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100 DAYS TO GO!

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Tinubu, Atiku Camps Intensify War Over 'Bola'

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‘Teminators’ Celebrate as 21-Year-Old Temi Wins Big Brother Naija Season 11

Twenty-one-year-old Temi has emerged as the winner of the 11th season of Big Brother Naija after 70 days of intense competition.

Temi was announced as the winner during the grand finale of the reality show on Sunday, defeating Aikou and Sheba, who finished as the second and third finalists, respectively.

The London-born contestant was among 24 housemates who entered the Big Brother Naija house when the season premiered on July 26.

This season featured a N160 million grand prize package, reportedly comprising cash, a car or SUV and other prizes provided by sponsors.

During her time in the house, Temi became known for her outspoken personality, confidence and distinctive British accent. Born and raised in London, she has Nigerian roots and is associated with Delta State.

Before entering the reality show, Temi was a student and lifestyle content creator. Her online content included shopping and luxury related videos.

Her journey to the finale saw her survive several nominations while participating in tasks and competitions throughout the season.

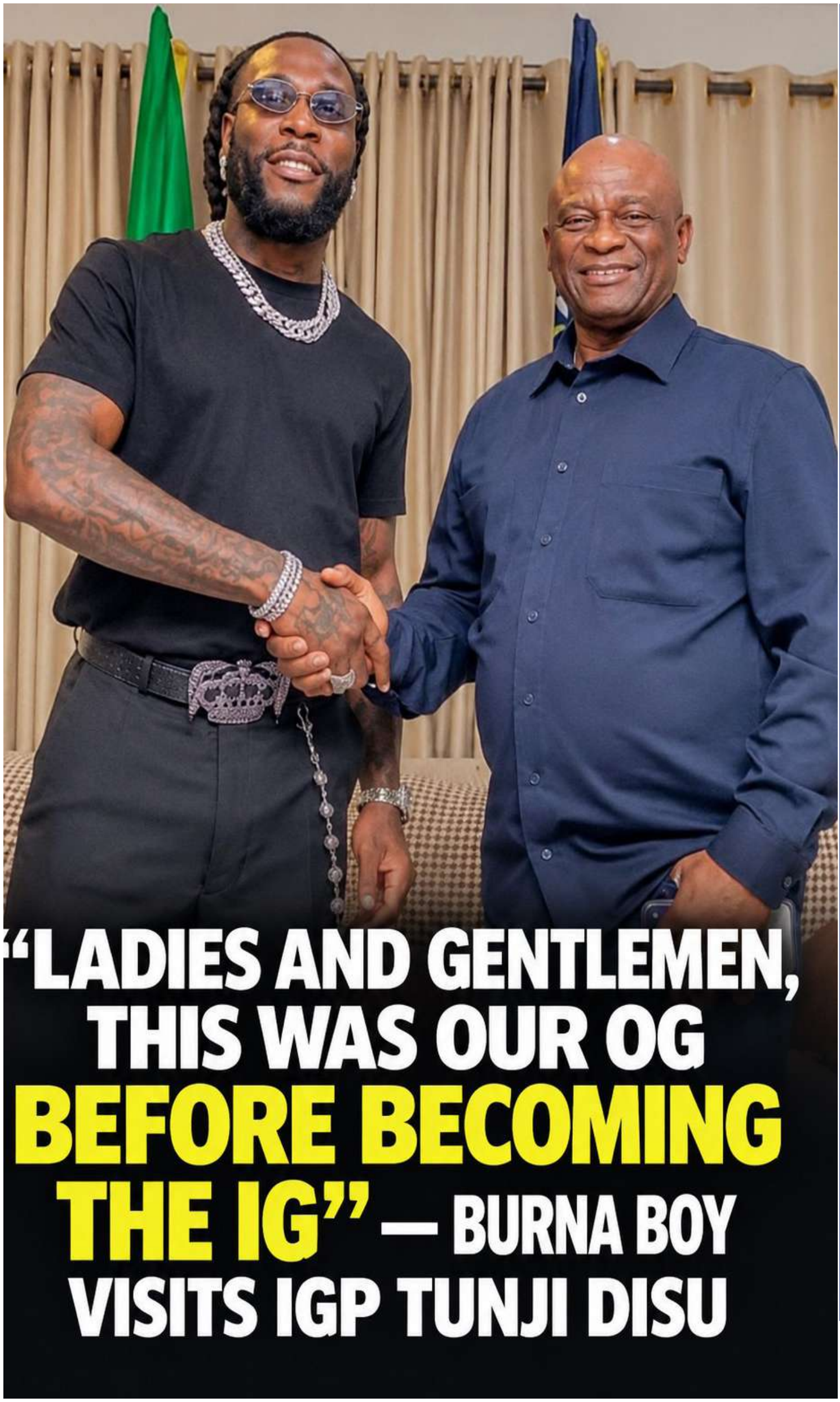
Temi secured her place in the finale after Barry used his Ultimate Veto Power to activate “Immunity for All”, cancelling that week’s eviction and public vote.

