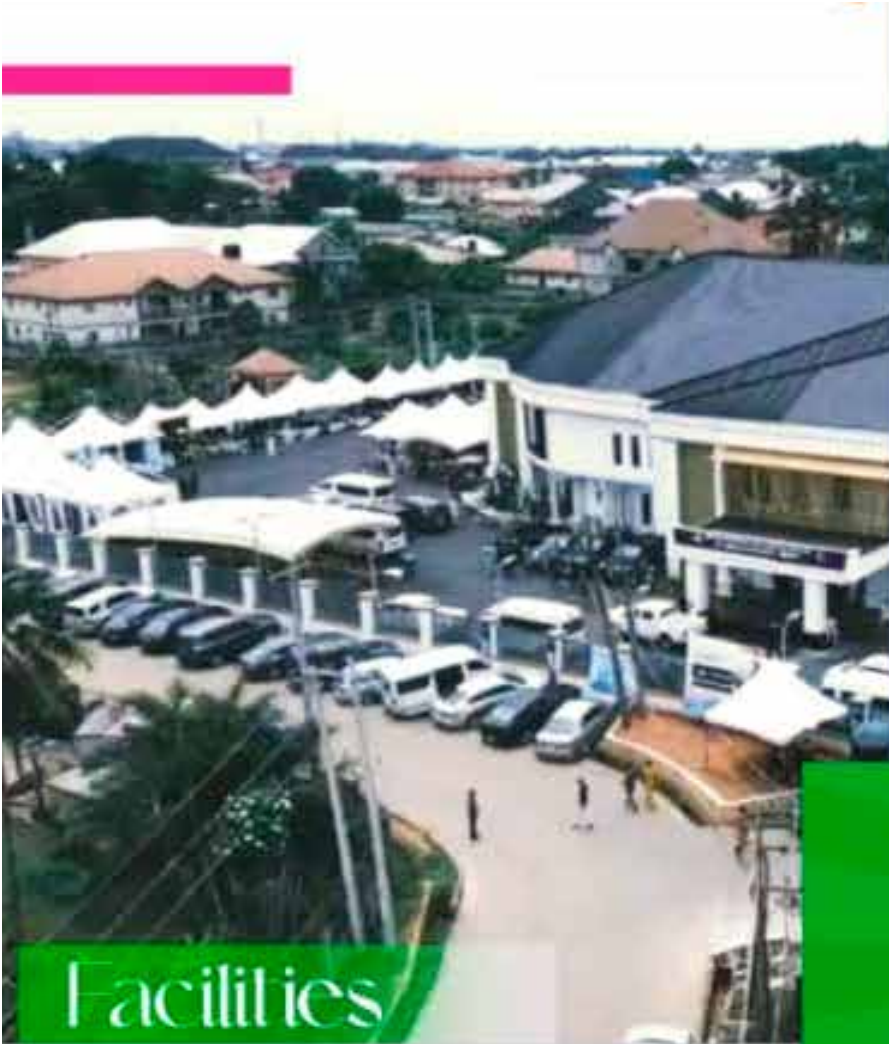
With PVAC as the driving force, 84 new healthcare companies are in active discussions with international financiers for support in implementing various manufacturing and related investment projects.

According to the latest data released by the Central Bank of Nigeria, Nigeria's spending on medical tourism recorded a significant decline to 96.2% in the first half of 2025 compared to the same period in 2024. This further affirms the impact of the Tinubu administration's reforms and the return of confidence in Nigeria's health sector.

Evidently, Nigeria while improving infrastructure and healthcare delivery is also making deliberate and bold efforts to improve the welfare of health professionals nationwide, in addition to strengthening government–labour relations.

Constructive and disciplined engagement—not militant actions or “japa”—remains the most viable path forward for labour and government in the health sector. There is more to gain in dialogue than in confrontation. Nigeria's health sector is ours to build, and we must do so with patriotism, dedication, and a clear understanding that no system anywhere in the world is perfect. Through harmony, dialogue, and constructive engagement, however, excellence remains an attainable goal.

–Igbemudia writes from Abuja.



# Cathelea

CONVENTION AND EVENTS


**4000 CAPACITY AND MOST FRIENDLY ENVIRONMENT FOR GUESTS EXPERIENCE!**


## Facilities

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



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

 +2348136266924

 catheleaconvention@gmail.com

## My theatre background prepared me for success as OAP - Yaw

Steve Onu popularly known as Yaw is a multi-faceted entertainer with over 20 years' experience spanning: acting, comedy, stage production, film production, broadcasting and event management.

The multi-award-winning broadcaster bared his mind on a number of issues concerning the entertainment industry in this exclusive interview with ORJI ONYEKWERE.

### What of Sparadise, the TV series you produced for Star Times?

Sparadise was in partnership with Star Times. After the first edition, we tried to reach an agreement based on the current realities of the country but it did not work out. We decided to put it on hold for a while to hear what they will say because the economy is not helping anybody at all but they refused to shift.

If it was an individual thing, it could have been a different thing. For instance, if I tell you to do this for me and what I have for you is 1000 and you agree to it, it's a different case. But if I tell you, bring all your guys and what I have for you is 1000, you may agree but your guys may not. Notwithstanding, we're still working on it, but if it doesn't work, we will move on.

### Since you graduated from LASU, have you done any collaboration with any former member of your theatre group in LASU, that's the 'Optimum Consortium'?

