

Our Nigeria

Out of Many, One (e pluribus unum)

Workers' Day 2025:

"Our Leaders Put People First"-

Ogunbanwo Applauds FMITI Leadership

WIKE:

THE
CAPACITY
MINISTER

"Anambra
is Rising
Because
Solution is
Here"

Dr. Law Mefor

"GOV. UMAR
RADDIA IS
PERFORMING
MAGIC IN
KATSINA

**Electoral Reform, State
Police, and a Vision for
Nigeria's Future**

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FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

In an age of political noise and performative governance, April/May 2025's edition of OurNigeria Magazine stands as both mirror and megaphone—reflecting the complexity of our national experience and amplifying voices that dare to imagine better. From the determined efforts of Senator Abdulaziz Yar'adua to reform electoral participation and military effectiveness, to the grassroots-driven governance seen in Katsina under Governor Dikko Radda, one theme recurs: the need for substance over slogans.

This edition is also timely—coinciding with Workers' Day—a moment when we collectively pause to reflect on the value of leadership and labour. Babatunde Ogunbanwo's tribute to the Ministry of Industry, Trade and Investment leadership is not just a celebration of excellence but a reminder that governance, when done right, creates dignity in public service. The story here is not of grand declarations, but of systems that work—where salaries are paid, staff are heard, and performance is rewarded. This is what Nigeria needs in every ministry and state.

In one of our lead stories, we revisit the legacy of Alhaji Atiku Abubakar, characterising him as “the President Nigeria never had.” Whether or not one agrees with his politics, the facts speak for themselves—here is a man whose policy blueprint has long aligned with structural reform, economic liberalisation, and federalism that works. In an era craving competence, perhaps it is time we stopped voting based on populism and started voting for those who are prepared. 2027 beckons, and our choices will either preserve this fragile union or compound our national confusion.

Further afield, our coverage of the DRC crisis, penned with historical depth by Dr. MS Abubakar, reminds us of the long shadows cast by colonial maps. The geopolitical chaos unfolding in Central Africa is more than a Rwandan-Congolese affair—it is a cautionary tale about what happens when identity, territory, and power are manipulated by greed. For Nigeria, currently battling its own insecurity across multiple fronts, the lesson is urgent: there can be no development without peace, and no peace without justice rooted in history.

Meanwhile, Wike's performance in the FCT offers a study

in contrast. Whether one agrees with his politics or not, there is no denying that Abuja has not seen this kind of developmental momentum in over a decade. Roads are being fixed, bureaucratic bottlenecks are being dismantled, and satellite towns are finally catching the attention of the centre. While we should be cautious of hero-worship, we must also acknowledge performance when we see it. Wike's example should not be an exception—it should be the benchmark.

In this month's edition, the voices of the people ring out clearly. From local governance in Katsina to youth policy reform in the proposed National Youth Conference, the call is the same: involve us, equip us, trust us. Nigeria's strength lies not in oil or politics, but in its people—young, resilient, and eager to shape their destiny. If our leadership can channel this energy into productivity instead of polarisation, Nigeria will rise.

But let us be clear-eyed. Hope without action is sentiment. The time for rhetoric has long passed. Nigerians are tired of slogans. What we need now are deliverables—education that empowers, infrastructure that lasts, leadership that listens, and policies that don't just look good on paper but transform lives. If this edition proves anything, it's that we have the blueprints. What's missing is the collective will.

As OurNigeria Magazine continues to chronicle these stories—of grit and governance, of promise and pressure—we urge our readers, leaders, and citizens alike to take up the challenge. We must reject mediocrity in all its forms. The next chapter of our national story must be written not in borrowed phrases, but in the ink of integrity, innovation, and inclusion.

As we look ahead, we commit to doing our part—asking hard questions, celebrating real progress, and remaining the people's newsroom. Nigeria deserves nothing less.

Om'Oba Jerry Adesewo
Editor-in-Chief

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ScD vs PhD

Many people think the Doctor of Science (ScD) is superior to the PhD. While both are terminal research degrees, the difference lies mainly in tradition and field of study. The ScD is more common in technical and scientific disciplines and is widely awarded by institutions in Europe and Asia. However, in the U.S., the PhD remains the standard for all fields of advanced academic research.

Nigeria's inflation hits 24.23% in March 2025

Nigeria's headline inflation rose to 24.23 per cent in March 2025, up from 23.18 per cent recorded in February, according to the latest data released by the National Bureau of Statistics. The figure represents a 1.05 percentage point increase, marking a sustained rise in the general price level across the country. On a month-on-month basis, inflation rose sharply by 3.90 per cent in March, compared to 2.04 per cent in February, indicating that the average price level increased at a faster pace.

5.15%

Health expenditure as share of total federal budget in Nigeria

The 2025 Nigerian Federal budget allocates 5.15% of the total budget to the health sector, which equates to a total of ₦2.48 trillion. This is slightly higher than the 5.18% allocated to health in the 2024 budget. While this represents a notable increase in funding, the health sector allocation still remains a relatively small portion of the total budget.



“Climate is Security”

– António Guterres, 2025

In his New Year's message for 2025, UN Secretary-General António Guterres emphasised the interconnectedness of climate and security, highlighting the urgent need for global action to address both issues. He urged nations to strengthen cooperation and prioritise the implementation of the “Pact for the Future” to tackle conflicts, inequalities, the climate crisis, and the misuse of technology, according to a message shared on YouTube.

Guterres's message underscored the significance of climate action, recognising that it is intertwined with broader security challenges. He called for a renewed commitment to the principles of the UN Charter, including human rights and international law, to build a more peaceful, equal, and sustainable future for all.

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Aysha Rabo: The Lens Whisperer Who Captured Victory

Toyin Amusa

In an age where visuals shape narratives and photos speak louder than words, Aysha Rabo, a vibrant talent from OurNigeria News Magazine, has risen above the noise to claim the spotlight. She emerged victorious at the recently concluded Master at Photos competition—an elite challenge that gathered some of the sharpest eyes and steadiest hands behind the camera in Nigeria.

Aysha's winning entry, a compelling visual story told through subtle emotion and deliberate framing, stood out for its originality, technical precision, and cultural resonance. Judges praised her ability to convey mood and message in a single frame—an artistry that separates photojournalists from mere photographers.

More than just a win for Aysha, her triumph is a celebration of excellence in visual storytelling and a powerful reminder of the often-unseen women behind the lens shaping how we see the world.

With this victory, which earned her a N500, 000.00 cash prize and a new set of camera packs, to further fuel her passion,

Aysha Rabo not only raises the bar for digital journalism at OurNigeria but also inspires a new generation of storytellers, especially young female creatives, to pick up the camera and dare to shoot.

Indeed, the lens has found its master.

“GOV. UMAR RADDA IS PERFORMING MAGIC IN KATSINA”

– Alhaji Babangida Bature Funtua



Alhaji Babangida Balarabe Funtua is a seasoned grassroots politician, and public affairs advocate whose journey into governance began at the local government level, where he served diligently for several years, as a Supervising Council of Funtua in Katrina State from where his commitment to community service and development later led to his transition into national service at the National Hajj Commission. Since 1999, Alhaji Bature has been actively involved in Nigeria's democratic processes. He is a student of the Umaru Musa Yar'adua's political school. In this exclusive interview with our editor-in-chief, Omo'Oba Jerry Adesewo, he delivered unequivocally, a mid-term assessment of Governor Dikko Umar Radda's administration.

OurNigeria: It is two years into Governor Dikko Umaru Radda's administration, how would you rate his overall performance?

Mallam Bature: Honestly, if an election were called today, I swear to God, my vote would go to Mallam Dikko. He has done a very good job—an excellent job. He's working hard, and I call on others to support him too. Katsina is working again.

OurNigeria: What would you say is the most significant achievement so far?

Mallam Bature: Accountability. The kind of structure Radda has put in place reminds me of the late President Umaru Musa Yar'adua's era. Every kobo spent is accounted for—from salaries to contracts. You can't just jump into a new project until you close the accounts on the last one. The Public Accounts Committee (PAC) is active, and everything is done through due process. That's how governance should be.

OurNigeria: Is the cost of living in Katsina relatively stable compared to other states?

Mallam Bature: Absolutely. Katsina is an agricultural state. Our people are farmers. So even when the economy is struggling nationally, harvest seasons help bring food prices down. Also, our border with Niger gives us access to certain goods that are still affordable.

In addition to this, there is the Rumbu Sobe initiative. This is one of the best things he has done. That programme is stabilising the market. Rice that costs ₦2,000 in the open market, you get it for ₦700 at these subsidised shops. Spaghetti for ₦300 instead of ₦1,000. Every local government has these shops. It's like a flea market, but better and consistent. This helps many families, especially now that the economy is tough nationwide.

OurNigeria: And how about education?

Mallam Bature: This administration takes education seriously. They have sent more than 500 students abroad, to places like Egypt, Jordan, and China. But here's the beauty of it: it's strictly based on

merit. If you don't pass the exams, you don't go, even if you're a big man's son. That's how it should be. They go into the communities, even to local Islamic schools, and pick the best. Not even the governor's child will get picked if he didn't pass the selection examination or meet all the criteria.

OurNigeria: That's encouraging. What area do you think needs more attention moving forward?

Mallam Bature: Security has improved compared to before, but it's not yet where we want it to be. The government has tried—recruiting 2,000 personnel and training them—but we need more collaboration with federal security agencies. If there's no security, there's no development. And people need to understand that security isn't just government's job. It's everyone's business.

OurNigeria: What about grassroots governance? Are local governments functioning?

Mallam Bature: Local government is active again. I was at the last

this will engender development at the grassroots.

OurNigeria: Do you think the governor has the people's trust?

Mallam Bature: Yes, though trust is always something you work on. But based on what people see—like the government not hoarding money but spending it on real development, has built their confidence in him and his administration. When money goes into infrastructure and welfare, people notice. The administration might not be perfect, but it's responsive. And that counts for a lot.

OurNigeria: How would you compare this administration to past ones in Katsina?

Mallam Bature: Governor Dikko Umar Radda is carrying the legacy of Yar'adua in terms of discipline and grassroots understanding. He listens. He checks prices himself; he makes sure contractors don't inflate costs. He makes sure contractors and other government employees are paid as at when due. That is the type of leadership we need. Leadership that acts, not just talks.

OurNigeria: Finally, if you could change one thing today in the state, what would it be?

Mallam Bature: I will say security. He has done well, but we need to go further. Strengthen local vigilantes, improve intelligence sharing, and invest more in rural protection. It will help farmers, traders, and the general population to feel safer, and the local economy to boom.

OurNigeria: What will be your message to the good people of Katsina State?

Mallam Bature: I call on Katsina citizens to continue to support the governor, and, when the time comes, to vote him for a second tenure in office, so that the government can continue on this path of development. As for me, my family, and anyone within my sphere of influence, Governor Dikko Umar Radda has our votes. Together, we can make Katsina greater.

Katsina is an agricultural state. Our people are farmers. So even when the economy is struggling nationally, harvest seasons help bring food prices down.

local government election, and it was a success. The moment local governments work, education grows, the economy improves. Radda understands this because he was once a local government chairman and ALGON president. He knows how important it is for the local government system to work because it is the closest to the people. In fact, my Governor is one of those who welcomed local government autonomy wholeheartedly because he knows



MS Abubakar, HND, B.Ed, M.Ed, M.A, DProf, PhD, CAS

THE CRISIS IN THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO: KAGAME, M23, AND THE INFLUENCE OF GREED

I feel compelled to address the situation in the Democratic Republic of Congo today, as both the nation—referred to as Congo Kinshasa—and the influential leader of Rwanda hold significant importance to me. Firstly, I have a deep appreciation for Congolese music and have been following the developments in Kinshasa since the early 1990s. Regarding His Excellency President Paul Kagame, I hold him in high regard; his transformative leadership style mirrors the brilliance of the late Lee Kuan Yew of Singapore, which fosters my ongoing respect for him. As I compose this piece, I wish to clarify that I do not intend to align with either faction. My primary aim is to encourage both nations to pursue a path of peace, thereby preventing loss of life and facilitating genuine development in Congo Kinshasa.

The crisis in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DR Congo) is a multifaceted issue deeply rooted in historical, political, and economic complexities, with the conflict increasingly characterized by the interplay of regional dynamics and greed. Central to

this turmoil is the involvement of Rwanda, under the leadership of President Paul Kagame, whose support for the M23 rebel group has exacerbated the instability in eastern DRC. The M23, which claims to represent the interests of the Congolese Tutsi minority, has been implicated in a range of human rights abuses as it seeks to exploit the rich resources of the region, including minerals vital for the global tech industry.

The crisis in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) predates both Presidents Paul Kagame and Félix Tshisekedi, and it is important to note that neither leader should be blamed for the emergence of the M23, which has since become a significant issue for Kinshasa. If there is anyone who should be blamed for the DR Congo crisis, it should be the Europeans especially Otto von Bismarck who called for the Congo or Berlin Conference in 1884 and redrew the map of Africa without any recourse to ethnic and social ties of the inhabitants. It was at that very conference that they placed the North Kivu Tutsis into DR Congo thus separating them from Rwanda. So none of the

two leaders actually started this conflict. There was a time when the two leaders enjoyed a close friendship, with President Tshisekedi frequently visiting Kigali. To fully grasp the complexities of the DRC crisis, it is vital to consider the historical context involving the DRC, the Bayamulenge community, and the M23. Consequently, ethnic Tutsis who should have remained in Rwanda became part of the DRC, leading to the identification of these individuals as the Bayamulenge people. This scenario bears resemblance to the situation in Nigeria, where various ethnic groups are divided between Nigeria and Niger, Chad and Cameroun.

Colonial rule in the DRC was exercised by the Belgians, while Rwanda was governed by the Germans. During this period, both Rwanda and its neighbor Burundi experienced a preferential treatment of the minority Tutsi population over the majority Hutus. Rwanda's colonial history profoundly shaped its socio-political landscape, particularly through the influence of European



powers such as Germany and later France. Initially, German colonial rule exacerbated existing ethnic divisions between the Tutsi and Hutu populations, as the colonial administration favored the Tutsi minority for administrative roles, thereby instilling a sense of superiority among them. This preferential treatment sowed seeds of resentment among the Hutu majority. Following the First World War, the French took over the administration of Rwanda and continued this divisive policy, reinforcing stereotypes and deepening ethnic animosities. This favoritism laid the groundwork for tensions that would erupt during

Rwanda's independence in 1960, effectively elevating the Tutsis to positions of power. Subsequently, the majority Hutus united against the Tutsi leadership, resulting in widespread violence that forced many Tutsis to seek refuge in Uganda and Tanzania. In contrast, Burundi witnessed a similar reversal where Hutus assumed control post-independence, marginalizing the Tutsi population.

Another detrimental action taken by colonial authorities involved the placing part of the Tutsi ethnic nationality occupying North Kivu who rightfully belonged to Rwanda into what was designated as Belgian Congo.