The finale featured a series of evictions before the final three emerged. Barry, Oyin, Ricky, Flora, Tram and Bluethopia were among the housemates evicted during the live show, leaving Temi, Aikou and Sheba to compete for the ultimate prize.

At the end of the voting process, Temi was announced as the winner, sending her supporters into celebrations at the live show, fan parks and online.

Her supporters, popularly known as the “Teminators”, celebrated her victory after weeks of campaigning and voting.

Temi’s victory brings the 11th season of Big Brother Naija to an end following weeks of nominations, wager tasks, Head of House contests, twists, evictions and public voting.



Nigerian singer Burna Boy has paid a rare visit to Inspector General of Police Tunji Disu in Lagos, in what appears to be an effort to promote better relations between Nigerian youths and the police.

The visit was captured in a video shared by Nigeria Police Force TV, showing the singer meeting with the Inspector General and discussing the role of Nigeria's creative industry in rebuilding public trust between young Nigerians and law enforcement.

Introducing Disu, Burna Boy said, "Ladies and gentlemen, this was our OG before becoming the IG," suggesting that the two had a relationship before Disu assumed his current position.

The meeting focused on how Nigeria's creative power can be used to encourage dialogue, strengthen understanding and help rebuild trust between young Nigerians and the Nigeria Police Force.

Soft Sell



Veteran Nollywood actress Stella Damasus has recalled the early years of her career alongside fellow actresses Genevieve Nnaji and Omotola Jalade Ekeinde, describing the trio as the “big three” female actors in Nollywood during the 2000s.

Damasus made the revelation while speaking on a podcast, where she reflected on the period when the three actresses were prominent figures in the Nigerian film industry.

According to her, she, Genevieve and Omotola built their careers authentically, without trying to imitate one another or conform to the image of other celebrities.

“They called us the big three. Genevieve, Omotola, Stella. The three of us were in this thing, playing friends. We were very authentic. We were not trying to be like other people. We were not trying to copy other people or be who we were not,” she said.

Damasus said the three actresses were focused on their craft rather than fame or money, noting that the absence of social media at the time meant they had little idea of how successful they could eventually become.

“Everything was authentic. We were not doing it because of the fame or the money. There was no social media to tell us how big we could get. We did not know,” she said.

The actress recalled that seeing their faces on movie posters and being recognised by people was one of the clearest indications of their growing popularity at the time.

“After you see yourself on a poster, that’s about it. People will recognise you here and there and all of that at that time,” she added.

Damasus described the period as one in which young, talented actresses entered the industry with determination and a strong desire to succeed.

“And you just saw young, beautiful, talented women coming to do this job with everything they’ve got, with so much determination to succeed,” she said.