You know it's not easy to do theatre or do just theatre alone. One of them called me recently for a stage play that they want to do some time in June. We still collaborate from time to time but most of us are not into films. When we do find time, we still go back to theatre.

### How difficult was it to transit from the theatre to radio broadcasting and becoming a radio OAP?

If you are a trained actor, you must be able to do everything. You can be anything you want to be: a doctor, lawyer, armed robber, engineer etc and you can transit into any character. There is nothing difficult about transitioning to an OAP aside that you know how to do your job and do it well.

Theatre also helps to emboldened you because as a theatre person, you are open to a lot of things. So, when I started; a lot of people didn't know much, they thought I was an old person, some thought I was young. I think my being good with my job on air, theatre has a very good role to play.

### We don't appreciate stage plays in this part of the world, what are you doing differently to draw that interest to stage plays?

We must learn to flow with the tide. Give it to Bolanle Austin Peters and the other people that are still organising stage plays. You must learn to adapt to the current reality of digitalization. A typical Nigerian budget and wants to see value for money. Gone are those days we stage long plays.

The attention span of people is getting shorter. People are thinking of how to make money and also remember that nowhere is safe again. You can't go out to watch plays for long. So there are so many things that are affecting the stage play industry. Gone are those days you go out at night to watch plays. It's not easy now.

Now you have to use some celebrities to market your stage plays if truly you want to have a sold out stage play. I mean those that have made their mark on TV, theater or other aspects of entertainment. These are the people you must feature in your play so that it will sell because that's what the people want to see. Have it at the back of your mind that the shorter the play, the better because people don't have that patience for long drama.

### In the BBC drama series 'Story Story', you played the character Ejike, a troublesome young man. Give us more insight into that character?

As a trained thespian, you must be able to



do everything. That experience was a huge help for me. The transition was just seamless; it was just easy for me to play. I remember the director then, Akeem, a British Nigerian told me to feel free to do whatever I am comfortable doing. How will the average troublesome igbo man behave? They gave us that freedom and also asked us to give the character life. Like my lecturers in school will always say, 'when God created man, he now breathe life into man and gave him soul. That's the way scripts are, when the writer creates a character, you must give it life by bringing yourself into it. That's the way it was for me.

### One embarrassing moment?

Those things happened in the course of the work.

All those things happen a lot. You meet people on the road because of my role on 'Flatmates', they will look at me and say, "are you not the same guy on Flatmates, so you can speak very well, even the clothes you are wearing. However, I don't think it's embarrassing. I think it's part of the job, you execute your character well that people now believe it's part of you.

### What of the lady that pulled down her clothes?

That was a long time ago. She tattooed my name on her body and she came to the radio station. I don't know anything about her. All those just happened, for me; it's nothing because they are history now and we are focused on other things. Everyone is looking for money now.

### Let's look at some of the backlash from the media. Can you recall one or two that really touched you?

I think they write some of those things just to sell. If I know you one on one and

read what you have written, I will meet with you and tell you that what you wrote is very wrong. I have seen one or two, and I tell them, 'my brother you should have asked. Aside that, in Nigeria, stories don't last more than two weeks. One or two weeks and we move. People have written things about other people and it did not last more than a week. We don't dwell on the past, is it putting food on my table?

I remember someone asked you if you will establish your own radio station. You were not comfortable with that question.

Radio stations are no longer making money they were making then. We have other platforms. You must move with the times.

### You always call your mother 'Abada'. Why are you passionate about that name?

I am from Awka in Anambra State and we call people by their nick names. That's the name we call her. But bear in mind the love between mother and child is very strong. You cannot rule that out. When the father is not around, the mother toughens up and these are some of the things that sharpened me.

So, my story is not different from any other person. I still talked about her on radio today because if you remember certain things, though now we laugh over them. Growing up was not funny, however, being on radio and sharing those experiences on radio flows better with some people. People will understand you better when you are talking on radio because you talk about issues that are relatable.

That helps your radio show and helps me as an actor on TV because by the time you are talking to people and bringing real life situations, they see reason with you and understand the situation and that's what makes me who I am.

### You started professional as an actor

### In 1995. You have featured in one of the longest running TV series Flatmates. What has changed between when you started and now?

Once money is being pumped into the industry everything will improve. Thank God for the likes of Netflix, Amazon, Showmax. These organizations have done a lot for the industry. Actors now earn better and script writers will go out of their way to write quality scripts. Why some script writers don't write certain things in their stories is because as a producer, if they write where car exploded, where am I going to see money that will buy a car that would be exploded or a car that will be destroyed.

Some of these things limit the script writer from the beginning. Even if the writer wants to write how they burnt down the house, the producer will ask, with which money? Because you know that when you do such, Netflix will evaluate your movie and say wao, you really burnt a house, your story line is beautiful. Your acting is on point; they will pay for it because they see value in what you have given to them.

Back then, we tried with no government support but when these movie companies now came you will not be scared to spend the money. If I come to you and say I want to shoot a movie with 300m and I have done my estimation and budget analysis with Netflix and they said once I finish they will buy. If you have the 300m, you will give me because you know Netflix has agreed to bankroll it. So, if I want to burn down a full house; I will do that with pleasure because it will be paid for.