Following Mobutu Sese Seko's ill-fated

"It is fundamentally erroneous to claim that President Tshikedi is not a legitimately elected leader, which would rationalize the M23's advance on Kinshasa with the objective of removing him. Alternatively, one could similarly contend that it would be acceptable for the Hutu militia in the Democratic Republic of the Congo to invade Kigali and depose Kagame on the grounds that he does not adhere to term limits."

support for Hutu President Juvénal Habyarimana of Rwanda, Tutsi refugees in Uganda formed an armed group known as the Rwandan Patriotic Front that ultimately seized power in Kigali after the Rwandan genocide. Shortly thereafter, they aided Laurent Kabila in his incursion into the DRC from Goma, resulting in Mobutu's overthrow. The Rwandan Tutsi dominated military decided to support the DR Congo Tutsis who were under the leadership of Laurent Kabila because Mobutu not only gave safe haven to the Hutus who fled Rwanda after the 1994 genocide but also decided to ask all Tutsis to leave DR Congo (then known as Zaire) to leave his country and go back to Rwanda. However, tensions arose between Kagame and Kabila when Kabila ordered all Tutsi members of his militia to return to Rwanda, leading to a breakdown in diplomatic relations between Kigali and Kinshasa. This discord culminated in Kabila's violent assassination at the hands of one of his child soldiers. His son, Joseph Kabila, succeeded him and

eventually transferred power to President Tshisekedi in 2014 after a controversial election.

The M23 rebel group emerged in April 2012 following the unsuccessful implementation of a peace agreement signed on March 23, 2009, between the government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and the National Congress for the Defense of the People (NCDP). This accord aimed to transition the CNDP, an armed faction in North Kivu, from a politico-military entity into a legitimate political party while integrating its military forces into both the Congolese National Police and the Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (FARDC).

However, due to adverse conditions within the military and the government's reluctance to uphold the terms of the peace agreement, a significant number of former NCDP soldiers within FARDC revolted against the DRC government, leading to the formation of the M23 rebel group in North Kivu, named after the date of the failed accord. The group has since perpetrated severe human rights violations against the Congolese population, including targeted killings of men and widespread sexual violence against women. By 2013, approximately 140,000 civilians had been displaced, and over 280 individuals had lost their lives as hostilities escalated since their inception in 2012.

President Tshisekedi's proposal to the NCDP militia for demobilization and integration into the Congolese military was met with mixed reactions; while many complied, approximately 600 individuals resisted. This reluctance led to escalating tensions. In response, the Congolese military launched an operation against these dissenters, forcing them to retreat into the mountains, where they subsequently adopted the name M23. It is crucial to differentiate between the Bayamulenge people and the M23, a distinction emphasized by figures such as

Jean-Pierre Bemba, a former vice president of Bayamulenge heritage who currently serves as a minister in President Tshisekedi's administration. Therefore, equating these two groups is fundamentally flawed.

My deep-seated worry revolves around the troubling support and arming of the M23 rebel group by President Kagame of Rwanda. This concern stems from a historical context that dates back to the era of Mobutu, during which Congo

“The crisis in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DR Congo) is a multifaceted issue deeply rooted in historical.”

Kinshasa has been actively aiding and supporting—if not outright arming—Hutu hardliners who fled Rwanda in the aftermath of the horrifying 1994 genocide. These Hutu hardliners harbor ambitions of returning to Rwanda with the intention of overthrowing the Kigali government. A significant and alarming aspect of this complex situation is the fact that the M23, which is being armed by Rwanda, is engaged in the illicit theft of valuable minerals, such as coltan and gold, from various mines within the Democratic Republic of the Congo. These stolen resources are then funneled into Rwanda through extensive smuggling routes. This claim is substantiated by the striking evidence that Rwanda, which only a few years ago reported mineral exports worth approximately \$330 million, now boasts exports that have skyrocketed to about \$1.2 billion, despite the glaring fact that Rwanda itself has no coltan mines. This raises a critical question: where is Rwanda acquiring all this coltan if not from the vast mineral wealth of Kinshasa? The M23's activities

have severely impacted the DRC's economy. Coltan, a mineral found in abundance in the eastern regions of the country, is crucial for the production of capacitors in electronic devices such as smartphones and laptops. The illegal smuggling of coltan by M23 not only undermines legitimate mining operations but also deprives the DRC of billions of dollars in potential revenue. This illicit trade fuels the conflict, as profits are often reinvested into further violence and destabilization efforts. The international community's demand for coltan, coupled with the lack of stringent regulations on its sourcing, perpetuates this cycle of exploitation.

Furthermore, Rwanda's insistence that the M23 represents the Bayamulenge community is a deceptive narrative that does not align with the complexities and realities of the situation on the ground. It is fundamentally erroneous to claim that President Tshisekedi is not a legitimately elected leader, which would rationalize the M23's advance on Kinshasa with the objective of removing him. Alternatively, one could similarly contend that it would be acceptable for the Hutu militia in the Democratic Republic of the Congo to invade Kigali and depose Kagame on the grounds that he does not adhere to term limits.

Regardless of the circumstances, it is imperative that both sides engage in meaningful dialogue and collaborate to discover a lasting solution to this multifaceted crisis before the ongoing turmoil in the Congo escalates and transforms the entire region of East Africa into a devastating killing field. At this moment, approximately seven countries—including Uganda, Angola, Kenya, Tanzania, Zambia, South Africa, along with global powerhouses such as the United States and even Russia—have established a presence in the Democratic Republic of Congo. The United Nations, too, has been actively involved, dedicating resources and personnel to the situation for an unsettling span

of nearly 60 years, undertaking efforts that, one might ponder, only God knows the true impact of. It is essential that swift action and cooperation take precedence to avert further tragedy and suffering in this already beleaguered region.

The Way out

I firmly believe that it is high time for the government of Kinshasa to engage in meaningful dialogue with the M23 rebel group, addressing not only the current political tensions but also extending a hand of acceptance to all Bayaruwandans and Rwandan-speaking Congolese individuals who have found themselves within the borders of the Democratic Republic of Congo, recognizing them as Congolese citizens. Drawing a parallel with Nigeria, where we have diverse ethnic nationalities such as the Fulbes, Shuwas, Kanuris, and Laka, which are also present in parts of Cameroon, Niger, and Chad, it is noteworthy that Nigeria has never denied these groups their citizenship rights. Therefore, it is imperative that President Tshisekedi acknowledges the Bayamulenge community as rightful Congolese citizens.

Moreover, it is vital for President Kagame to cease all forms of support for the M23 and to issue a directive for their withdrawal from the territories of the DR Congo. The government of the Democratic Republic of Congo must also awaken to its responsibilities and begin to implement concrete governance strategies, establishing its presence and authority across the vast geographical landscape known as the DR Congo. Presently, there exists an alarming number of ungoverned spaces within the country that threaten stability and security.

In addition, the government of the DR Congo must collaborate closely with the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF) to reform, strengthen, and adequately equip its military forces. At this moment, the military of the DR

Congo is woefully underprepared and ill-equipped to deal with the numerous challenges it faces, both internally and externally. It is crucial that comprehensive reforms are prioritized to ensure they can effectively maintain peace and security for all citizens in this richly diverse nation.

The international community has acknowledged President Tshikedi as the rightful leader of the Democratic Republic of Congo,

“The government of the Democratic Republic of Congo must also awaken to its responsibilities and begin to implement concrete governance strategies.”

and therefore, it is difficult to understand why the M23 would not recognize this reality. They should be prepared to engage with him as the legitimate representative of the Congolese populace.

The leader of the M23, who boldly proclaimed himself as the head of the Congolese election commission, has confidently asserted that President Tshikedi did not legitimately win the recent elections. In light of these serious allegations, he should consider pursuing legal avenues to prove his case in court, rather than resorting to armed insurrection, which could lead to further chaos and violence. After all, one must question why he initially declared Mr. President Tshikedi as the rightful leader in the first place if he now contests the election results. Individuals like Mr. Corneille pose a significant threat to democracy in Africa, undermining the stability and integrity of the political landscape in a region that desperately needs constructive dialogue and peaceful resolution.

To paraphrase the words

of Nabelo Gabs Nxumalo, the conflict in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) is likely to persist until the Tutsi and Hutu communities address a deeply rooted tribal tension that has been a source of significant strife for many years. It is essential to recognize that the historical discrimination between these groups, exacerbated by the establishment of colonial borders in this region, has had devastating consequences, resulting in the loss of millions of lives. Notably, Paul Kagame of Rwanda is Tutsi, as were Jean-Baptiste Bagaza and Pierre Buyoya, the founding presidents of Burundi. Additionally, President Yoweri Museveni of Uganda also belongs to the Tutsi/Hima ethnicity, indicating a shared ethnic heritage between the Tutsi and the Hima of Uganda. It is therefore unsurprising that Presidents Paul Kagame of Rwanda and Yoweri Museveni of Uganda are extending their support to the M23 rebel group, given their common ancestral connections rooted in the intricate and frequently tumultuous history of the area. The dynamics of this association expose a more profound narrative centered on ethnocentrism and racism, particularly emphasizing the enduring hostilities between the Tutsi and non-Tutsi communities. This unfortunate situation not only complicates the political environment but also sustains cycles of conflict and division that obstruct efforts towards achieving enduring peace and unity in the region.

In conclusion, the situation in the DRC remains critical as the M23 rebel group continues to inflict suffering on its population while profiting from valuable natural resources. The alarming number of lives lost and the extensive smuggling of coltan underscore the urgent need for concerted international efforts to address both humanitarian and economic challenges. Without decisive action, the DRC risks descending further into chaos, with devastating consequences for its people and stability in the region.



Electoral Reform, State Police, and a Vision for Nigeria's Future

Jerry Adesewo

In this compelling April edition, OurNigeria Magazine's Editor-in-Chief, Om'Oba Jerry Adesewo, sits with Senator Abdulaziz Yar'adua—retired military officer, legislative reformer, and scion of the Yar'adua political dynasty. With 29 years of military service and a seat as Chairman of the Senate Committee on Army, Yar'adua brings a unique lens to Nigeria's pressing challenges. From championing a groundbreaking Early Voting Bill aimed at enfranchising millions of election workers to advocating for decentralized policing and robust security reforms, he outlines pragmatic solutions to Nigeria's democratic and security woes.

A staunch supporter of President Tinubu's economic policies, Yar'adua also reflects on his family's legacy of service, urging Nigerians—especially the youth—to embrace patriotism and unity. Dive into his vision for a Nigeria where inclusivity and innovation drive progress, and where the lessons of history pave the way for a brighter tomorrow.

OurNigeria: Can you provide a brief overview of the journey so far regarding the early voting bill, and do you see diaspora voting as a possibility in the future?

Senator Yar'adua: I feel humbled by the recognition of my legislative work, and I want to thank you and your board for the award. The early voting bill is something I'm deeply passionate about. From the First Republic to the Fourth Republic, Nigeria has never had an early voting system, unlike many advanced democracies and even some African countries.

The motivation behind this bill is simple: nearly 2 million Nigerians involved in election duties—INEC staff, ad hoc staff, police, military, journalists, and observers—are currently disenfranchised because they're working on election day. Early voting would give them the opportunity to participate in the democratic process.

I was in South Africa during their elections last year, and I saw how they conducted early voting not just for election officials but also for the disabled, the aged, pregnant women, and even those who preferred to vote from home. They used a portal where voters could register for early voting, and the electoral body would visit their homes with party agents to ensure transparency.

This system increases voter turnout, which has been declining in Nigeria. In 2019, voter turnout was 34.7%, and in 2023, it dropped

to 27.1%. Early voting can help reverse this trend by reducing pressure on election day and gradually paving the way for diaspora voting.

OurNigeria: As the Senate Committee Chair on Army, what more should Nigerians expect in terms of legislation to improve the armed forces, especially given the challenges of inadequate funding and equipment?

Senator Yar'adua: Let me be clear: the insurgents do not have more firepower than our military. What we need is better coordination among our security agencies, particularly in intelligence sharing. I've proposed a central coordinating center to

I strongly support the establishment of state and local government police. Our current centralized policing system is inadequate. In the United States, for example, they have multiple layers of policing—county, state, and federal—which ensures effective security.

streamline operations and address overlapping mandates.

One of the biggest challenges is that our military is doing police work. Once they clear an area,

the police should take over, but that's not happening. This is why I'm advocating for police reform, especially the Mobile Police. They used to be the stopgap between the military and regular police, but today, they're understaffed and undertrained. I've proposed recruiting and training at least 3,000 Mobile Police officers per state to ease the burden on the military.

The insurgency has been going on for 14 years, and war fatigue is setting in. During the civil war, it took two and a half years to resolve an internal conflict. We need to address these challenges urgently.

OurNigeria: What is your take on the calls for state police and local government police?

Senator Yar'adua: I strongly support the establishment of state and local government police. Our current centralized policing system is inadequate. In the United States, for example, they have multiple layers of policing—county, state, and federal—which ensures effective security.

Local government police could address insecurity at its root before it escalates. I understand concerns about potential abuses, but we can borrow best practices from other countries to mitigate these risks. For instance, in the U.S., the head of the police is often elected, ensuring accountability.

We need more layers of security; especially as economic hardship increases crime rates. State and local government police would complement the federal



system and ensure better security for all Nigerians.

OurNigeria: After 29 years in the military, what prompted your decision to retire and transition into politics? Do you have any regrets?

Senator Yar'adua: Retiring from the military was one of the hardest decisions I've ever made. I joined the Nigerian Military School at the age of 12, so my life has been regimented from a young age. However, my short-service commission limited my career progression, and I felt it was time to move on while I was still young and energetic.

There were also family reasons for my decision. While I occasionally reflect on whether I made the right choice, I believe it was divinely ordained. My military career shaped me and prepared me for my current role in politics. I have no regrets.

OurNigeria: How much has Nigeria's defense partnership with superpowers like the U.S., UK, and France improved, and what positive impact has it had on our internal security?

Senator Yar'adua: Defense partnerships are primarily handled by the executive branch, but they're crucial for our security. During President Buhari's tenure, we acquired Tucano helicopters from the U.S., which have been a significant boost in our fight against insurgency.

We also have collaborations with Russia and other countries. These partnerships are important for technology transfer and mutual benefits. No country can live in isolation, and Nigeria must take advantage of these relationships to strengthen our defense capabilities.

OurNigeria: If you were the president of Nigeria today, what would you do differently to address the nation's major challenges?

Senator Yar'adua:

If I were president, I would do exactly what President Bola Tinubu

is doing now. He has taken bold steps, such as removing fuel subsidies and stabilizing the exchange rate, which his predecessors couldn't do. These decisions were necessary, even if they were unpopular.

I believe in his vision for a free-market economy. Nigerians need to be patient and support his policies. The economy will stabilize, and we'll see the benefits in the long run.

OurNigeria: How do you handle the pressure of maintaining the legacy of the Yar'adua dynasty, including the late Major General Yar'adua and President Umaru Musa Yar'adua?