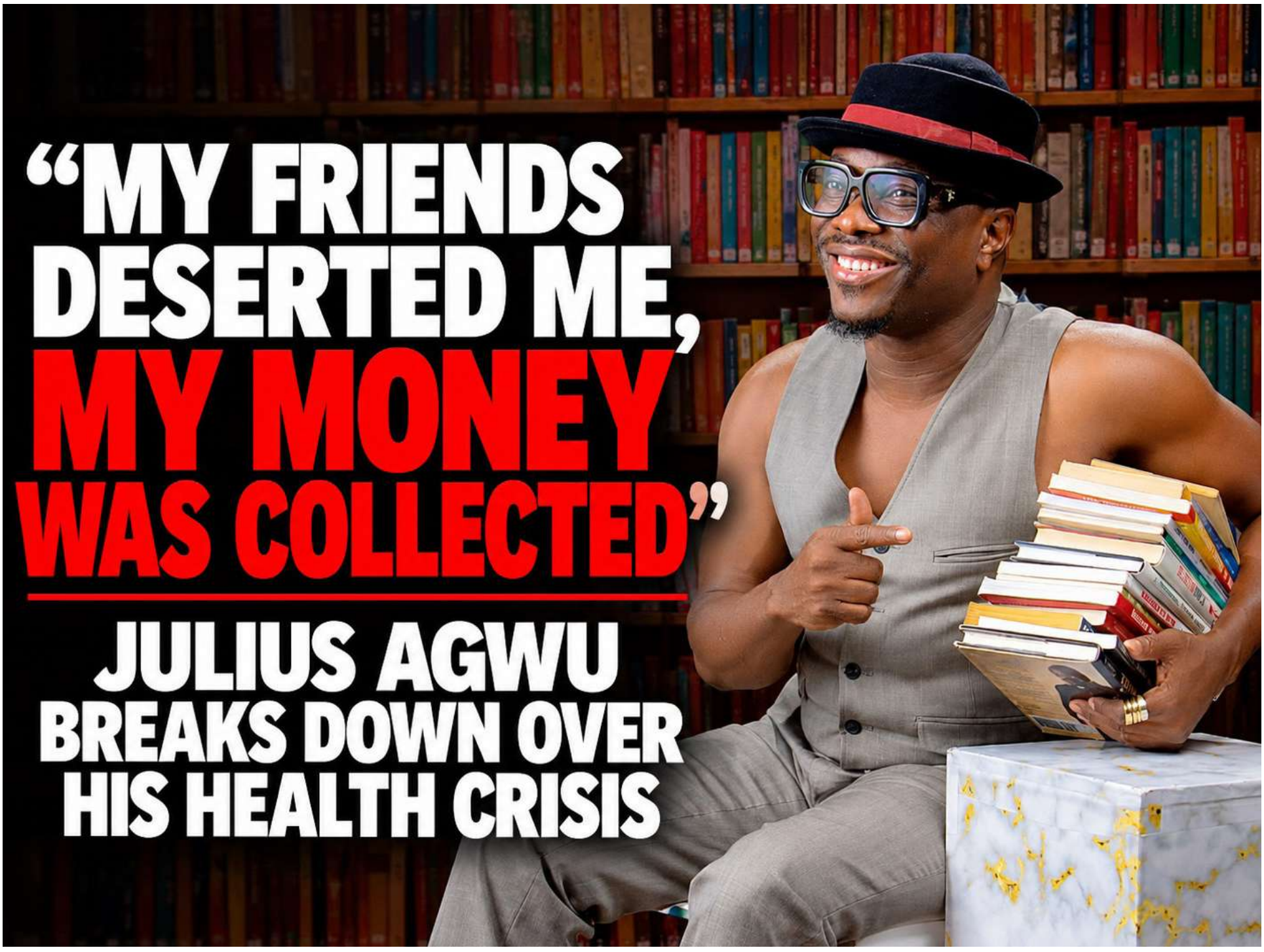
She also acknowledged that their popularity led to comparisons among fans, with audiences often debating which of the three actresses was better.

According to Damasus, the comparisons created an atmosphere where each actress felt the need to continually prove herself and avoid being perceived as the weakest among the trio.

“And I won’t lie, it also brought a lot of comparisons. Fans who love this person more than this person, more than this person. So it meant that we had to keep proving ourselves that we’re better. We’re better. So don’t think I’m the weakest link. Nobody wanted to be the weakest link,” she said.

"MY FRIENDS DESERTED ME, MY MONEY WAS COLLECTED"

JULIUS AGWU BREAKS DOWN OVER HIS HEALTH CRISIS



Nigerian comedian Julius Agwu broke down in tears while reflecting on the difficult period he went through during his health crisis, revealing how he lost several people he considered friends and faced painful personal challenges.

The veteran comedian became emotional while recounting some of the experiences he endured after undergoing a major health crisis that changed his life.

Agwu recalled how he coined the term "music comedy", describing it as one of the ideas that reflected his creativity and the way his mind worked.

"Music comedy, I'm the one who stayed and formed that coinage. I'm the one that formed it. That's to tell you how my brain is working," he said.

However, the comedian became emotional as he reflected on the difficult circumstances that followed his health challenges.

"The God wey I dey serve, anybody wey get hand for wetin happen to me. I will be there and ask myself, what kind of life is this?" Agwu said.

He went on to reveal that some of his friends abandoned him during the period, while he also accused a bishop who had been managing him of collecting his money before communication between them eventually stopped.

"My friends deserted me. This bishop that I'm talking about, he was managing me, he collected my money, they stopped talking to me. It is well," he said through tears.

Agwu's health crisis became public in 2015 when he underwent surgery in the United States after doctors discovered two growths in his brain.

The comedian previously recounted how serious the situation became, claiming that he died during the medical ordeal and later regained consciousness while arrangements were being made to take him to the mortuary.

His health struggles were followed by other major personal challenges, including the end of his marriage.

Agwu has also previously spoken about losing people he considered friends during his most difficult period, making the latest emotional recollection another account of the personal toll the experience took on him.

And Now You Call Him Bola!

By Femi Fani Kayode

My dear Waziri Atiku Abubakar,
I listened to your October 1st speech with great interest.
It was calm and well-delivered but intellectually-flawed, highly disrespectful, inherently dishonest and utterly bereft of decency, logic and rationality.