Flatmates is better than what it was before because we were using one camcorder to shoot but now we use three camcorders and we try to straighten the story line to align with the current realities

# Fubara, to Go or Not.....



Rivers State is back in the news again, and as usual, not for anything pleasant. Nigerians thought that having been out of office for six months, that as soon as the Rivers State Executive and Legislature resumed work in September 2025, they would hit the ground running. Alas, we were wrong.

### Notice of Allegations Against Governor Fubara and Deputy Governor Odu

Last week, on January 8, 2026 to be precise, the Rivers State House of Assembly (RSHA) commenced removal proceedings against the State Governor, Siminalayi Fubara and his Deputy, Professor Ngozi Odu, in accordance to Section 188 of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (as amended)(the Constitution). It appears that there are allegations of gross misconduct against them, such as budgetary impropriety, failure to present the 2026 Budget Appropriation Bill, alleged extra-budgetary expenditure without approval from the RSHA, and financial neglect of the RSHA and Rivers State Judiciary. It is unclear whether the accusation of unlawfully demolishing the RSHA Complex against Governor Fubara, which may amount to an act of terrorism (destruction of a Government Facility), is among the new allegations – see the definition of Terrorism in the Terrorism (Prevention and Prohibition) Act 2022 (TPPA).

### Highly Inflammable Governor

Governor Fubara appears to be a person, whom we describe in Yoruba, as one who people want to set fire to, but, strangely, assists the ignition process by rubbing petrol on his body, thereby making himself highly inflammable, instead of perhaps, sitting in a pool of water to make himself non-flammable. On 17/3/2025, a Notice of 5 Allegations was submitted by 26 RSHA Members against Governor Fubara; therefore, he shouldn't have created any avenue for history to repeat itself, particularly as the Supreme Court had declared in a 2024 case, that Rivers State had had no government at the time. For one, over three months after resumption, the key Ministries in Rivers State, such as Justice, Finance, and Education are said not to have Commissioners.

In *Borishade v NBN 2007 1 N.W.L.R. Part 1015 Page 217 at 241* per Monica Dongban-Mensem, JCA (now PCA), the Court of Appeal noted that “there has been no clear

definition under the law of this nation, as to what constitutes a misconduct”. In *Hon. Muiyiwa Inakoju & 17 Ors v Hon. Abraham Adeleke & 3 Ors (2002) LPELR-1510 (SC)* per Dahiru Musdapher, JSC, the Supreme Court gave the statutory definition of gross misconduct as “a grave violation or breach of the provisions of this Constitution, or a misconduct of such a nature as amounts to, in the opinion in the House of Assembly, gross misconduct”. The Apex Court per Niki Tobi, JSC went on to define “gross” in this context as “atrocious, colossal, deplorable, disgusting, dreadful, enormous, gigantic, grave, heinous, outrageous, odious and shocking”. It is clear that breaching the provisions of the Constitution, could be gross misconduct. For instance, a public official breaching the Code of Conduct, or withdrawal of monies from public funds without approval of the State House of Assembly (see Sections 209 & 120(3) & (4) of the Constitution). Governor Fubara stands accused of the latter.

A notice of removal containing allegations of misconduct, signed by at least one-third of RSHA Members, was presented to the Speaker of the RSHA. Governor Fubara and Professor Odu, obviously have a right to defend themselves against the allegations. But, whether they respond or not, within 14 days of presentation of the allegations to the Speaker, a resolution of a motion of whether or not to investigate the allegations, must be passed. The resolution to investigate must be passed by at least a two-thirds majority of the RSHA, and within seven days of this, the Chief Judge of Rivers State, upon the request of the RSHA Speaker, shall appoint a Panel of seven persons to investigate the allegations, and report its findings within three months – see Section 188(2)-(7) of the Constitution. Where the allegations remain unproven, no further removal proceedings in the matter shall continue.

But, in 2019, in the case of former Deputy Governor of Kogi State, Mr Simeon Achuba, the then Chief Judge of Kogi State, Hon. Justice Nasiru Ajanah, instituted a Panel to investigate the allegations levelled against Mr Achuba. Though the findings of the Panel were that the allegations of misconduct against Mr Achuba were unproven, the Kogi State House of Assembly (KSHA) still went ahead to remove Mr Achuba, in breach of Section 188(8) of the Constitution. See

*AG Kogi State & Ors v Achuba & Ors (2024) LPSLR-61940 (CA); Kogi State House of Assembly & Ors v Achuba & Ors (2024) LPELR-61938(CA).*

On the other hand, if the allegations of misconduct are proven, within 14 days of receipt of the report, the report is adopted by a motion of at least two-thirds of the House of Assembly, and the Governor and/or Deputy shall stand removed on the date of the adoption of the report – see Section 188(9) of the Constitution.