Senator Yar'adua: The legacy of my family is immense, and I can never compare myself to my predecessors.

They were legends, and their shoes are too big to fill. However, I am committed to upholding their vision of service to humanity.

They were my role models and teachers, and I'll do my best to honor their legacy. While I may not achieve what they did, I'll continue to serve Nigeria with the same dedication and passion.

OurNigeria: What

is your message to

Nigerians, particularly the younger generation?

Senator Yar'adua: My message to Nigerians, especially the youth, is simple: be patriotic. Love Nigeria first because we have no other country. The global trend is shifting, with nations closing their borders and reducing foreign aid. We must look inward and build our nation.

We need to move beyond tribal and religious divides and see ourselves as one people. Rwanda is a great example of what unity can achieve. After the 1994 genocide, they put their differences aside and focused on building their nation. Today, they're thriving.

I urge the youth to be the change they want to see. Let's work together to build a Nigeria where people from other countries will want to come and see the wonders we've created.

WIKE:

THE CAPACITY MINISTER

By AK Peters

If you subject President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's 48 Ministers to a performance assessment, on a scale of 1-10, one man will stand up visibly, towering head and shoulders over the rest. He is His Excellency, Ezenwo Nyesom Wike CON, the Honourable Minister of the Federal Capital Territory.

From the word, "Go", on the 21st August, 2023 when President Bola Tinubu swore in his ministers and inaugurated the Federal Executive Council, one man immediately caught the vision of Mr President's Renewed Hope Agenda and hit the ground running by delivering the goods in the FCT.

Nigerians want Good Governance and they can see and experience Good Governance in the Federal Capital Territory. Good Governance is giving the people their due. Good Governance is good performance. Good Governance is service to the people and the state.

With Nyesom Wike, the seemingly impossible became possible in the FCT. He has redefined leadership and put an end to the era of Arms-Chair governance in the Federal Capital Territory. He is talking and working.

Obviously, Minister Wike has fast become the Star Boy of Tinubu's regime. He is working in almost forgotten Abaji. He has opened up the once obscure Bwari. Kuje has received unprecedented developmental attention. Kwali is now wearing the looks of an FCT Area Council. Gwagwalada has been rebranded and The Abuja Municipal Area Council, AMAC is taking its pride of place as the seat of the government of Nigeria.

You may not like his style of politics, but you cannot hate Wike's performance

as the Minister of the Federal Capital Territory. His dedication to duty is unparalleled. His commitment to success is unmatched. His result-oriented and goal-getting mentality is his strongest characteristic.

No wonder the Rumuepirikom, Obio Akpor born former Governor of Rivers State has become the greatest selling point of the Tinubu's Renewed Hope Agenda and truly living up to his nick name, "Mr Project".

Indeed, under Wike, the FCT has become a huge construction site with different people oriented projects spread across the length and breadth of the 6 Area Councils of the FCT. Today, more than ever before, Abuja is experiencing transformation to the status of a befitting capital city of Africa's richest nation with the extra-ordinary visible presence of good Governance, one that the people never experienced in the last 20 years and compounded in the last 8 years that were a complete disaster.

Wike knows what he wants and goes all out to get it done. He has made unprecedented sweeping reforms in all spheres of the FCT.

His security reforms have seen the FCT experiencing peace and safety. Criminal hideouts have been destroyed, kidnapping and One Chance have become rare, stealing of drainage manholes and vandalization of infrastructure has stopped.

His administrative reforms have led to the creation of the FCT Civil Service Commission and the appointment of 6 Permanent Secretaries, thereby drastically reducing the bureaucratic bottle necks that use to delay and hinder the delivery of good Governance.

The quantum of internally generated revenue was never imagined by previous administrations. Today, FCT has been taken out of the Treasury Single Account, giving the FCT the latitude to generate funds and spend directly.

Very visible are the Land use reforms and the construction works in Abuja. Land administration has been simplified and made transparent. Land documents issued by Area Councils are being regularized as Rights of Occupancy are now issued within 21 days of applications, while the issuance of Certificates of Occupancy will no longer take donkey years to get.

Mr Wike has planned to engage President Bola Tinubu on a project commissioning galore for 3 weeks as part of the activities to celebrate Mr President's second anniversary in office.

For so long, Nigerians longed for good leaders and they can identify them if they see them. Wike is a good leader.

Go to the satellite towns and you will see the signature of Wike. Hospitals, schools, the environment, social and physical infrastructures have received full attention at the same time. Street lights have been fixed and the FCT is beauty to behold at night. All internal roads have been reconstructed. Flyovers are being finished and made ready for commissioning. An FCT University of Science and Technology, Gwarimpa is being built.

Wike is topnotch. Wike is effective, efficient and productive. Wike has really performed and is indeed the Star Boy of the Tinubu Renewed Hope Agenda.

Workers' Day 2025:

"Our Leaders Put People First"—

Ogunbanwo Applauds FMITI Leadership

In a spirited Workers' Day 2025 celebration at the Eagles Square in Abuja, OurNigeria News Magazine's Editor-in-Chief, Om'Oba Jerry Adesewo, caught up with Mr. Babatunde Ogunbanwo, Chairman of the Association of Senior Civil Servants of Nigeria (ASCSN), Ministry of Industry, Trade and Investment (FMITI) Chapter, who also serves as Chairman of the Joint Negotiating Council (JNC) — the umbrella body for all four unions in the ministry. In this exclusive interview, Ogunbanwo delivered a passionate commendation of the ministry's leadership and raised key issues around public service welfare.

OurNigeria: Mr. Ogunbanwo, how would you describe this year's Workers' Day celebration, especially from an FMITI point of view?

Ogunbanwo: It's been wonderful. The energy, the unity, the solidarity—everything has been exceptional. But more than that, for us at the FMITI, what we are really celebrating this year is leadership. Leadership that puts people first. The Honourable Minister, Her Excellency Mrs. Jumoke Oduwole, her Minister of State, Senator John Owan Enoch, and our diligent Comrade Permanent Secretary, Alhaji Nura Abba Rimi, have shown a level of commitment to staff welfare that deserves national commendation.

OurNigeria: That's quite high praise. Can you be more specific on what the ministry's leadership has done to earn this?

Ogunbanwo: Absolutely. Our working conditions have improved. Capacity building opportunities are regular. Salaries and allowances are paid promptly, despite the economic situation in the country, which has resulted in a shrunken welfare packages for other MDAs. Health support is functional, and most importantly, we have leadership that listens. That is rare. Her Excellency,

Mrs. Oduwole, is not just an administrator; she's a people-first reformer. She's accessible, forward-thinking, and humane. Her leadership has redefined morale in the workplace.

OurNigeria: And what about the role of the Permanent Secretary in all this?

Ogunbanwo: Alhaji Nura Abba Rimi is what I will call a silent hero. He ensures continuity. The administrative wheels never stop turning under his watch. He works behind the scenes, but his impact is visible. From welfare disbursement to policy implementation, the system works smoothly because he's meticulous and genuinely cares about the wellbeing of staff. He's been very effective as a bridge between the workers, and the leadership of the ministry. A lot has changed since his arrival, and that's why he has earned for himself the love and respect of the staff, and we fondly referred to him as Comrade Permanent Secretary.

OurNigeria: What message do you have for leadership across other ministries and agencies?

Ogunbanwo: That's a very important question. I would like to use this opportunity to call on other ministries, departments and agencies to take a cue from FMITI.

Let staff welfare be prioritised — not politicised. Our civil service should be a place of dignity and motivation, not frustration. When workers are treated right, they give their best. It's that simple. For FMITI, I believe it would have



been even better, if the ministry had more resources, but compared to others, what is happening here is encouraging, and worth emulating by others.

OurNigeria: What are the expectations of your union moving forward?

Ogunbanwo: We're proud of the progress made, but we will not rest. We expect more inclusive welfare policies—housing support, long-term incentives, and professional growth pathways. We want to see more consistent engagement between staff unions and management. This is a partnership, and we must continue to build it on mutual respect and shared purpose.

OurNigeria: You spoke about the Joint Negotiating Council earlier. Could you briefly explain its role?

Ogunbanwo: Of course. The JNC represents the collective interests of all four unions in the ministry— Association of Senior Civil Servants of Nigeria (ASCSN), Nigeria Civil Service Union (NCSU), chaired by Comrade

Idoko, Amalgamated Union of Public Corporations, Civil Service Technical and Recreational Services Employees (AUPCTRE), chaired by Comrade Alimi, and the Nigeria Union of Public Service Reportorial, Secretarial, Data Processors and Allied Workers (NUPSRAW), chaired by Comrade Akor. Though I chair this joint committee, we speak as one voice on issues that affect the welfare of all staff in FMITI.

OurNigeria: Speaking of systemic concerns, what's your take on the ongoing national debate about the minimum wage?

Ogunbanwo: It's long overdue for another serious adjustment. The current minimum wage does not reflect the economic reality we're facing. Inflation, rising costs of living, and stagnant pay have pushed workers into very difficult positions. Many are facing temptations and shortcuts that only worsen their situation. Many of our staff became victims of loan sharks and Ponzi investments like CBEX in their efforts to maximize their very little resources. If we don't address

the inadequacy of the minimum wage, we're exposing the average worker to economic hardship and moral compromise. A livable wage is not a luxury—it is a right.

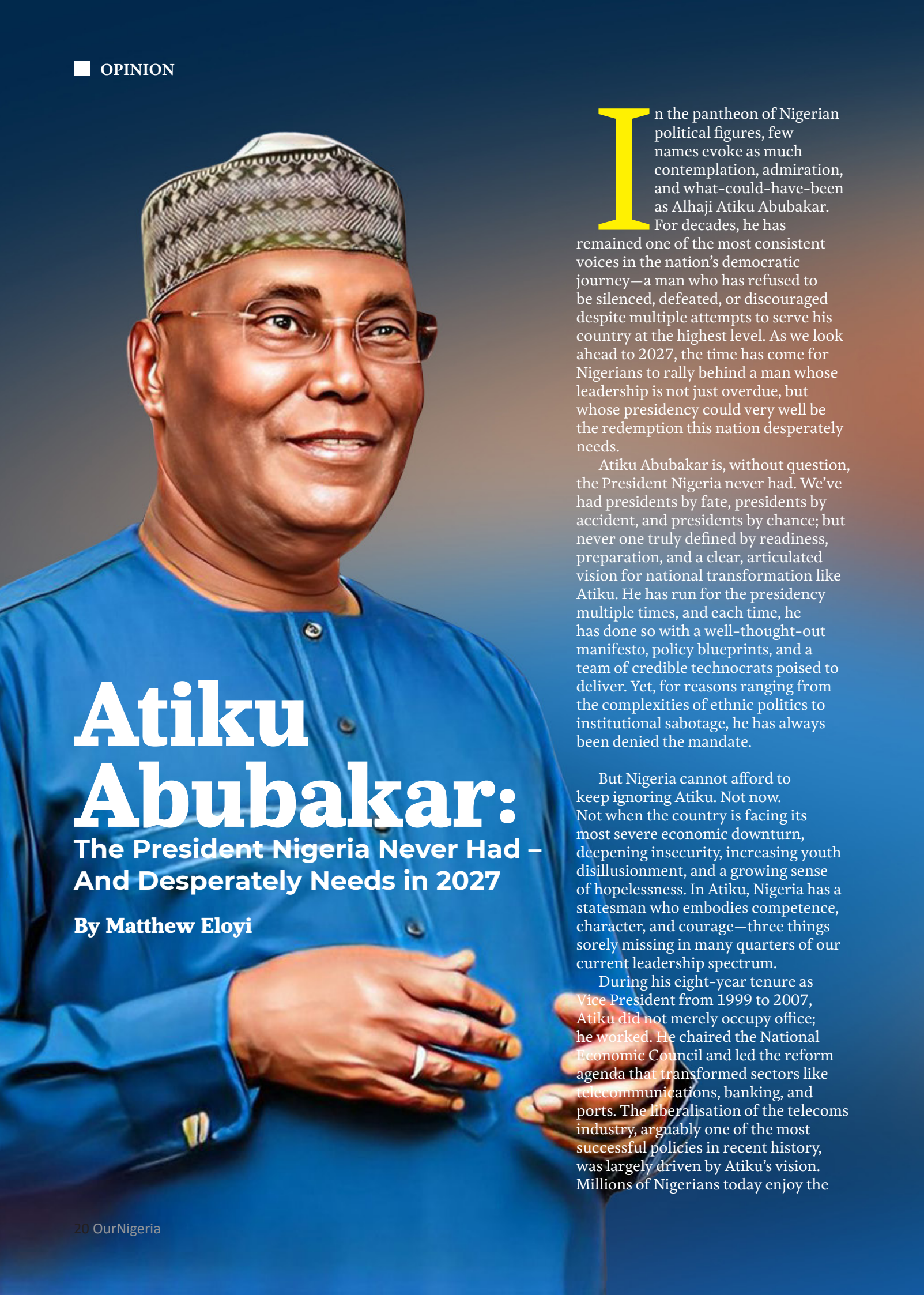
OurNigeria: And what's the pledge from the staff to the leadership?

Ogunbanwo: We are committed—fully. As staff, we promise to match every act of kindness and support from our leaders with diligence, dedication, excellence, and mutual respect. We will not take this trust for granted. It's a shared responsibility, and we are ready to carry our weight in the growth of this ministry and our great nation.

OurNigeria: Final words on the day?

Ogunbanwo: This year's Workers' Day is not just about celebration—it's a reminder that when leadership and labour unite in purpose, there's no limit to what we can achieve. FMITI has set a standard. We hope others will follow.



A portrait of Atiku Abubakar, a Nigerian politician, wearing a blue traditional Nigerian garment and a patterned cap. He is smiling slightly and looking towards the camera. The background is a gradient of blue and orange.

Atiku Abubakar:

The President Nigeria Never Had – And Desperately Needs in 2027

By Matthew Eloyi

In the pantheon of Nigerian political figures, few names evoke as much contemplation, admiration, and what-could-have-been as Alhaji Atiku Abubakar. For decades, he has remained one of the most consistent voices in the nation's democratic journey—a man who has refused to be silenced, defeated, or discouraged despite multiple attempts to serve his country at the highest level. As we look ahead to 2027, the time has come for Nigerians to rally behind a man whose leadership is not just overdue, but whose presidency could very well be the redemption this nation desperately needs.

Atiku Abubakar is, without question, the President Nigeria never had. We've had presidents by fate, presidents by accident, and presidents by chance; but never one truly defined by readiness, preparation, and a clear, articulated vision for national transformation like Atiku. He has run for the presidency multiple times, and each time, he has done so with a well-thought-out manifesto, policy blueprints, and a team of credible technocrats poised to deliver. Yet, for reasons ranging from the complexities of ethnic politics to institutional sabotage, he has always been denied the mandate.

But Nigeria cannot afford to keep ignoring Atiku. Not now. Not when the country is facing its most severe economic downturn, deepening insecurity, increasing youth disillusionment, and a growing sense of hopelessness. In Atiku, Nigeria has a statesman who embodies competence, character, and courage—three things sorely missing in many quarters of our current leadership spectrum.

During his eight-year tenure as Vice President from 1999 to 2007, Atiku did not merely occupy office; he worked. He chaired the National Economic Council and led the reform agenda that transformed sectors like telecommunications, banking, and ports. The liberalisation of the telecoms industry, arguably one of the most successful policies in recent history, was largely driven by Atiku's vision. Millions of Nigerians today enjoy the

benefits of that singular decision: jobs were created, businesses flourished, and digital communication became democratised.

The Obasanjo–Atiku administration also initiated the Bureau of Public Enterprises (BPE), laying the groundwork for privatisation and deregulation. These are not abstract achievements; they are real, measurable policies that continue to influence the Nigerian economy today.

Unlike many political actors who emerge with empty slogans, Atiku Abubakar has consistently presented Nigerians with comprehensive policy documents addressing critical national challenges. His plans for restructuring Nigeria, boosting private sector investment, and addressing youth unemployment are not just academic; they are rooted in years of governance experience and deep engagement with global best practices.

He believes in a Nigeria where states have more control over their resources; where the centre is not overburdened; and where economic productivity is localised. That vision of true federalism is the foundation of every successful multi-ethnic society, and it's time we gave it a chance under a leader who genuinely understands and supports it.

In an era when the political class often appears disconnected from the realities of ordinary Nigerians, Atiku has remained engaged. His active presence on social media, frequent policy dialogues with youth groups, and open-door posture signal a leader who understands the times. He is not rigid or dogmatic. He listens. He adapts. And more importantly, he responds.

Atiku's efforts in education are further proof of his commitment to the future. The American University of Nigeria (AUN), which he founded in Yola, is a beacon of academic excellence in a region once ravaged by insecurity. Through scholarships, skills acquisition programmes, and continuous philanthropy, Atiku has demonstrated that leadership extends beyond public office; it is about impact.

Nigeria today is a country in distress. Inflation is choking families, food insecurity is on the rise, and the currency has suffered dramatic devaluation. Millions of young Nigerians are either unemployed or

underemployed, while others are desperately fleeing the country in what has been tragically dubbed the "Japa wave." Our security architecture is overstretched, with banditry, terrorism, and kidnapping becoming everyday headlines.

We need a president who doesn't need on-the-job training. We need a man with both the political will and policy understanding to fix this country. That man is Atiku Abubakar.

Perhaps one of Atiku's most compelling qualities is his unshakable belief in a united Nigeria. He has never been a regional champion; instead, he has built political bridges across all six geopolitical zones. He speaks for the North and the South, the Christians and the Muslims, the youth and the elders. He has a pan-Nigerian appeal that very few political figures in our history have genuinely enjoyed.

In an increasingly polarised Nigeria, Atiku is the bridge-builder we need. He is a Muslim who promotes religious tolerance. A northerner who respects southern agitation. A leader who is not afraid to talk about difficult issues such as power rotation, inclusivity, and equity.

Atiku will be 81 in 2027.

If he runs (and he should), it may very well be his last attempt. But age, as we've seen across the world, is no disqualifier when competence is intact. What matters is not how old a leader is, but how sharp, how visionary, and how prepared. On all these counts, Atiku ticks the right boxes.

Nigeria cannot afford another leadership experiment. We've paid dearly for inexperience, arrogance, and indifference. It's time we chose substance over sentiment. It's time we placed the country's future in the hands of a man who has prepared all his life for this job.

History is replete with nations that missed their moment: moments when the right leader stood at the door, knocking, and the nation looked the other way. Nigeria must not repeat that mistake in 2027.

Atiku Abubakar is not perfect; no leader is. But in a nation desperate for competence, unity, and a new direction, he is a tested and trusted hand. He is the president Nigeria never had. But if we make the right choice, he can become the president Nigeria needs and deserves.

"We need a president who doesn't need on-the-job training. We need a man with both the political will and policy understanding to fix this country. That man is Atiku Abubakar."

KWANKWASO: A KINGPIN KEYED IN FOR A KNOCK-OFF?

By Bala Ibrahim

There is no way anyone can chronicle Nigeria's political history without mentioning the name, Dr. Rabiu Musa Kwankwaso. Kwankwaso served as the Governor of Kano State twice, first from 1999 to 2003 and again from 2011 to 2015. Kwankwaso also held the position of Minister of Defence under President Olusegun Obasanjo, from 2003 to 2007. The same Kwankwaso was elected to the Senate in 2015, under the All Progressives Congress, APC. For those conversant with Nigeria's political history, they must have come across the name Mohammed Rabiu Musa Kwankwaso, on the list of members of the House of Representatives in 1992. He was at the National Assembly as the representative of the Madobi Federal Constituency from Kano state. Subsequently, Kwankwaso was elected the deputy speaker of the House, a feat that probably propelled him to the limelight of national politics.

READ ALSO: Ms Rabo of OurNigeria News Emerges Victorious in Master at Photos Competition

In 2023, the New Nigeria People's Party, NNPP, fielded Kwankwaso as its Presidential flag bearer, where he came fourth, on the ladder of the contestants, carrying only one state, his native Kano state. Since then, Kano remains the only state under the control of the party, while Kwankwaso carries the tag of the leader. He is undoubtedly the party's political kingpin. So, as far as politics and political maneuverings are concerned, Kwankwaso is qualified to be labelled as one that has been through the thick and thin. However, events are unfolding in a manner that seems suggestive, of the fact, the political kingpin is destined, or being keyed in for a knock off.

First, let me do an overview on the history of the NNPP, which, according to history and believe, was fashioned out after the NPN of 1978. The NPN was one of the six political parties registered for the Second Republic elections. It was led by the late Makaman Bida, Alhaji Aliyu Makaman Bida, MHA,CMG,CFR OBE,CBE. Makaman Bidda was a Nigerian politician and the first Northern Minister of Education and

Social Welfare. He later became the Minister of Finance and Treasurer of the NPC, the Northern People's Congress. He was also the Deputy Premier of Northern Nigeria, the second most politically powerful personality in the north. Makaman Bidda led the NPN to victory, by winning and producing a President in 1979, in the person of Alhaji shehu shagari. The politically powerful Makaman Bidda passed away in 1980. Now, is Kwankwaso positioning himself for the political position of the late Makaman Bidda? He has not said so, neither has any of his political promoters, including his famous and vocal friend, Alhaji Buba Galadima. But there are those who are saying so, and they have made it a duty, to get him knocked off.

The first challenge to the political ambition of Kwankwaso came by way of questioning the legitimacy of his membership of the NNPP, and the subsequent claim of being the leader of the party. This claim, put against the claim of the party's founder, Dr Boniface Aniebonam, who went to court, to challenge the Independent National Electoral Commission, INEC, for assenting to the change in the NNPP logo and colour, as well as the amendment of the party constitution by Kwankwaso and his cohorts, are issues of concern to Kwankwaso. The court ruled in favour of Aniebonam, but the Kwankwaso faction was undeterred, by continuing to lay

claim to the party. Aniebonam saw that as an act of disobeying the court, the blame of which he puts on Kwankwaso. Aniebonam, alongside the National Chairman of the party, Agbo Major, announced the expulsion of Kwankwaso, for impersonation, amongst many political sins.

In essence, two people were laying claims to the seat of the National Chairman of the party. One was Agbo Major, while the other was Dr. Ajuji Ahmed. Again, the dispute was settled in court, where it dismissed the suit filed by the Kwankwaso faction, and upheld the legitimacy of the Aniebonam faction. This brought another spanner in

the political works of Kwankwaso, because he is seen as floating on a floorless plank. He is technically a politician without a political party.

Again yesterday, pursuant to the persistent rumour making the rounds, that Kwankwaso is working underground for a return to the APC, the headquarters of the party played host to a powerful delegation of stakeholders from Kano, led by the Minister of State housing, Rt. Hon. Abdullahi Yusuf Attah. Honourable Attah's political profile is fast rising because of a



number of reasons, prominent amongst which are his frankness, openness, honesty, and his disdain for deception. Apparently, Attah and his delegation were at the party headquarters with a frank and straight forward message- Kwankwaso must not be accommodated in the APC.

Hon. Attah said, Kwankwaso is a spent force in politics and that his relevance has long become irrelevant. Bringing such a liability to the party, would only make a mess of its fiercely fought fortunes. This is another knock off for Kwankwaso as a kingpin. However, Kwankwaso's political style notwithstanding, particularly the presumed perception of the public, that, in his political dictionary, the word political humility is non-existent, the National Chairman of the APC, Dr. Abdullahi Umar Ganduje, an erstwhile ally of the same Kwankwaso, went the way of compassion and political benevolence. To him, refusing to receive Kwankwaso, if indeed he is seeking refuge in the party, would amount to a political overkill.

The question now begging for answer is, is Kwankwaso really seeking a refuge in the APC, and if so, is the kingpin being keyed in for a knock off?

So, as far as politics and political maneuverings are concerned, Kwankwaso is qualified to be labelled as one that has been through the thick and thin

Femi Adebayo Seven Doors' D AMVCA

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At the 11th Africa Magic Viewers' Choice Awards (AMVCA) held on May 10, 2025, Femi Adebayo's *Seven Doors* emerged as the most celebrated film, clinching multiple top honors and reaffirming Adebayo's esteemed position in Nollywood. Online movie streaming services

Seven Doors led the nominations with 11 nods, including Best Indigenous Language Film (West Africa), Best Director, Best Lead Actor, and Best Lead Actress. The film's success is a testament to its compelling narrative, exceptional performances, and technical excellence.

Femi Adebayo's *Seven Doors* wasn't just a film—it was a cultural phenomenon and an artistic triumph that rightfully swept

major categories at the 2025 Africa Magic Viewers' Choice Awards (AMVCA). From the opening scene to its emotional finale, the film masterfully blends tradition, suspense, and profound storytelling, delivering a cinematic experience that resonates long after the credits roll.

Set in the fictional Ilara Kingdom, *Seven Doors* tells the story of King Adedunjoye, a ruler caught between ancestral expectations and personal conviction. The plot thickens as the kingdom confronts a prophecy tied to seven symbolic doors—each representing a moral and political crossroad. With each door unlocked, the audience is drawn deeper into a complex narrative of leadership, love, betrayal, and ultimately, redemption. The storyline isn't merely a royal tale—

it's a philosophical reflection on the burden of power, the fragility of trust, and the haunting weight of legacy.

Femi Adebayo: A Multifaceted Talent

Femi Adebayo, born on December 31, 1978, in Lagos, Nigeria, is a distinguished actor, director, producer, and trained lawyer. He holds a master's degree in law from the University of Ibadan and has starred in over 1,000 Nigerian films. Adebayo's contributions to the entertainment industry have earned him numerous accolades, including awards from the Africa Magic Viewers' Choice Awards, Afro-Heritage Broadcasting & Entertainment Award, and Zulu African Film Academy Awards. He also served as the Special Adviser



Adebayo's 'Seven Doors' Dominates AMVCA 2025

by Adelewe

to the Governor of Kwara State on Arts, Culture, and Tourism from 2017 to 2019. Through his production company, Euphoria360 Media, Adebayo has produced several successful films, including *King of Thieves* and *Jagun Jagun*.

Why *Seven Doors* Deserved Its AMVCA Sweep

Femi Adebayo's *Seven Doors* wasn't just a film—it was a full-bodied cultural experience that deserved every accolade it picked up at the 2025 AMVCA. Winning Best Indigenous Language Film (West Africa) was only fitting, given the film's authentic and unflinching portrayal of Yoruba culture. From the language to the rituals, the costumes to the storytelling, *Seven Doors* brought tradition to life with a richness that deeply resonated with audiences across the continent.

As Best Director, Adebayo showed extraordinary vision, weaving a layered narrative that explored generational struggles, power, and destiny, all while keeping the pacing sharp and the emotional stakes high. His handling of the story's cultural intricacies revealed a director at the top of his game.

In the Best Lead Actor category, Adebayo's own performance was nothing short of gripping. His portrayal of the embattled hero, torn between legacy and conscience, was delivered with depth, restraint, and emotional honesty.

And Chioma Akpotha's performance as Queen Amaka? Majestic and moving. She wore the crown not just in costume, but in presence—earning her the Best Lead Actress title with a character

that balanced vulnerability and strength in ways that few on screen ever manage.

In all, *Seven Doors* didn't just win awards—it earned them.

Other Notable Winners

While *Seven Doors* dominated the awards, other films also received recognition. *Lisabi: The Uprising* garnered accolades for Best Movie and Best Lead Actor, and *Skeleton Coast* was recognized for its exceptional cinematography. These wins highlight the diverse talents and storytelling prowess present in the African film industry.

The 2025 AMVCA celebrated the dynamic and evolving landscape of African cinema, with *Seven Doors* setting a new benchmark for excellence and cultural representation in Nollywood.

The National Youth Conference and its Impact on Governance, Economic Development, and Sustainability in Nigeria

By Comrade Philip Ikodor

The Proposed National Youth Conference (NYC) in Nigeria is perceived to serve as a platform for young people to engage in discussions, propose solutions, and influence national policies. This national youth conference will absolutely play a significant role in economic development and sustainability by fostering dialogue, innovation, and policy formulation.

In Nigeria, where youths make up a significant portion of the population, their participation stands to benefit significantly from harnessing this demographic dividend and it is crucial in shaping policies that will drive progress policy reforms, economic growth and sustainability. The conference will provide young people with opportunities to engage policymakers, express their concerns, and propose solutions to national challenges.

This milestone initiative by the government of the day will obviously bring together Nigerian youths from all spheres of life across government institutions, business world, academics, artisans, PLWDs, and civil society organizations alike to address pressing national issues bordering on youth inclusivity in governance.

Youth involvement in governance, economic development, and sustainability is crucial to national progress. A well-structured NYC will foster leadership, innovation, and proactive citizenship, leading to transformative impacts in governance, the economy, and environmental sustainability.

Suffice to say that, the proposed NYC will attempt to holistically address key National issues that will impact on youth inclusivity leading to the economic growth, and sustainability in Nigeria such as:

Impact on Governance

The NYC will provide a structured

avenue for young people to influence policies that directly affect them. Discussions from the conference will ultimately contribute to national youth policies, shaping sectors such as education, employment, technology, and governance reforms as well as activate the discussion around the promotion of youth participation in governance through the strengthening of the advocacy for policies like the “Not Too Young to Run” Act. By institutionalizing the youth involvement, the government must ensure that policies are reflective of the needs and aspirations of the young population.

Leadership Development and Political Participation:

One of the major challenges in Nigeria’s governance system is the underrepresentation of young people in decision-making roles. This conference will encourage leadership training, mentorship programs, and political awareness campaigns that prepare youth for governance roles. Through the various workshops and discussions sessions, the NYC will nurture young leaders who can take active roles in political offices, civil society organizations, and grassroots governance.