However, Section 188(10) of the Constitution which seeks to oust the jurisdiction of the courts from the proceedings of the Panel or the House of Assembly in the removal of a Governor or Deputy, appears to be unconstitutional, as it goes against the rules of natural justice, the right to fair hearing enshrined in Section 36(1) of the Constitution, and Section 6(6)(b) of the Constitution which gives the courts the powers to adjudicate on all matters except those mentioned in Section 6(6)(c) of the Constitution, that is, the Fundamental Objectives and Directive Principles of State Policy, which such removal proceedings are not a part of. In the case of *Hon. Muiyiwa Inakoju & 17 Ors v Hon. Abraham Adeleke & 3 Ors (Supra)* per Sunday Akinola Akintan, JSC, Governor Ladoja was restored to his position as Governor of Oyo State, on the ground that the process that led to his removal was faulty. It is trite that the removal process set out in Section 188, must be followed to the letter, if not, it can be challenged. In *Hon. Muiyiwa Inakoju & 17 Ors v Hon. Abraham Adeleke & 3 Ors (Supra)* for example, there were eight infractions that were cited in Governor Ladoja's removal process, including Legislators sitting at D'Rovans Hotel instead of the House of Assembly to deliberate on the removal, and instead of sending the notice of the allegations to the Speaker of the Oyo State House of Assembly, publishing it in the newspapers (see Section 188(2)(a) & (b) of the Constitution).

Let's wait and see, how the Fubara/Odu removal matter plays out. Will the RSHA complete the removal process, or are they just grandstanding? Only time will tell.

Agreement Not to Seek a Second Term Sections 180(1)(a), (2) & 182(1)(b) provide unequivocally, that a Governor holds office until his successor is sworn in, that a term of

office is four years, and a candidate cannot serve for more than two terms, that is, eight years. This is what the Constitution recognises. The Constitution doesn't recognise any term elongation beyond two terms in office, or a third term to be served vicariously through a successor-in-office. Therefore, any predecessor-in-office (to do his/her bidding), does so at their own peril, as there is no law to support this action.

Consequent upon the foregoing, any agreement that a candidate who has only served one term mustn't seek a second term, is against public policy, unconstitutional, null and void ab initio and unenforceable, unless of course such Governor is found to be suffering from any of the impediments listed in Section 182 of the Constitution that disqualifies him/her from running (also see Section 1(1) & (3) of the Constitution). Such agreement is inconsistent with Section 182(1)(b) of the Constitution. See *Fasel Services Ltd & Anor v NPA & Anor (2009) LPELR-1245(SC)* per Mahmoud Mohammed, JSC on the non-enforceability of illegal contracts.

The only way to ensure that such a candidate doesn't get a second term, is either to support a stronger aspirant that will secure the party ticket at the primaries, or, if the unwanted candidate is still able to secure the party ticket, support another candidate against the unwanted candidate during the election. This latter option was adopted by the then 'G5 PDP Governors' who decided not to support former Vice President, Alhaji Abubakar Atiku, GCON, the PDP Presidential candidate in the 2023 election. They supported APC's President Bola Tinubu, GCFR instead, and he won the election.

### Conclusion

It is unfortunate that all the trouble in Rivers State, has absolutely nothing to do with the betterment of the welfare of the people (see Section 14(2)(b) of the Constitution). It is about a scramble for power, control and State funds! From where we are sitting, we can see that the only person so far, that will certainly gain from the war, is President Bola Tinubu, GCFR, as the two opposing sides, even though they are not in any type of alliance, have pledged their allegiance to the President's second term bid, and are eager to outdo themselves on who will deliver victory to him in Rivers State!

*Reception*  
*in loving*  
*Memory of*



.....  
 Air Vice Marshal (Rtd)

*Terry Okorodudu*  
 AVM, DSS, FWC, PSC(+), MSc.

*Our beloved friend, husband,  
 father, grand-father*

*Reception*

*Main Hall,  
 Armed Forces Officers' Mess  
 (Immediately after Lungi Barracks Cemetary)  
 Abuja, Nigeria*

*10th January, 2026 at 1400 hours.*

**RSVP**

Mr Bube Okorodudu - 08055555655  
 Group Captain Nnoruku (rtd) - 08034549031  
 Air Cdre Sanni Zakari (rtd) - 08025112615  
 Dr Anthony Luka Elumelu - 07041001613

# Taxing Poverty: When Policy Becomes Punishment



There is a Nigerian proverb that says when the soup is tasteless, the salt should not be blamed alone. Today's economic soup is not just tasteless; it is thin, bitter, and served in broken bowls. Yet, at this exact moment, the President Bola Ahmed Tinubu administration has chosen to add a new ingredient: a hydra-headed tax regime whose stated intention is fiscal responsibility, but whose practical effect is to chase the poor into a shrinking corner.

Let us begin from ground level, not from air-conditioned conference rooms in Abuja.

Joe is not an abstraction. He is real – and his story, originally shared by policy analyst Emmanuel Orjih, is painfully familiar across Nigeria. The young man earns 75,000 a month, lives modestly, feeds sparingly, and dreams cautiously. He is the gateman who is also a gardener. The shop assistant who is also a student. The village nephew who keeps a house from collapsing into weeds. He is unmarried, lives rent-free in a village house, tends a garden, and keeps a human presence where abandonment would otherwise reign. Policy rarely sees Joe, but Joe will feel policy – first, hardest, and longest.

The official assurance is that the poor are protected. Arithmetic, however, has no respect for press statements. At a recent tax explainer session with senior officials of the Federal Inland Revenue Service, Orjih posed a simple question: would Joe pay tax under the new regime? The initial answer was no. But when the officials were invited to walk through their own framework – line by line, deduction by deduction – the mathematics betrayed the reassurance.

Once the imaginary reliefs were stripped away and only what Joe actually qualifies for was retained, the picture changed. Pension contributions shaved off a modest amount, leaving him with a taxable income of about

69,000 a month. That figure places him squarely within the new tax bracket. The officials reportedly reversed themselves. Quietly. Reluctantly. Joe, they conceded, would pay tax.

That moment matters. Because when Joe becomes taxable, a line is crossed. Nigeria's poor enter the tax net.

Let us clear the fog. Poverty is not a sentiment; it is a metric. By the World Bank's poverty threshold for lower-middle-income countries, anyone earning below roughly 190,000 a month in Nigeria is classified as poor. By that yardstick, Joe is not "almost poor" or "temporarily strained". He is poor – unmistakably so. If the state taxes him, then the state is taxing poverty. No press release can negotiate with arithmetic. No rhetorical gymnastics can reverse that conclusion.

We are told this is about "widening the tax base". Fine words. Neutral words. Technocratic words. But words, like fishing nets, must land somewhere. Nigeria's wealthy are already inside the tax net – at least on paper. If the net is widening, it can only stretch downward. It will not catch goats already in the pen. It will catch the barefoot child running past.

And so Nigerians are entitled to ask an uncomfortable question: to what end?

We have seen money before. Plenty of it. Budgets passed with ceremony. Loans collected with speed. Fuel subsidy "savings" announced with drumrolls. Oil revenues sold forward. VAT raised, widened, normalised. Loot recovered and displayed. Internally generated revenue flowing daily like a stubborn tap. Development funds received with smiles and communiqués.

Yet, here we are. Electricity largely remains a private arrangement between citizens and generators. Water is a personal project. Security is outsourced to prayer

warriors, vigilantes, and luck. Healthcare is a gamble; education is a luxury. Roads are commissioned more often than they are completed. Poverty is not retreating; it is advancing.

Wisdom, not cynicism, demands that governments be judged by patterns, not promises. If previous pools of public money did not translate into public relief, why should money squeezed from Joe's already thin wallet perform a miracle?

Economics, too, has its own stubborn truths. Raising taxes is not sinful. Timing, however, can turn policy into punishment. When inflation is high, taxes eat purchasing power. When real wages are falling, taxes deepen desperation. When unemployment is rising and informality dominates, taxation pushes survival further underground. When safety nets are weak, taxation becomes naked extraction.

Nigeria today is not suffering one of these conditions. It is suffering ALL of them at once. To ignore this is not reform; it is recklessness.

In such circumstances, orthodox economics – not ideology – advises restraint. Stabilise prices first. Support incomes. Grow the economy. Protect the vulnerable. Build administrative capacity. Then, and only then, broaden taxation fairly. Reverse the sequence, and you do not raise sustainable revenue; you shrink trust, encourage evasion, and harden poverty.

The cruel irony is that the same poor being asked to "contribute" already self-provide what taxes should ordinarily supply. They pay for power in diesel. For water in sachets. For security in contributions. For education in school fees. For healthcare in cash and hope. Now they are asked to pay again, this time directly to a state whose presence they mostly encounter through

demand notices.

Naturally, suspicion follows. Is this rush to tax about efficiency, or about sustaining an expensive political culture? When convoys grow longer while stomachs grow emptier, when allowances expand while classrooms collapse, when public-funded medical tourism thrives while local hospitals decay, when palliatives travel faster into warehouses than into kitchens, trust evaporates.

This is why the growing resistance to the new tax regime is not rebellion; it is self-preservation. It is not anti-government; it is pro-survival. The poor are not rejecting responsibility; they are demanding fairness, sequencing, and evidence that sacrifice travels upward as well as downward.

Nigeria stands at a crossroads. One road insists that the poor must keep tightening belts that have no more holes. Hunger deepens. Resilience frays. The nation weakens quietly. The other road pauses, reassesses, and fixes leakage before squeezing throats. Families breathe. Survival stabilises. The country regains a fighting chance.

This is not a call to disorder. It is a plea for sense. Citizens can remain within the law by understanding their rights, demanding clarity, and insisting on transparency. Knowledge, not protest, is the first remedy – it's lawful. Questions are legal. Scrutiny is patriotic.

And the simplest question remains the most devastating: if government has been collecting money all this while and your life did not improve, why should this one be different?

In economics, as in life, hope without evidence is not optimism. It is gambling – and it is always the poor who are asked to stake what little they have left.

# NIFT: Mogbolu refreshes Ndokwa Land with historic interschool football tourney

BY TOSIN ADAMS

History was made in Ndokwa, Delta State, on 12th January 2026, as a bold vision translated into reality with the successful hosting of the largest inter-school football tournament ever recorded in the Ndokwa region.

Tagged, Ndokwa Interschool Football Tournament, the landmark event was organised and convened by Mr. Ifeanyi Samson Mogbolu, a rising community leader, youth advocate, and social influencer, under the platform of Big Child Initiative for the Less Privileged.

Abbi Grammar School, Abbi, edged out Ashaka Community School (6-5 via penalty shootout) after a total of forty-eight (48) secondary schools participated in the tournament, making it unprecedented in scale, coordination, and community impact. The competition showcased outstanding youth talent, discipline, unity, and sportsmanship, while setting a new benchmark for grassroots development initiatives in Ndokwa.