Strengthening Democratic Institutions and Good Governance:

The NYC will provide a platform where youth will discuss and advocate for transparency, accountability, and good governance. This engagement will foster civic responsibility and promotes anti-corruption campaigns among the people. And by promoting open governance, it will empower youth to demand better governance and hold public officials accountable.

Strengthening Civic Engagement and Activism:

A well-informed youth population plays a crucial role in democratic governance. The NYC platform will encourage civic activism and participation in governance, enabling young people to contribute ideas and take an active role in their communities. Programs such as voter education and youth-led policy monitoring, will improve political engagement and reinforce democratic values.

Impact on Economic Development Promoting Entrepreneurship and Innovation:

Unemployment remains a significant challenge in Nigeria, particularly among young people. The NYC will foster entrepreneurship by equipping participants with the requisite ideas to improve or enhance their business skills, access to funding, and mentorship. Through the workshops instituted at the conference, young entrepreneurs will learn about business development, financial literacy, and how to leverage technology to scale up their businesses.

Job Creation and Workforce Development:

One of the key topics that should be on the front burner on issues to be addressed at the NYC is employment. The conference will highlight the need for vocational training, internship programs, and government-private sector collaborations to create job opportunities for young people. Additionally, the conference will serve as a networking platform where young professionals can connect with potential employers and investors.

Digital Economy and Technological Advancement:

The conference will promote youth participation in the digital economy, encouraging engagement in fields such



as fintech, artificial intelligence, and e-commerce. The platform will seek to press on Government and its private sector partners to provide training on digital skills, ensuring that Nigerian youth remain competitive in the global digital space.

Public-Private Partnerships (PPP) for Youth Development:

By the engagement of key stakeholders, the NYC will facilitate public-private partnerships aimed at providing youth-friendly financial products, mentorship programs, and startup incubators. These partnerships will bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical business application, driving economic diversification and industrial growth.

Impact on Sustainability Climate Change Awareness and Environmental Protection:

Nigeria faces significant environmental challenges, including deforestation, desertification, and pollution. The NYC platform will be an avenue to educate young people about environmental conservation and sustainable practices. Programs such as tree planting initiatives, recycling projects, and climate action campaigns will be focus for discussion and implemented and should be encouraged at the community level.

Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs):

The conference I believe will aligns with Nigeria's commitment to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly in the areas such as youth empowerment, quality education, clean energy, and environmental sustainability. Youth engagement in these areas will ensure that Nigeria stays on track toward achieving

sustainable development by 2030 with all the modalities put in place.

Agriculture and Food Security

Agriculture remains a critical sector in Nigeria's economy. The NYC will be the most viable platform to promote youth involvement in agribusiness by having discussions that will provide knowledge on modern farming techniques, access to funding, and technology-driven solutions thereby increasing youth participation in agriculture which will in turn contribute to food security, economic diversification, and rural development.

Community Development and Social Responsibility:

Young people play a significant role in driving local sustainability efforts. The NYC will inspire youth to take ownership of community development projects, ranging from education initiatives to healthcare awareness campaigns such as 'Say No to Drug Abuse', 'Farm to Food to Livelihood'. And through this volunteerism and social entrepreneurship, young people will contribute to national development beyond government-led efforts.

Challenges

Challenges that may bedeviled the National Youth Conference will be Limited Government Support such as Inconsistent funding and lack of follow-up mechanisms that may possibly hindered the implementation of youth-led initiatives.

Political and Institutional Barriers which may hinder youth participation in governance remains low due to political elitism and lack of mentorship opportunities.

Unemployment and Underem-

ployment may also arise. Despite discussions at the conference, translating policy recommendations into tangible job opportunities remains a challenge.

Lack of Awareness and Engagement: Many young Nigerians are unaware or will be able access this proposed NYC thereby limiting participation and impact.

Recommendations for Improvement

Institutionalize Youth Engagement:

The government should create permanent youth advisory councils at federal, state, local, and ward levels. This we ensure a robust and lasting engagement.

Increase Funding for 'Youth Development Programs in form of Providing grants, scholarships, and business incubation support can boost youth economic participation.

There is great need to Expand Digital and Entrepreneurial Training, that is to lay more emphasis on technology and innovation which will prepare youth for the future workforce.

Government must strengthen collaboration between stakeholders, private sector, and civil society to enable them work in synergy to implement resolutions from the NYC.

There should be creation of a mechanism for the continuous engagement beyond the conference such as follow-up programs which should ensure that discussions at the NYC leads to real policy implementation.

There should be massive awareness and information dissemination to ensure robust youth participation.

Conclusion

The National Youth Conference (NYC) will play a crucial role in shaping Nigeria's governance, economic growth, and sustainability agenda. By investing in youth empowerment, creating the platform for national youth dialogue, the country will harness the talents and energy of its young population for national development. The government, private sector, and civil society must work together to ensure that the outcomes of the conference lead to meaningful, long-term change that will launch Nigeria into the global space of fast developing countries

A well-structured NYC, with proper implementation of its resolutions, can transform Nigeria into a nation driven by youth-led innovation, sustainable governance, and economic prosperity.

Cultural Imperialism in Africa:

The Silent War on Indigenous Identity

By Matthew Eloyi

Africa, a continent rich in history, traditions, and cultural diversity, has long been subjected to external influences that shape its societies in profound ways. While political and economic imperialism are widely discussed, cultural imperialism remains an insidious force that continues to erode indigenous identities. This phenomenon, largely driven by globalisation, media dominance, and Western soft power, raises urgent questions about the survival of African cultural heritage in an increasingly homogenised world.

The roots of cultural imperialism in Africa can be traced back to colonialism, where European powers imposed their languages, religions, and educational systems on African societies. The colonial era saw the systematic suppression of African traditions, replacing them with Eurocentric values. Indigenous languages were relegated to the background, traditional governance structures were dismantled, and local religions were dismissed as primitive.

Post-independence Africa, rather than reclaiming its cultural sovereignty, found itself ensnared in neocolonial cultural dependencies. The use of English, French, and Portuguese as official languages, the continued preference for Western education models, and the adoption of foreign religions over indigenous spiritual practices illustrate how deep-rooted cultural imperialism remains.

The Role of Media and Globalisation

In the modern era, globalisation and media play a crucial role in the perpetuation of cultural

imperialism. Hollywood, Western music, and international social media platforms dictate global entertainment and fashion trends, often sidelining African narratives. The proliferation of Western television networks and the dominance of global media giants in shaping public discourse contribute to the erosion of indigenous storytelling and traditional knowledge systems.

Social media further exacerbates this trend, as young Africans increasingly consume and internalise Western ideals of beauty, success, and lifestyle. Platforms like Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube amplify Western influence while sidelining traditional African aesthetics and values. This has led to a situation where African youths are more familiar with Western pop culture than with their own folklore, proverbs, or historical figures.

Moreover, international media organizations often frame Africa through a Eurocentric lens, reinforcing stereotypes of poverty, conflict, and underdevelopment while neglecting positive stories of cultural resilience and innovation. The dominance of foreign-owned media outlets limits the growth of indigenous media industries, making it difficult for African narratives to gain traction globally.

A clear example of this media dominance is the portrayal of African stories in Western films. Movies like *Black Panther* offer a rare, albeit fictional, glimpse of African culture in a global cinema industry dominated by Western perspectives. However, even such portrayals are often mediated through Western lenses, limiting their authenticity and impact. Conversely, African filmmakers

struggle with limited funding and global distribution, making it difficult for local stories to reach international audiences.

The Erosion of Indigenous Languages and Knowledge Systems
Language is a primary vessel of culture, and its decline often signals deeper cultural erosion. Today, many African languages are on the brink of extinction due to the dominance of colonial languages in formal education, governance, and business. When children are taught in English or French at the expense of their mother tongues, they lose not only linguistic fluency but also the wealth of indigenous knowledge embedded in their native languages.

Similarly, traditional African knowledge systems—spanning agriculture, medicine, conflict resolution, and philosophy—are undervalued in favour of Western scientific paradigms. The marginalisation of indigenous knowledge means that generations of wisdom, passed down orally for centuries, risk being lost forever.

The decline of indigenous languages is also exacerbated by the lack of institutional support. Many African governments have not prioritised the preservation of local languages, leading to their gradual disappearance from schools, media, and literature. Without formal documentation and transmission, these languages risk becoming obsolete, leaving younger generations disconnected from their cultural roots.

Furthermore, globalisation has introduced linguistic homogenisation, where English, French, and other dominant languages serve as the primary means of communication in urban centres. This shift discourages

young Africans from learning their mother tongues, as they perceive indigenous languages as less useful in the modern world. Consequently, African children often struggle to communicate fluently in their native languages, weakening the intergenerational transmission of cultural knowledge.

African literature, oral traditions, and storytelling—once central to knowledge dissemination—are also under threat. The preference for Western educational curricula over indigenous storytelling traditions means that African historical narratives are often overlooked. As a result, folklore, proverbs, and indigenous philosophies, which have historically been used to instill moral values and wisdom, are being replaced by Western narratives, further eroding the continent's cultural identity.

For instance, Nigerian writer Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* remains one of the few African literary works that successfully challenged Western narratives of African history. However, such literature remains underrepresented in educational curricula across Africa, where European authors like Shakespeare and Dickens still dominate reading lists.

The Influence of Western Religion and Education

Religious imperialism has also played a significant role in the erosion of African cultures. Christianity and Islam, introduced through colonialism and trade, have largely supplanted indigenous African belief systems. While these religions have been indigenised to some extent, they have nonetheless displaced many traditional spiritual practices, leading to a decline in cultural rituals, festivals, and indigenous moral philosophies.

Western education systems, while beneficial in many respects, have also contributed to the devaluation of African traditions. The curriculum in many African schools prioritises European history, literature, and philosophies over indigenous African thought. This reinforces the idea that African intellectual traditions are inferior or irrelevant in the modern world.

Despite the pervasive effects of cultural imperialism, Africa is not

without agency. Many countries and cultural activists are actively working to revive and promote indigenous identities. Movements advocating for African fashion, music, literature, and film have gained momentum, showcasing the richness of local cultures on global platforms.

Governments and educational institutions must play a pivotal role in reversing cultural erosion. Policies that promote indigenous languages in schools, support local media industries, and encourage the documentation of African knowledge systems are essential. Additionally, African nations must prioritise digital sovereignty by creating and promoting local content on global digital platforms.

“Governments and educational institutions must play a pivotal role in reversing cultural erosion. Policies that promote indigenous languages in schools.”

Furthermore, African youths must be encouraged to embrace their heritage, not as a relic of the past, but as a vital component of their identity. The narrative must shift from viewing African traditions as outdated to recognising them as essential elements of modern African life.

In conclusion, cultural imperialism remains a formidable challenge in Africa, subtly shaping identities and altering traditions. However, the continent possesses the power to resist and redefine its cultural trajectory. By actively preserving indigenous languages, promoting local content, and fostering pride in African heritage, Africa can reclaim its cultural sovereignty in a rapidly changing world. The fight against cultural imperialism is not just about nostalgia—it is about securing a future where African identity thrives on its own terms.



NEWS FROM AFRICA:



1. CJ Dismisses Sudan's Genocide Case Against UAE

The International Court of Justice (ICJ) has dismissed Sudan's allegations that the UAE financially backed the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) rebels in its ongoing war. Sudan's government had accused the UAE of providing weapons and funds that fueled the conflict. The ICJ ruled that Sudan lacked sufficient evidence to prove genocide claims, sparking outrage among Sudanese citizens. Protests erupted in Khartoum, with demonstrators demanding international accountability. Meanwhile, diplomatic relations between Sudan and the UAE remain strained. Analysts warn that the dismissal could worsen Sudan's humanitarian crisis, as fighting between the RSF and government forces intensifies.



2. M23 Rebels Seize Strategic Town in DRC Despite Peace Talks

The M23 rebel group has successfully taken control of Kanyabayonga, a critical town in the eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). This development comes despite ongoing peace talks

between the Congolese government and armed factions. The town's strategic location allows the rebels to exert influence over supply routes and military operations. Reports indicate that thousands of civilians are fleeing the violence, fearing worsening conditions. The DRC military has vowed to reclaim the territory but faces significant logistical challenges. International observers are calling for renewed negotiations and stronger peacekeeping efforts to prevent further instability in the region.



3. Poachers Kill Over 100 Rhinos in South Africa

South Africa is facing a disturbing surge in rhino poaching, with over 100 killed in recent months. Conservationists warn that this increase threatens the country's efforts to protect its wildlife. Poaching syndicates, driven by demand for rhino horns, continue to evade authorities despite anti-poaching measures. Kruger National Park, a hotspot for rhino populations, has seen intensified illegal hunting. The government has pledged stricter enforcement and harsher penalties for offenders. Wildlife organizations are urging international action, including bans on rhino horn trade. With rhino numbers declining, experts fear the species could face extinction if poaching persists.



4. Rwanda in Talks to Receive Immigrants Deported from the US

Rwanda has entered discussions with the United States to receive deported immigrants as part of a controversial relocation program. The negotiations follow similar agreements Rwanda has made with the UK for asylum seekers. While Rwandan officials argue that the country is equipped to integrate these individuals, human rights groups have raised concerns about the plan's ethical implications. Critics argue that deportees could struggle with adaptation and lack support systems upon arrival. The US has yet to confirm details of the agreement. As talks continue, international observers are scrutinizing Rwanda's role in global immigration policies.



5. Morocco's Capital, Rabat, Sees Uptick in Luxury Tourism

Rabat is experiencing a surge in luxury tourism, attracting affluent travelers with high-end accommodations and exclusive experiences. The Moroccan government has invested in expanding tourism infrastructure, including five-star hotels, upscale restaurants, and private resorts. Wealthy visitors from Europe and the Middle East are fueling the growth, boosting Morocco's economy. Luxury travel companies report increased bookings, citing the city's rich history, cultural heritage, and scenic coastline. Rabat's emergence as a premier destination aligns with Morocco's broader efforts to position itself as a leading tourism hub in Africa. Officials anticipate continued investment to sustain the tourism boom.



6. SADC Mission Troops to Complete Withdrawal from DRC by End of May

The Southern African Development Community (SADC) has announced that its military mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) will conclude by the end of May. The mission, initially deployed to stabilize the eastern DRC amid rebel activity, is completing its operations after months of intervention. While regional leaders argue that the withdrawal marks progress, security experts warn that tensions remain. The Congolese government is exploring alternative security measures as local forces prepare to take over defense efforts. Observers fear that without continued support, the situation could deteriorate. The SADC has committed to providing advisory assistance post-withdrawal.

GLOBAL NEWS:



1. Israel Launches Airstrikes on Yemen After Houthi Attack

Israel has conducted airstrikes on Hodeida, a key port city in Yemen, targeting Houthi rebel positions. The assault follows a missile attack by the Houthis that struck Ben Gurion Airport in Tel Aviv, causing minor structural damage but no casualties. Israeli officials say the response is part of a broader military strategy to curb threats from Iranian-backed groups in the region. Yemen's Houthi leadership has condemned the strikes, vowing retaliation. Meanwhile, international organizations have expressed concern about escalating tensions, warning that further conflict could deepen the humanitarian crisis in Yemen.