With the conclusion of the tournament, a total prize sum of 1,000,000 (One Million Naira) was awarded to the winning team — a strong statement of investm

The tournament reflects Mr. Mogbolu's leadership philosophy, rooted in service, inclusion, youth empowerment, and sustainable development. Conceived as an act of charity

and social responsibility, the its peaceful conduct, massive



initiative leveraged sports as a unifying force to inspire hope, discover talent, and strengthen communal b

Although unavoidably absent in person, Mr. Ifeanyi Samson Mogbolu remained fully present in vision, coordination, and purpose, ensuring effective execution through strategic delegation and community collaboration — a defining quality of modern leadership.

Community leaders and stakeholders present described the event as a historic milestone for Ndokwa, applauding

participation, and enduring social value.

In line with the tournament's objective of talent discovery and youth development, exceptional performances were recognised with Oyeme Joshua and Joseph Bethel clinching the Most Valuable Player and the Best Goalkeeper respectively.

According to Mrs. Esvee Solomon, the project coordinator, plans have been perfected to take the careers of the honoured young players forward.

"These young athletes have emerged as symbols of the

vast potential within Ndokwa Nation and beneficiaries of a platform designed to nurture future champions and leaders. Our President, Ifeanyi Mogbolu has concluded arrangements with former Nigerian soccer international, Ibezito Ogbonna, who graced the finals today to get the boys into good football academies where they can take their dreams to the next level", she said.

The dignitaries present at the event include: Ibezito Ogbonna, (Former Professional football Striker (Israel), Comr. Sagboje Odiri Milton, (CLN, State Chairman, National Youth Council of Nigeria (NYCN), Delta State), Comr. Agarivbie Igho Francis (National President, Global Youth Initiative & Leader, NYCN), Comr. Aduabo Akpo James (Delta Central Vice Chairman, NYCN), Comr. Amb. Eyefia Oliver (Chairman, Police Community Relations Committee (PCRC), Delta State), Comr. Enueme Paul, (Delta North Vice Chairman, NYCN), Comr. Enyabine Ndidi Oscar, Comr Cyril Kokorhaye (Leader, Nigerian Red Cross Society, Delta South), Comrade Mrs. Serah Couple (Leader, National Youth Council of Nigeria (NYCN), Delta South), Hon. Charles Chukwue-meka Emetulu (Member Representing Ndokwa West, Delta State House of Assembly), Chief Patrick Onugbor (Traditional Ruler, Ndokwa Nation) and Ogbuefi Gabriel Egutu, a traditional leaders amongst many others.

## Man City agree deal to sign Palace captain Guehi



Manchester City have agreed a deal in principle to sign Crystal Palace captain Marc Guehi this month.

City started talks to sign the England centre-back, 25, this month following injuries to defenders Josko Gvardiol and Ruben Dias.

Guehi, who has been

linked with some of Europe's top clubs, is out of contract in the summer and was close to a move to Liverpool in the summer.

BBC Sport reported earlier this month that City were exploring a move for Guehi and talks have accelerated in the past 24 hours. Guehi is now expected to

join City on a long-term contract this month.

Personal terms have not been formally agreed but are not expected to be an issue.

City have already signed Antoine Semenyo from Bournemouth in the current transfer window for £62.5m.

'If I had 15 attackers, I'd be happy to have Salah back'

Mohamed Salah will return to Liverpool next week with boss Arne Slot saying he would be pleased to have the forward back even if he had "15 attackers".

For the past month Salah has been on international duty with Egypt at the Africa Cup of Nations (Afcon), but he will head back to Merseyside after Saturday's third-place play-off against Nigeria.

The 33-year-old gave an explosive interview shortly before departing for Afcon, in which he claimed "someone doesn't want me in the club" and that he no longer had any relationship with Slot.

He was subsequently left out of the Liverpool squad for their 1-0 win at Inter Milan but came off the bench to register an assist against Brighton four

days later.

Slot said before the Inter game he had "no clue" if Salah, who has scored 250 goals in 421 appearances for Liverpool, had played his last game for the club, but he is now ready to welcome him back.

"First of all, he needs to play another big game for Egypt on Saturday and then he comes back to us," said Slot.

"I am happy that he comes back. Mo has been so important for this club, for me, so I am happy that he is back.

"Even if I had 15 attackers I still would have been happy if he came back but that is not our current situation."

Liverpool are unbeaten in six games since Salah left for Afcon, winning three, and face Burnley at Anfield on Saturday (15:00 GMT).

## Glasner to leave Palace at end of season

Crystal Palace manager Oliver Glasner has confirmed he will leave the club when his contract expires at the end of the season.

The Austrian, 51, will leave as a Palace legend having led the Eagles to their first major trophy when they beat Manchester City to win the FA Cup last season.

That victory meant Glasner also took charge of Palace in this season's Conference League - their first experience of a major European competition - while they beat Liverpool on penalties in August's Community Shield.

Sources told BBC Sport Glasner was offered a new deal last summer, but he confirmed on Friday he had informed chairman Steve Parish he would not sign a

new contract in October.

The news comes with Palace captain Marc Guehi closing in on a move to Manchester City, although Glasner insisted his exit had nothing to do with transfer decisions.

"A decision has already been taken, months ago. I had a meeting with Steve [Parish] in October, the international break," Glasner said.

"We had a very long talk, and I told him I will not sign a new contract. We agreed at the time it was the best to keep it between us. It's the best that we could do that and keep it confidential for three months.

"But now it's important to have clarity, and we had a very busy schedule so that's why we didn't want to talk about it. Steve and I want the best for Crystal Palace."



## Anthony Joshua returns to gym

Anthony Joshua shared a video of himself boxing for the first time since the tragic car crash that claimed the lives of his two friends.

The former heavyweight world champion was in the car at the time of the accident.

His friends Latif Ayodele and Sina Ghami died in the fatal crash in Nigeria, where Joshua was on holiday.

Joshua, 36, has publicly shared a video of himself boxing for the first time since the horrifying ordeal.

He was seen hitting the pads in the gym with a trainer, and he captioned the video: "Mental strength therapy."

Another clip showed Joshua hard at work on the exercise bike and undergoing a vigorous workout.

There has been plenty of speculation surrounding AJ's future since the terrible accident. His promoter Eddie Hearn believes Joshua will want to return to boxing, but says he will need time to decide.

He said: "I think AJ, as we have seen in the past on boxing-related stuff, is always a brave-face guy, a very positive guy. This is very different to that and I know he will take his time.

"He will need his time physically, mentally, emotionally, spiritually, before he makes a decision on his future. I do think he will want to return to boxing, but that will be his decision when the time is right.

"It is certainly not a conversation I'll be having with him any time soon.

"The only conversation is 'are you OK?' and sometimes we find people will give that facade of being OK, but what happened to him is not normal and heartbreaking for all involved."

Joshua, who made a "miracle recovery" after the crash, paid tribute to his two friends.

He said: "Thank you for all the love and care you have shown my brothers.

"I didn't even realise how special they are. I'll just be walking with them and cracking jokes with them, not even knowing God kept me in the presence of great men.

"100% it's tough for me, but I know it's even tougher for their parents. I have a strong mind, and I believe God knows their hearts.

"May God have mercy on my brothers."

## Tyson Fury wanted for world record

STUNNING plans are in place for the world-record boxing attendance to be smashed – with Tyson Fury wanted to fight on the card.

The current number to beat is 135,132 – set in 1941 at Jumeau Park, Milwaukee when Tony Zale beat Billy Pryor. The group at the heart of the task is upstart promotional company iVisit Boxing and their head honcho Ed Pereira.

Pereira has worked in marketing and logistics in the Premier League, rugby union and more recently boxing.

He helped put together the May 2025 fight card in New York when Times Square was closed down for the likes of Ryan Garcia, Devin Haney and Teofimo Lopez. Now, Pereira is hoping to attract up to 150,000 fans on July 11 when they turn San Francisco's Civic Center Plaza into an open-air boxing space.

The card will be streamed on YouTube with some tickets to be handed out for FREE in an attempt to smash the 85-year-old record.

Pereira told SunSport: "When you are asking 150,000 to 180,000 people to turn up to an event, I think by telling them it's a world record event is the key thing.

"For them they are gonna be part of history. They're gonna be record breaking themselves and then making it enjoyable.

"So the boxing is central but also we're making this a fun festival atmosphere that goes around that.

"I think there's certain things that we've seen that we can just ramp up, so instead of just one act, multiple acts, a fan village,

so instead of a couple of booths, we're talking about a whole fan village.

"So things like that where it becomes experiential, the boxing is key and critical, and we'll put on the biggest names in iconic locations, iconic names in iconic locations, but we also make it an enjoyable experience for the fan."

Plans are already in place with promoters to build the dream fight card worthy of the record-breaking feat – with Fury and Garcia top targets.

Pereira said: "For me, I think the big names at the moment is Tyson Fury. He's back and I think it's for the big events.

"It's something that would suit him down to the ground. Now, who he goes up against is the question, so that's the really interesting question.

"But I think also being in California, we've got to look at a strong Hispanic card. A strong Mexican card is critical.

"So as a co-main event I think we need a really strong Mexican card and strong Mexican boxers if we can.

"I think you've got a really great mix of the Ryan Garcias of the world, which would draw a crowd.

"We saw it in Times Square, his appeal goes across the board and one of the key things that I think is my biggest challenge, which I'm really looking forward to kind of tackle, is the challenge of the general fan.

"It's about bringing it to the guy in the pub who likes to go for a pint and making them engage with it.

## Tinubu hails Super Eagles' resilience, says bronze medal feels 'like gold'

President Bola Tinubu has congratulated the Super Eagles on clinching bronze at the 2025 Africa Cup of Nations (AFCON), praising their unyielding spirit after a heartbreaking semi-final exit.

The Nigerian national team secured third place on Saturday by overpowering seven-time champions Egypt in a tense penalty shootout, following a dominant regular-time performance. This triumph came days after their semi-final penalty loss to hosts Morocco on Wednesday, which dashed hopes of a title.

According to a statement issued by the Special Adviser on Information and Strategy, Bayo Onanuga, President Tinubu lauded the players' determination. "Despite their good run during the



tournament, the Eagles lost the semi-final match to Morocco during the penalty shootout last Wednesday, and our people's hopes of winning the championship were dashed," he said.

"However, our players remained undaunted, and, exhibiting the resilience of the Nigerian spirit, their efforts have now paid off. We will all be proud of them as they receive their hard-

earned bronze medals on Sunday in Rabat, Morocco. Thank you, our gallant Super Eagles. Thank you, our national team players. This bronze medal surely feels as good as gold."