2. Romania's Far-Right Candidate Wins First Round of Presidential Vote

George Simion, the leader of Romania's far-right nationalist movement, has secured 41% of votes in the first round of the country's presidential election. His opponent, pro-EU candidate Marcel Ciolacu, received 34% and will face Simion in a run-off election. Simion's success has alarmed

Brussels, as his campaign promotes nationalism and skepticism toward the European Union. His popularity is driven by widespread dissatisfaction among rural voters, who feel neglected by mainstream politics. Observers say the second round will be crucial in determining Romania's future stance toward European integration and regional alliances.



3. Lady Gaga Concert Bomb Plot Foiled in Brazil

Brazilian authorities have arrested multiple suspects accused of planning an attack at an upcoming Lady Gaga concert in Rio de Janeiro. Security officials say the group intended to carry out an explosion near the stadium entrance, targeting concertgoers. Law enforcement intercepted encrypted messages detailing the plot, leading to swift arrests. The suspects are believed to be affiliated with extremist groups, though investigations are ongoing. Lady Gaga's management has reassured fans that enhanced security measures will be in place. The incident has reignited debates about counterterrorism efforts in Latin America.



5. Mexico Rejects Trump's Proposal to Send US Troops Across Border

Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum has revealed that Donald Trump privately proposed deploying US troops into Mexico to combat drug cartels. Sheinbaum rejected the idea, citing sovereignty concerns and the risk of escalating regional tensions. The revelation has stirred diplomatic controversy, as Mexico maintains that joint security efforts should respect national borders. Trump's comments come amid renewed discussions on stricter immigration policies in the US. Mexican officials have reiterated their commitment to domestic anti-narcotics strategies, urging Washington to focus on reducing US demand for illicit drugs rather than external military interventions.



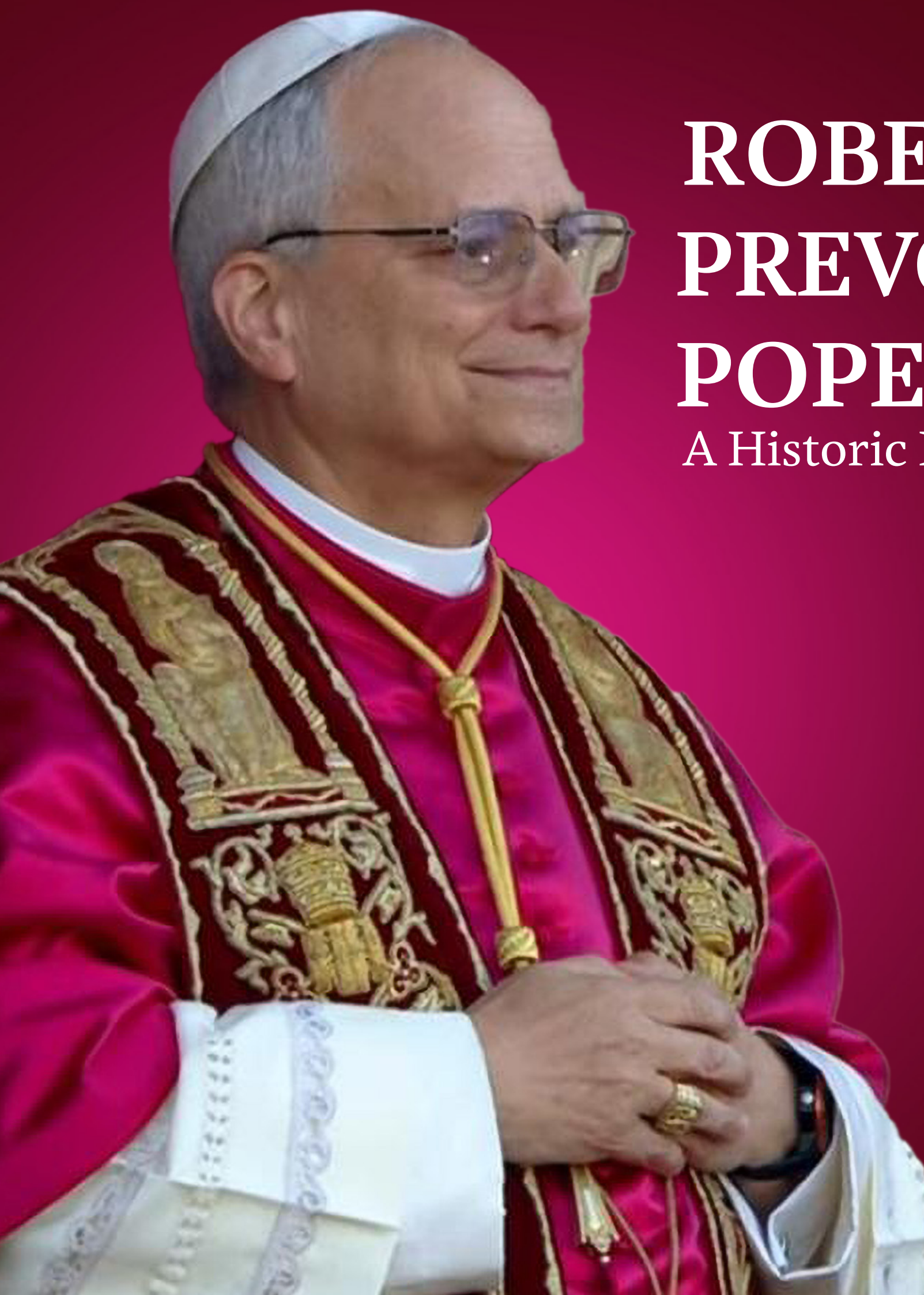
6. Europe Seeks to Attract Scientists After US Funding Freeze

The European Union has launched a €500 million initiative aimed at attracting top scientists from the United States, following funding cuts under the Trump administration. The program seeks to position Europe as a leading research hub by offering grants, fellowships, and state-of-the-art laboratory access. US-based researchers, particularly in climate science and artificial intelligence, have expressed frustration over dwindling budgets and political interference. EU officials hope the initiative will prevent a brain drain to Asia, where countries like China and South Korea are increasing investment in scientific innovation.



7. Eta Aquarids Meteor Shower to Peak Tonight

Skywatchers across the world are set to witness the Eta Aquarids meteor shower, which will peak tonight. The annual event, originating from debris left behind by Halley's Comet, is known for its fast-moving meteors that create bright streaks in the sky. Astronomers say visibility will be best in the Southern Hemisphere, with optimal viewing expected just before dawn. Stargazers in North America, Europe, and Asia will also have a chance to witness the display, provided skies remain clear. Experts recommend finding a location away from city lights for the best experience.



ROBERT PREVOST POPE A Historic

ROBERT FRANCIS PREVOST BECOMES LEO XIV: First for the Americas

By Patience Bitrus

In a landmark moment for the Catholic Church, Cardinal Robert Francis Prevost of Chicago has been elected as the 267th pope, taking the name Pope Leo XIV. He is the first American-born and first Augustinian to ascend to the papacy, marking a significant milestone in the Church's 2,000-year history.

A Life of Service Across Continents

Born on September 14, 1955, in Chicago, Illinois, to Louis Marius Prevost and Mildred Martínez, Robert Francis Prevost was raised in a multicultural household with French, Italian, and Spanish heritage. He entered the Order of Saint Augustine in 1977, making his solemn vows in 1981. Ordained a priest in 1982, he pursued advanced studies in theology and canon law, earning degrees from the Catholic Theological Union in Chicago and the Pontifical University of Saint Thomas Aquinas in Rome.

Prevost's missionary zeal led him to Peru in 1985, where he served for over a decade in various roles, including parish pastor, seminary teacher, and diocesan official. His deep connection to the Peruvian people and culture earned him dual citizenship and a reputation as a bridge between diverse communities within the Church.

Leadership Within the Church

In 2001, Prevost was elected Prior General of the Augustinian Order, a position he held for two terms until 2013. His leadership was marked by a commitment to pastoral care, education, and the promotion of social justice. In 2014, Pope Francis appointed him as Bishop of Chiclayo, Peru, further solidifying his role as a key figure in the Latin American Church.

In 2023, Prevost was called to Rome to serve as Prefect of the Dicastery for Bishops, overseeing the appointment of bishops worldwide. His tenure was noted for its emphasis on transparency, inclusivity, and the selection of leaders attuned to the pastoral needs of their communities. He was elevated to the College of Cardinals later that year.

Election to the Papacy

Following the death of Pope Francis, the conclave convened and, after four rounds of voting over two days, elected Cardinal Prevost as pope. The announcement was made from the balcony of St. Peter's Basilica, where he appeared in traditional papal attire and delivered his first blessing to the faithful gathered in the square.

In choosing the name Leo XIV, the new pope pays homage to

Pope Leo XIII, known for his social teachings and efforts to engage the Church with the modern world. This choice signals a continuity of focus on social justice, dialogue, and the Church's role in addressing contemporary challenges.

A Vision for the Future

Pope Leo XIV's diverse background and extensive experience position him as a unifying figure within the global Church. His commitment to missionary work, education, and social issues reflects a pastoral approach that resonates with Catholics worldwide. Observers note that his election may help bridge divides within the Church and promote a message of inclusivity and compassion.

As he begins his pontificate, Pope Leo XIV faces the task of guiding the Church through a complex global landscape, addressing issues such as secularization, social inequality, and internal reform. His leadership is anticipated to continue the trajectory set by his predecessors, emphasizing humility, service, and engagement with the broader world.

The inauguration Mass for Pope Leo XIV is scheduled for May 18, 2025, where he will formally begin his ministry as the spiritual leader of over 1.3 billion Catholics worldwide.



Nigeria Breaks Ground for Armed Forces Invictus Centre in Partnership with Invictus Games Foundation

Aysha S. Rabo

The Nigerian Armed Forces, in partnership with the Invictus Games Foundation, officially broke ground on the Armed Forces Invictus Centre in Abuja, marking a significant milestone in the rehabilitation and recovery of wounded, injured, and sick service personnel. The historic event, held at a strategic location in the Federal Capital Territory, was attended

by senior military officials, government representatives, members of the diplomatic community, and representatives of the Invictus Games Foundation, including David Wiseman, speaking on behalf of Prince Harry, Duke of Sussex.

A Journey of Partnership and Resilience

In his remarks, David Wiseman reflected on the longstanding

partnership between Nigeria and the Invictus Games Foundation, recalling his first visit to Nigeria in 2021 to explore the country's potential inclusion in the Invictus community. He expressed pride in Nigeria's subsequent participation in the 2023 Invictus Games in Düsseldorf, Germany, where the nation won two medals, including gold in powerlifting.



“The Duke and Duchess of Sussex were delighted to be invited to Nigeria by our gracious host today, Chief of Defence Staff, General Christopher Musa. It was during that historic visit that General Musa announced the intention to build the Armed Forces Invictus Centre. And here we are today, breaking ground and laying the first brick,” Wiseman said.

He emphasised that the centre would not only serve as a rehabilitation facility but also stand as a symbol of hope, healing, and resilience for Nigerian service personnel.

A Commitment to Wounded Soldiers

The Chief of Defence Staff, General Christopher Musa, delivered an impassioned speech, highlighting the centre’s strategic importance in providing holistic recovery programs tailored to the needs of injured and sick military personnel.

“This occasion marks another significant step in our nation’s commitment to providing comprehensive care for our brave men and women who have endured physical and psychological wounds in the line of duty,” General Musa stated.

He explained that the Invictus Centre would not operate in isolation but in collaboration with existing military medical facilities, non-governmental organisations, and international bodies dedicated to veteran affairs. The location was

strategically chosen for accessibility, ensuring that both military personnel and veterans outside Abuja can benefit from its services.

Minister of Defence Pledges Support

Honourable Minister of Defence, Mohammed Badaru Abubakar, commended the initiative,

“This centre will not only be a place for physical rehabilitation but also for mental wellness and social reintegration. It is our commitment to those who have sacrificed so much for our nation’s peace and security,”

aligning it with President Bola Ahmed Tinubu’s Renewed Hope Agenda. He described the centre as a crucial step towards improving sports rehabilitation, psychological healing, and overall well-being of Nigeria’s military personnel.

“This centre will not only be a place for physical rehabilitation but also for mental wellness and social

reintegration. It is our commitment to those who have sacrificed so much for our nation’s peace and security,” the Minister remarked.

Nigeria to Participate in Vancouver Invictus Games

Wiseman also announced that Nigeria would be among the 23 nations participating in the upcoming Invictus Games in Vancouver, with the Nigerian team receiving training in Abuja under the guidance of Africa Unconquered. He expressed confidence that the new centre would produce generations of future competitors who would find strength, hope, and healing through adaptive sports.

A Global Recognition for Nigeria’s Commitment

In a gesture of appreciation, the Invictus Games Foundation presented a special honour coin to Nigeria, featuring the Nigerian Invictus team on one side and Corporal Dean Owen Chikwa on the other. The coin symbolises Nigeria’s commitment to advancing the Invictus spirit and supporting wounded veterans.

As construction begins, the Armed Forces Invictus Centre is set to become a legacy, reinforcing Nigeria’s commitment to the well-being of its service personnel and further strengthening its partnership with the global Invictus community.



“Anambra is Rising Because Solution is Here”

Dr. Law Mefor is a renowned communications expert, and public affairs analyst. He was a constant presence in television and radio stations, baring his mind on issues of national relevance. Seven months ago, Prof. Charles Soludo named him the Commissioner for Information. In this interview with OurNigeria News Magazine, he bare his mind on the state of affairs in Anambra State, where the governor, is seeing a second term in office.

OURNIGERIA: Good afternoon, Chief. Let's begin with infrastructure development. What stands out most for you in Governor Soludo's achievements?

CHIEF LAW MEFOR: Thank you. When we talk about infrastructure, we're witnessing a revolution in Anambra under Governor Charles Soludo. It's not just about building roads — it's about building lasting roads. He's using adaptive reconstruction technology that ensures these roads are built to last 20 years, unlike those constructed a decade ago that failed within a few years.

In less than three years, Governor Soludo has awarded over 746 kilometers of roads and delivered at least 462 kilometers, with top construction firms working across all 21 local government areas. That's a total revolution in road infrastructure, and it's happening concurrently all over the state. Road-work isn't measured by distance alone — the quality, design, and supporting infrastructure like street lighting and stormwater systems make his road projects unique.

OURNIGERIA: That's impressive. Are there other sectors where the governor's leadership is making a mark?

CHIEF LAW MEFOR: Absolutely. Let's take health care, for instance. One innovation that stands out is telemedicine — a form of remote consultation where a nurse at a health center communicates directly with a doctor via video. The nurse checks the patient's vitals, relays them, and the doctor interacts live with the patient, issuing prescriptions or referrals as necessary.

Now, in Anambra, every resident has access to a

primary health center. At the very least, there is always a nurse on-site, and that nurse can immediately connect the patient with a doctor remotely. This system has made health care accessible to even the remotest communities.

Our primary health care delivery system has been so effective that it was peer-reviewed and recognized by the United Nations Health Agency and other Nigerian health bodies as the best in Nigeria. We won two national awards, including the Primary Health Care Challenge, topping both the South-East zone and the entire country, with a combined cash prize of \$1.2 million. Many of these achievements weren't even captured in the original manifesto — Soludo has gone far beyond it.

OURNIGERIA: That's quite an accomplishment in just three years. What about security?

CHIEF LAW MEFOR: Security is another area where the Soludo administration is changing the game. The Anambra State Homeland Security Law, signed into effect in 2025, has provided the foundation for a robust new security architecture.

We're not just adding more personnel — we've introduced technology. Anambra now boasts a state-of-the-art Command and Control Center powered by artificial intelligence. It gives real-time access to all major roads and flash-points across the state. There's also a Call 24/7 Center (5111) where citizens can report incidents — and it works.

There is also a policy of whistleblowing the governor introduced which has helped a lot in calming down things in Anambra. There is a N5m reward for every citizen that provides information that help curtail a major security threat. So, everyone that is seeing something is now saying something, and Anambra is the better for it.

We have equipped our strike force, known as 'Operation Udo Ga-Achi' a special intervention unit made up of the Army, Police, DSS, Civil Defence, Air Force, and state vigilante forces, now known

as 'Agwunegenmba', which is just like the 'Amotekun' in the South West, to tackle insecurity collectively. This inter-agency synergy means that no community is left to fend for itself. Even kidnappers and criminals cannot hide — once they make a call, our tracking systems can pinpoint their location, even outside the state, and they are brought back to face justice.

OURNIGERIA: Beyond building roads and ensuring security, what else is the governor building?

CHIEF LAW MEFOR: He is building people, especially the young men and women of Anambra state. Professor Charles Soludo has re-conceptualize and re-introduced the popular Igbo Apprenticeship Model. This initiative is a systematic evolution. A practical and deeply cultural approach to economic empowerment, now refined to suit modern realities. It aligns with Governor Soludo's campaign promise to create 130,000 public/private sector jobs annually and to raise 1,000 youth millionaires every year. What we're doing is redirecting the energy of young people away from crime, restiveness, and other social vices toward productive ventures.

Already, this initiative has graduated the first batch of 500 young people, who were not only trained, but provided capital, to launch their own business. In fact, some graduates of this initiative, have on their own started a different scheme, in their bid to give back to the society. They are called 'Proud Millionaires', and are currently raising another 1000 millionaires. Aside this give back initiative, another batch of 8700 participants will be graduating in a few months' time.

There is another initiative where our youths are trained in information and communication technology and innovation, after which they are challenged to use the skills acquired to provide solution to various challenges of the state. They are not just trained, they are well motivated and I can tell you some of them are currently benefiting from this initiative. They

are now employable and making impact in various fields. I must tell you that, an app produced by one of the beneficiaries is currently being used in the state. So, in this state, there is a heartwarming mantra now that says: 'Everything ICT, Anambra is Everything'. By the type this initiative come full cycle, Anambra will be the 'tech hub' of Nigeria.

OURNIGERIA: It seems the governor has also focused on finance and governance reforms.

CHIEF LAW MEFOR: Correct. One of Soludo's greatest feats is the reversal of the long-standing imbalance between capital and recurrent expenditure. For the first time since 1999, a Nigerian government has achieved 77% capital and 23% recurrent expenditure. No previous budget has come close to this. It means more money is spent on development — roads, hospitals, schools — instead of just salaries and running costs. That is intentional and transformational governance.

Even where loans are involved, he insists on viable borrowing — any money borrowed is tied to clear, impactful projects. For instance, the state's rail transport masterplan that is being implemented will cost over ₦1.67 billion, but every kobo is tied to developmental goals, and it is expected that the initiative will pay back the loan in ten (10) years.

OURNIGERIA: Finally, what's your verdict?

CHIEF LAW MEFOR: Anambra is rising. I say this, not because I am a commissioner. I say this because I am a citizen and what I have seen before, and since joining this government, shows so. There's no doubt about it. From infrastructure and health to security, economy, digital governance, and youth empowerment through startups, Governor Soludo has not just implemented his manifesto — he has exceeded it. In just three years, he has set Anambra on a path of irreversible transformation, without borrowing a kobo! And that is why we say, "Solution is here."

Mastering the Art of Impactful Leadership: The Power of Continuous Improvement, Attention to Details, and Measurements

By: Ojo Emmanuel Ademola



leadership excellence lies in the ability to inspire and motivate and the capacity to continuously improve, attend to details, and measure impact. In this context, continuous improvement, attention to

Building a great team is essential to foster a successful strategy in the digital age. A great team is the foundation for all successful businesses, particularly in the fast-paced and rapidly evolving digital landscape.

To develop a great team, it is essential to identify and recruit individuals with the necessary skills, knowledge, and expertise to thrive in the digital age. This may include individuals with strong technical skills, creative thinkers, and strategic visionaries who can adapt to the constantly changing digital landscape.

Furthermore, fostering a culture of collaboration, communication, and continuous learning within the team is crucial. In the digital age, where technology is constantly evolving and disrupting traditional business models, it is essential for teams to be agile and adaptable to stay ahead of the curve.

Building a diverse team with various perspectives and backgrounds is also key to fostering innovation and creativity in the digital age. Different viewpoints and experiences can lead to more creative solutions and better decision-making, helping the team stay competitive in an increasingly global and

Effective leadership is paramount for organisations to thrive and succeed in today's dynamic and volatile business environment. Leaders are critical in driving strategy, making decisions, and navigating risks that can significantly impact performance. However, true

detail, and measurements of impactful leadership are key components that can help leaders mitigate risks, drive innovation, and achieve sustainable success. This piece explores how these elements are interconnected and essential for successful leadership in a rapidly changing world.

interconnected world.

Intriguingly, building a great team in the digital age is not just about finding individuals with the right skills and expertise. It is about creating a culture of collaboration, innovation, and adaptability that allows the team to thrive in an ever-changing digital landscape. Ultimately, a great team is the driving force behind a successful strategy in the digital age.

How can harnessing impact in the digital age significantly contribute to creating a formidable team that drives a successful strategy in leadership and management? By delving into the intricacies of this concept, we can uncover the underlying issues,

the digital age is the constant need to adapt and stay up-to-date with new technologies and trends. This requires a shift in mindset and continuous learning to effectively harness the potential of digital tools for team collaboration and productivity. Leaders must also be able to foresee potential disruptions and challenges caused by digital transformation and take proactive steps to mitigate them.

Additionally, the digital age has brought about a shift in how teams communicate and collaborate. Virtual teams are becoming more common, and leaders must find ways to foster a sense of connection and belonging among team members who may

work environment where diverse perspectives are valued.

Furthermore, leaders must also empower team members to take ownership of their work and contribute their unique skills and insights to the team's overall success. By providing autonomy and support, leaders can tap into the full potential of their team members and drive innovation and growth.

This means that to build a great team in the digital age, leaders must be adaptable, tech-savvy, and focused on creating a culture of learning and innovation. By harnessing the impact of technology and digital tools, leaders can foster a successful strategy in

leadership and management and drive their teams towards achieving their goals.

Trending issues include: Where exactly does impactful leadership reside in the digital era? How do leaders navigate the complexities of today's technological landscape to inspire and influence their teams towards success? By exploring this question, we can delve into the dynamics



thought processes, and innovative solutions that pave the way for building a high-performing team in today's fast-evolving digital landscape.

Of course, in the digital age, the role of a leader and manager in building a great team has evolved significantly. It is no longer just about hiring individuals with the right skills and experience but also about understanding the impact of technology and digital tools on team dynamics and performance.

One key issue leaders face in

be geographically dispersed. This requires strong communication skills, building trust remotely, and digital collaboration tools to ensure seamless teamwork.

One effective solution to these challenges is to focus on building a culture of continuous learning and innovation within the team. This involves creating opportunities for team members to upskill and acquire new digital competencies, fostering creativity and experimentation, and encouraging an open, inclusive

that shape effective leadership in the digital age and uncover the strategies that propel teams towards achievement.

In the digital age, impactful leadership thrives on a clear vision and strategy that harnesses technology to drive innovation and growth. Leaders must adapt to ever-evolving technological advances, embrace change and remain agile to stay ahead in the fast-paced digital landscape. Effective communication is crucial, particularly for virtual teams, as

leaders leverage digital tools to connect, provide feedback, and foster collaboration, building trust and alignment within the team.

Empowering team members and fostering a culture of experimentation and learning are essential in driving innovation. Leaders must empower their teams to take ownership of their work, encouraging them to explore new ideas, take calculated risks, and learn from failures. Digital literacy is a must-have for leaders, enabling them to understand technology trends, leverage digital tools effectively, and continuously upskill to stay relevant and effective in the digital realm. Additionally, ethical leadership is paramount, requiring transparency, integrity, and a strong commitment to data privacy to build trust with teams and stakeholders in an increasingly data-driven world.

Elaboratively, in the digital age, impactful leadership lies in effectively leveraging technology, nurturing a strong team culture, and driving innovation. Here are some key aspects to consider:

1. Vision and Strategy: Leaders need a clear vision and strategy for how technology can drive the organisation forward in the digital age. Understanding emerging technologies, industry trends, and customer preferences is crucial in shaping a forward-thinking strategy that leverages digital tools for success.

2. Adaptability: Digital technology constantly evolves, and leaders must be adaptable and open to change. They should be willing to embrace new technologies, experiment with innovative solutions, and pivot quickly in response to changing market conditions.

3. Communication: Effective communication is essential in the digital age, especially when leading virtual or remote teams. Leaders must be skilled in using digital communication tools to connect with their teams, provide feedback, and foster collaboration. Clear and

transparent communication helps build trust and alignment within the team.

4. Empowerment: Empowering team members to take ownership of their work and contribute their ideas is key to fostering innovation in the digital age. Leaders should create a culture of empowerment where team members are encouraged to experiment, take risks, and learn from failure.

5. Digital Literacy: Leaders in the digital age need to understand digital technologies and how they can be applied to enhance business processes and outcomes. Continuous learning and upskilling are essential for leaders to stay relevant and effective in a rapidly changing digital landscape.

6. Ethical Leadership: With the increasing reliance on data and technology, ethical leadership is more critical than ever. Leaders must prioritise transparency, integrity, and data privacy to build trust with their teams and stakeholders.

Essentially, impactful leadership in the digital age requires strategic thinking, adaptability, effective communication, empowerment, digital literacy, and ethical decision-making. By focusing on these key aspects, leaders can navigate the complexities of the digital landscape and drive their teams towards success.

How does the concept of continuous improvement factor into this process? What role does the commitment to ongoing enhancement play in shaping the trajectory of success within teams and organisations striving to thrive in the digital age? By delving into this idea, we can uncover

the significance of continuous improvement in driving progress and innovation within the ever-evolving digital era landscape.

Continuous improvement is a fundamental aspect of impactful leadership in the digital age as it ensures that teams are constantly evolving, learning, and adapting to new challenges and opportunities. Leaders must cultivate a culture of continuous improvement by encouraging feedback, reflection, and a growth mindset among team members. By embracing a mindset of continuous learning and development, teams can stay ahead of the curve in a rapidly changing digital landscape.

Leaders can promote continuous improvement by setting clear goals, measuring progress, and celebrating small wins along the way. Regular feedback loops and performance evaluations provide valuable insights for both leaders and team members to identify areas for growth and development.

Embracing new technologies and processes can also drive continuous improvement, enabling teams to streamline operations, enhance productivity, and innovate more effectively.

By prioritising continuous improvement, leaders can foster a culture of innovation,

resilience, and adaptability within their teams. Embracing change and encouraging experimentation allows teams to test new ideas, learn from failures, and make data-driven decisions to drive continuous improvement. This iterative approach not only leads to enhanced performance and outcomes but also builds a strong foundation for long-term success in the digital age.

How does the idea of paying attention to detail influence the outcomes of various endeavours

Empowering team members and fostering a culture of experimentation and learning are essential in driving innovation.

and the overall success of a project or task? By examining the importance placed on meticulousness and precision in decision-making and execution, we can gain insights into how focusing on the finer points contributes to achieving the desired outcomes. Delving into this concept allows us to uncover the significance of careful attention to detail in enhancing the quality and effectiveness of our actions and endeavours.

Attending to details is crucial for successful leadership in the digital age as it enables leaders to maintain high standards of quality, consistency, and efficiency in all aspects of their work. By paying attention to the finer points, leaders can ensure that projects are completed accurately, timelines are met, and resources are utilized effectively. In a fast-paced and complex digital environment, overlooking details can lead to errors, setbacks, and missed opportunities.

Effective leaders understand that success often lies in the details and are committed to thorough planning, organisation, and execution. By focusing on the specifics, leaders can identify potential risks, anticipate challenges, and proactively address issues before they escalate. Attention to detail also demonstrates a commitment to excellence and professionalism, instilling confidence in team members, stakeholders, and customers.

In the digital age, where rapid innovation and continuous change are the norm, attention to detail is a key differentiator that sets successful leaders apart. By being meticulous in their approach, leaders can build trust, credibility, and accountability within their teams and organizations. Ultimately, it is the careful consideration of details that paves the way for successful outcomes, sustainable growth, and long-term success in the dynamic and competitive digital landscape.

How can utilising measurements of impactful leadership aid in

mitigating risks and enhancing the overall effectiveness of an organisation's leadership strategies? By integrating assessments of impactful leadership into our discussions on risk management, we can explore how these evaluations provide valuable insights into identifying potential vulnerabilities and developing proactive approaches to address them. Placing a focus on the relationship between impactful leadership measurements and risk reduction allows us to consider

Attending to details is crucial for successful leadership in the digital age as it enables leaders to maintain high standards of quality.

the role of data-driven decision-making in fostering a resilient and successful leadership culture.

Measurements of impactful leadership play a crucial role in reducing associated risks by providing leaders with valuable insights into their performance and the outcomes of their decisions. By establishing clear metrics and key performance indicators, leaders can track progress, identify potential areas of improvement, and mitigate risks before they escalate. Monitoring and analyzing these measurements allow leaders to make data-driven decisions, measure the effectiveness of their strategies, and adapt their approach in real-time to address emerging challenges.