## Police Game: LOC inspects sporting facilities in Asaba ahead 15th BIPOGA



The Local Organising Committee (LOC) constituted ahead the forthcoming 15th Biennial Police Games (BIPOGA 2026), held a two-day strategic conference from Friday, 16th January to Saturday, 17th January 2026, in Asaba, Delta State.

Arising from the conference, the LOC embarked an inspection tour of sporting facilities designated for

the games ahead of the forthcoming Nigeria Police games scheduled to hold from 7th February to 14th February 2026 in Asaba Delta State.

Delta State Police Public Relations Officer SP Bright Edefe, in a statement on Saturday, said that the conference and inspection exercise was led by AIG Fom Pam Joseph, Chairman of the Force Sports Planning Committee.

He said that the conference aimed at fine-tuning operational plans, logistics, and coordination ahead of the commencement of the games.

Edefe said that in attendance at the conference and inspection were senior officers of the Nigeria Police Force, including AIG Suleiman Abdul, CP Dantawaye Miller, CP Hassan Gwani, CP Osifo Emeifele, and the

Commissioner of Police, Delta State Command, CP Aina Adesola, alongside other senior officers and members of the Local Organising Committee.

He said that during the conference, critical issues bordering on venue readiness, security arrangements, accommodation, transportation, medical services, and general logistics were discussed, with emphasis placed on ensuring a seamless and professionally coordinated sporting event.

Following the conference, the Committee embarked on an inspection tour of the various sporting facilities to be utilised for the games, assessing infrastructure, safety standards, logistics, and overall suitability for athletes and officials expected from police commands and formations across the country.

The Local Organising Committee reaffirmed their commitment to delivering a safe, orderly, and successful sporting festival, assuring participants and members of the public that preparations are progressing steadily.

## AFCON: Senegal slam Morocco over 'lack of fair play' ahead of final

The Senegalese Football Federation has expressed strong concerns about how its national football team is being treated in Morocco ahead of Sunday's Africa Cup of Nations final against Morocco.

The federation, known as FSF, issued a statement early Saturday morning criticising an alleged lack of

security arrangements for the team's arrival in Rabat, problems with the team's accommodation, issues with the training facilities, and difficulties in obtaining a fair ticket allocation for its supporters.

It called on the Confederation of African Football (CAF) and the local organizing committee to "immedi-

ately take every corrective measure to guarantee respect for the principles of fair play, equal treatment, and security indispensable for the success of this celebration of African football."

Senegal's players traveled by train from Tangier to Rabat on Friday, but found what the federation said was a "mistake" clear

lack of adequate security measures" upon their arrival.

"This deficiency exposed the players and technical staff to overcrowding and risks incompatible with the standards of a competition of this magnitude and the prestige of a continental final," the federation said.

# Support Our Armed Forces, Gov Diri Urges Corporate Bodies



**G**overnor of Bayelsa State, Senator Douye Diri, has implored corporate organisations and private individuals to lend support to the country's armed forces through contributions and partnerships that would improve their conditions of service.

Senator Diri made the call on Thursday at the 2026 Armed Forces Remembrance Day celebration held at the Peace Park in Yenagoa, the state capital.

The Bayelsa governor, who paid tributes to serving, retired and fallen soldiers for their gallant services in preserving the country's territorial integrity, said the celebration should serve as a renewed act of solidarity and expression of gratitude to the heroes that made sacrifices to protect and unify Nigeria.

His words: "On this day, and every day,

let us ensure we do not forget those whose sacrifices have made peace and safety attainable. We know that behind every medal lies a story of sacrifice. Families who have lost breadwinners; veterans who have had their lives altered in their prime; and many who live with wounds, visible and invisible, that demand our practical compassion as much as our respect.

"The Armed Forces are the bedrock of national security. Without them, the very fabric of our country would be torn apart.

"I am therefore grateful to Mr. President, in his capacity as Commander-in-Chief, and to the senior military leadership for their unremitting efforts to improve conditions of service and the welfare of our gallant soldiers.

"Let me take this opportunity to call on corporate organisations and private

individuals to lend their support to our armed forces. Through your contributions and judicious partnerships, we can ensure that those who hazard so much for our safety are neither overlooked nor forgotten."

Senator Diri assured of his administration's commitment to improving the welfare of the armed forces, which he said was evident in the recent completion and handing over of residential accommodation to the Nigerian Army 16 Brigade at Elebele.

The governor urged the army leadership to also collaborate with his administration on agriculture to boost food security and sustainable livelihoods.

"On Tuesday, I flagged off the dry farming season programme in the state. In that spirit, and following the model of the Ni-

gerian Army Farms and Ranches Limited (NAFARL), I invite the Armed Forces leadership to partner with the Bayelsa State Government in large-scale agricultural endeavours that will bolster food security and promote sustainable livelihoods."

Highpoint of the event was the laying of wreaths at the tomb of the unknown soldier by Senator Diri, Speaker of the State Assembly, Rt. Hon. Abraham Ingobere, the Chief Judge, Justice Matilda Ayemieye, as well as service commanders and a representative of widows of the fallen heroes, Mrs Christina Boroni.

Others who laid wreaths were chairman of the state traditional rulers council, King Bubaraye Dakolo, and the Assistant Commandant General and chairman of the Nigerian Legion, Bayelsa State Council, Chief Baratuaipre Allison-Alanimi.