Effective leadership measurement not only helps leaders identify risks but also enables them to proactively manage these risks by implementing targeted interventions and corrective actions. By continuously evaluating their

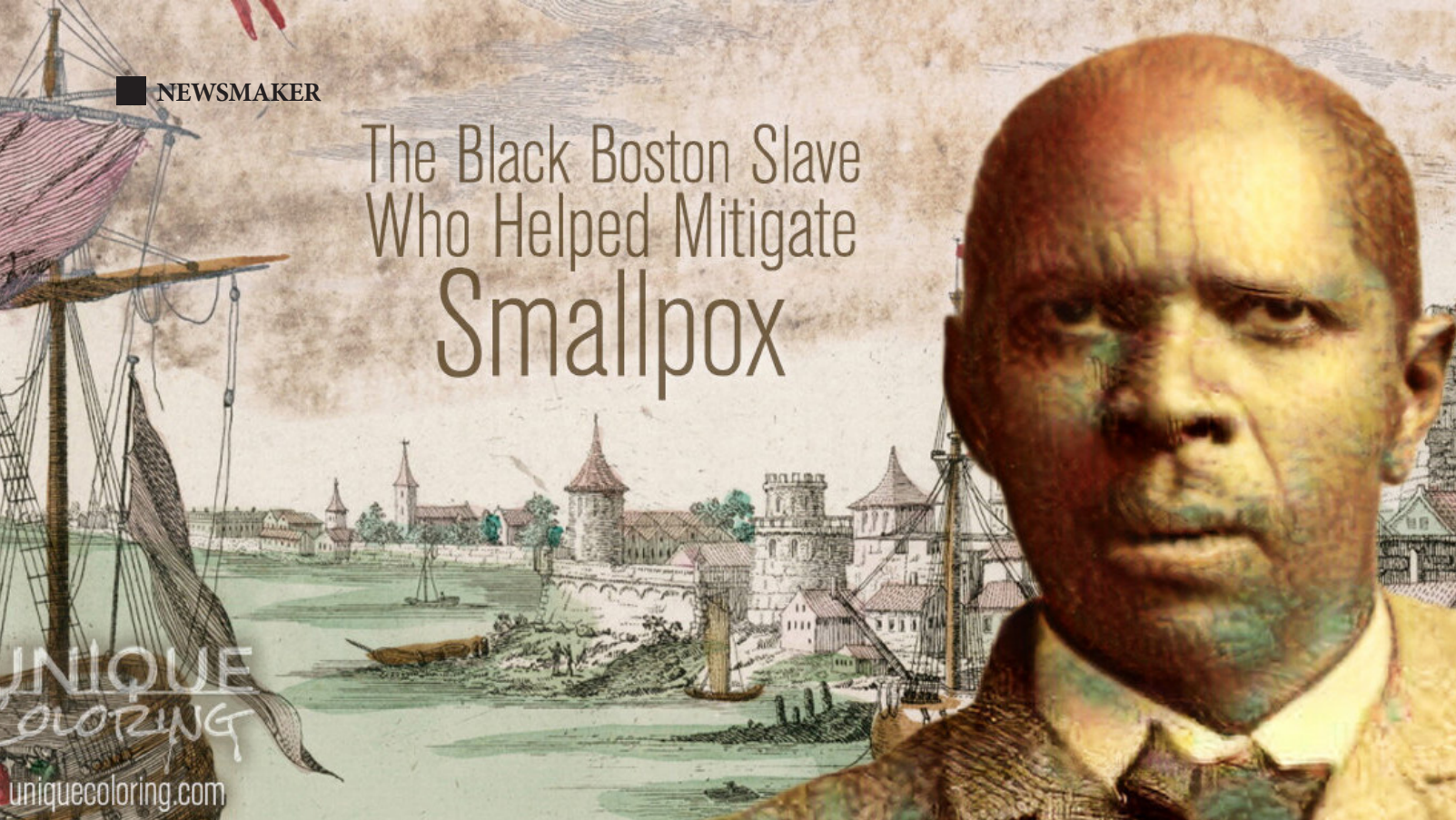
impact on the organization and stakeholders, leaders can identify trends, patterns, and potential vulnerabilities that may pose risks to the achievement of their goals. This proactive approach to risk management allows leaders to stay agile, resilient, and responsive in the face of uncertainty, thereby reducing the likelihood of setbacks and failures.

In the digital age, where disruption and change are constant, measurements of impactful leadership offer leaders a competitive advantage by providing them with the tools and insights needed to navigate complex and uncertain environments successfully. By establishing a culture of accountability, transparency, and performance measurement, leaders can foster a risk-aware culture that anticipates, monitors, and mitigates risks effectively. Ultimately, by leveraging measurements of impactful leadership, leaders can drive sustainable growth, innovation, and success in today's rapidly evolving digital landscape.

In conclusion, the journey towards impactful leadership is multifaceted and requires a holistic approach encompassing continuous improvement, attention to detail, and impact measurements. By embracing a culture of learning and growth, leaders can refine their skills, enhance their decision-making abilities, and proactively manage risks to steer their organisations towards success. Leaders can identify and address potential vulnerabilities through meticulous attention to detail, while robust impact measurements provide valuable insights to refine strategies and drive performance. In today's competitive landscape, where uncertainties are prevalent, leaders who prioritise continuous improvement, pay attention to details and measure their survival survive but thrive in the face of challenges, driving sustainable growth and innovation in their organisations.

The Black Boston Slave Who Helped Mitigate Smallpox

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Onesimus: The Enslaved Man Who Saved Boston from Smallpox and Yoruba's Tradomedical Legacy

Jerry Adesewo

Every year, on February 13, in the City of Boston, in the United States of America, historians, medical professionals, and advocates of African heritage come together to commemorate Onesimus Day, honouring a man whose knowledge of traditional medicine transformed Western medicine. Onesimus, an enslaved African in 18th-century Boston, played a pivotal role in combating smallpox—a deadly disease that ravaged populations worldwide. Though long overshadowed, his contributions stand as a testament to the wisdom of African traditional medicine, a field that continues to thrive, particularly within Yoruba culture.

As we reflect on Onesimus' legacy, it becomes clear that his story is not just a singular historical event but part of a broader narra-

tive that connects African medical traditions, particularly Yoruba tradomedical practices, to modern healthcare.

Onesimus and the Battle Against Smallpox

In the early 18th century, smallpox was one of the most feared diseases in the world. The highly contagious virus caused fever, painful rashes, and, in many cases, death. In 1721, Boston was hit with a severe smallpox outbreak that threatened the city's entire population. During this time, Onesimus, an enslaved man owned by Puritan minister Cotton Mather, shared a remarkable medical knowledge that would change history.

Onesimus told Mather about a practice from his homeland—variolation, a method of inoculation

used by many African societies, especially in the Yorubaland of Western Africa. Variolation involves deliberately introducing material from an infected person's smallpox sores into a healthy individual, usually through a small cut in the skin, otherwise known in Yoruba culture as 'Gbere' (incision). While this might result in a mild infection, it granted the recipient immunity against severe smallpox.

This practice had been used for centuries in Yoruba culture, but it was largely unknown in Europe and the American colonies. Mather, recognising the potential of this knowledge, partnered with Dr. Zabdiel Boylston to test the method. Despite widespread skepticism and fierce opposition, they conducted a trial that ultimately proved successful—those who

underwent variolation had significantly lower mortality rates than those who did not.

Onesimus' contribution laid the foundation for modern immunization, influencing the later development of vaccines by Edward Jenner and, eventually, global vaccination programs. Yet, despite the significance of his role, Onesimus remained largely unacknowledged for centuries, his name obscured by history until recent efforts to reclaim his legacy.

The Yoruba Connection: Traditional Medicine and Immunization

Onesimus' knowledge likely stemmed from West African medical traditions, which share similarities with Yoruba tradomedical practices that persist to this day. Yoruba medicine, known as 'Oogun', is an intricate system combining herbal remedies, spiritual healing, and preventative care.

Long before the advent of modern vaccines, Yoruba healers (known as 'Babalawos' and 'Onise-gun'), employed various forms of immunisation and disease prevention. These methods included the use of herbal infusions, protective charms ('Ìbù' and 'ase'), and exposure to small doses of illnesses to build resistance—much like the variolation technique Onesimus described.

The Yoruba healing philosophy is holistic, recognising the interconnectedness of the body, spirit, and environment. For example, certain herbs like 'Dogonyaro' (neem) and 'efirin' (African basil) were used to boost immunity, while divination systems like Ifá guided healers in diagnosing and treating illnesses. This integration of science and spirituality remains a vital part of Yoruba medicine today.

Celebrating Onesimus Day: Honouring African Contributions to Medicine

Thus, February 13 is not just a day to remember Onesimus but an opportunity to celebrate Africa's broader contributions to medicine. Across the world, historians, scientists, and cultural organizations are

working to ensure that figures like Onesimus receive the recognition they deserve.

In Nigeria and the wider Yoruba-speaking world, this commemoration aligns with efforts to preserve and promote traditional medicine. Events on Onesimus Day often include lectures, symposiums, and cultural exhibitions showcasing Yoruba healing practices and their impact on global health.

Moreover, the day serves as a call to action for African governments and institutions to invest in re-

“In Nigeria and the wider Yoruba-speaking world, this commemoration aligns with efforts to preserve and promote traditional medicine.”

search that bridges traditional medicine with modern healthcare. By supporting herbal medicine research, integrating indigenous healing into national health policies, and educating younger generations about the richness of African medical history, we can ensure that knowledge like Onesimus', which abounds in every corner of the African continent, continues to benefit future generations.

The Future of African Traditional Medicine

As we move further into the 21st century, the challenge remains: how can Africa reclaim its medical heritage while embracing technological advancements? The key lies in fostering collaboration between traditional healers and biomedical researchers.

Countries like China and India have successfully integrated their traditional medicine systems—Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) and Ayurveda—into their national healthcare frameworks. Africa, and

especially, Nigeria, can follow suit by creating regulatory bodies that ensure the safe and effective use of traditional remedies, funding clinical trials for herbal medicines, and developing educational programs that respect both indigenous and modern medical knowledge.

In Yoruba culture, there is a saying: 'Ti a ba fi owo otun we osi, a fi ti osi we otun, Ohun ni owo fi nmo' (When the right hand washes the left, and the left hand washes the right, both become clean). This proverb highlights the importance of balance and cooperation—precisely what is needed in the integration of traditional and modern medicine.

A Legacy That Lives On

Onesimus' story is a powerful reminder that history is often written by those in power, while the contributions of marginalised voices are overlooked. By reclaiming his legacy, though belatedly, we acknowledge not only his impact but also the rich medical traditions of Africa that have shaped global healthcare.

As we celebrate Onesimus Day, let us not only honour his role in pioneering immunization but also recognise the countless African healers, scientists, and innovators whose knowledge has safeguarded lives for centuries. Whether through the strengthening of Yoruba tradomedical practices or the continued exploration of indigenous healing systems, Africa has much to offer the world.

The lesson from Onesimus is clear: wisdom transcends borders, and solutions to the world's greatest challenges can emerge from the most unexpected places—even from an enslaved man who, centuries later, continues to save lives.

One could only hope that, someday, Onesimus would be celebrated in Africa by African leaders, and Yoruba heritage officially confirmed.



REMO STARS: STAND UP FOR THE CHAMPIONS!

Charity Onah

In a season finale that will be etched into Nigerian football folklore, Remo Stars Football Club soared to their first-ever Nigeria Professional Football League (NPFL) title, capping off a sensational 2024/2025 campaign with a dramatic 2-1 victory over Rivers United at a packed Remo Stars Stadium. The Sky-Blue Stars, once considered underdogs, have rewritten history, becoming the first club from Ogun State to lift the

prestigious NPFL trophy.

A Season of Grit, Flair, and Unyielding Ambition

Under the visionary leadership of head coach Daniel Ogunmodede, Remo Stars dazzled fans with their attacking brand of football, blending youthful exuberance and tactical discipline. The team dominated the league, losing only three matches and amassing a record-breaking 75 points. Key

to their success was 22-year-old striker Sikiru Alimi, whose 18 goals earned him the Golden Boot, and midfield maestro Dayo Ojo, whose creativity anchored the squad's relentless offense.

The title race went down to the wire, with Remo needing a win in their final match against Rivers United to edge rivals Enyimba FC by two points. A nerve-wracking encounter saw captain Nduka Junior head in a 89th-minute



winner, sending the 10,000-strong home crowd into delirium.

“

A Dream Achieved Through Brotherhood” – Coach Ogunmodede

Emotions ran high as coach Ogunmodede dedicated the victory to the club’s loyal supporters and ownership:

“This isn’t just a trophy; it’s a testament to years of belief, hard work, and investing in youth. These players fought like family, and today, we’ve made every Nigerian proud.”

Team captain Nduka Junior echoed the sentiment, hoisting the trophy amid fireworks:

“We knew the world doubted us, but we carried the hope of Ikenne on our shoulders. This is for everyone who never stopped singing our anthem!”

NPFL Chairman Gbenga Elegbeleye hailed Remo’s fair play and flair:

“Their rise embodies the spirit of Nigerian football. They’ve set a new standard for excellence.”



From Lower Leagues to Continental Glory

Remo Stars’ journey to the pinnacle has been arduous. Founded in 2004, the club climbed from the amateur NLO League to the NPFL in 2016, narrowly avoiding relegation in early seasons. Their turnaround began with the establishment of the Remo Stars Academy, a talent factory that produced 60% of the current squad.

The triumph also secures Nigeria’s slot in the 2025/2026 CAF Champions League, a historic debut for the club. Chairman Kunle Soname announced plans to bolster the squad and upgrade facilities, declaring, “This is just the beginning. We aim to be Africa’s pride.”

Celebrations Sweep the Southwest

Fans flooded the streets of Ikenne, Sagamu, and Abeokuta, dancing to Fuji beats and waving the club’s blue-and-white colors. Governor Dapo Abiodun proclaimed a public holiday, vowing state support for the team’s continental campaign.

What’s Next for the Champions?

As the NPFL shield gleams in their cabinet, Remo Stars now set sights on African glory. For a team that dared to dream, the sky is no longer the limit—it’s the foundation.



SUN SET ON AN ICON

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We are yet to come to terms with your departure. The news of your sudden demise hit us like a thunder bolt. Our mouths remained in awe, our hands trembling, our feet transfixed. Our body developed goose pimples as in a cold harmattan morning, when we received the news of your passing on.

Yes, are no more. You died in active service, doing what you know best.

Lawrence Bilal Audu, you were our finest, our brightest, our most efficient, our most effective, our most zealous, most reliable, most timeous, most talented, most precise, most affectionate, most amiable, simple, gentle, honest, passionate and multi-tasking.

What a void your departure has created in us. You were our Honourable Minister of Employment. The oracle of the house. The one with the special touch.

We will miss your calm demeanour. We will miss your easy solution to knotty issues. We will miss your indepth reportage. We will miss your no holds barred analyses in the editorial room.

We love you, Lawrence, but God loves you more. May the good Lord console your wife and two sons. May He comfort us, your colleagues and friends.

Your memory will remain fresh in our mind.

Adieu, dear brother.
Rest in Perfect Peace.

Sir AK Peters.
Chairman, Editorial Board.
Our Nigerian Magazine.

REST IN PEACE

1982 - 4TH FEB. 2025

Late Mr.
Lawrence Audu Bilal Okoh
May his soul rest in perfect peace Amen