Worse still you refused to address President Tinubu as 'President' but rather continuously and contemptuously referred to him by his first name 'Bola'.

Surely this level of pettiness is below even you. Yet despite this provocation I will not refer to you as 'Kachalla' and I will accord you the respect that I still think you deserve.

Bashorun Akin Osuntokun, the former Special Advisor on Politics to President Olusegun Obasanjo and the former Director General of the 2023 Peter Obi Presidential Campaign Organisation, spoke the minds of millions when he wrote, inter alia, the following.

"Abubakar is entitled to criticise the President, however sharply. What I found objectionable was his repeated decision to call him "Bola." That was not a more forceful argument; it was a needless display of disrespect. This is not acceptable. It is bad manners and primarily an insult to Nigeria on whose account he occupies that office...This is not a demand for deference to Tinubu's policies or person. It is a demand for decorum and decency... Imagine a former Vice President referring throughout a national address to a sitting President as 'Segun' or 'Muhammadu'. The rudeness would be unmistakable".

Osuntokun is right.

Yet, judging from other parts of his article, he appears to be surprised by your rank insolence whilst I am not.

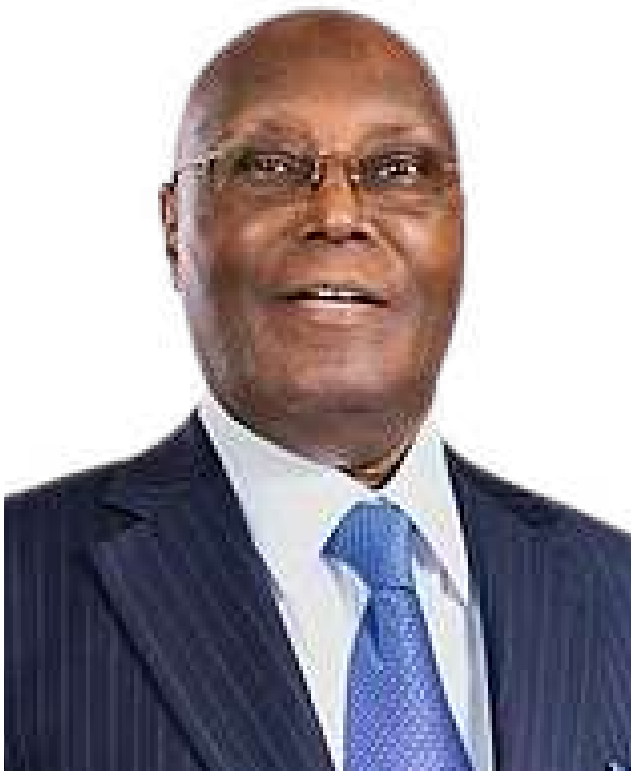
Are you not the same Atiku that betrayed his principal, President Olusegun Obasanjo two years after he was elected into office in 1999 and conspired with a handful of Governors to overthrow him at the primaries and take over his seat in 2003.

Are you not the same Atiku that insulted Obasanjo publicly from 2003 up until 2007 even though you were his Vice President?

Are you not the same Atiku who sought to justify your rebellion and treachery by saying that you opposed Obasanjo only because of 'third term' when in fact your rebellion started long before 2007 and your intention was to stop him from getting a second term in 2003?

Are you not the same Atiku that recently went on Arise and referred to President Goodluck Jonathan as an "inexperienced young man" who "made mistakes" and whose inexperience contributed to him not being able to "properly manage the affairs of the country".

You were referring to a former President that is 69 years old, that led our country for 5 years as firstly Acting President then President, that was elected into office as Vice President just under 20 years



• Atiku

ago, that was elected firstly as Deputy Governor and later Governor of his state 27 years ago as a "young man" with "no experience"?

Are you not the same Atiku that went to the BBC Hausa Service and described Vice President Kashim Shettima, a humble man who unlike you has the courage to be loyal to his boss, as being "disrespectful" simply because he challenged you to give an account of your tenure in office and to tell the world how many people you have empowered since you came into politics 33 years ago?

Your response to him was that it was against the culture of the North for him to ask elders like you such questions yet you did far worse to Obasanjo in 2002 when you attempted to strip him naked before the world, remove his shoes and crown and humiliate him out of office.

You and your legion of fallen angels went even futher by peddling the foul and abominal falsehood and diabolical mendacity that a man that was old enough to be your father and that was, as President, your principal and boss, knelt down before you, grabbed your feet and literally begged you to allow him to run for a second term in 2003 knowing that Obasanjo would rather have died than do such a thing or endure such humiliation.

Where were your Northern culture and manners then?

The truth is that you do not reflect the decency, restraint, patience, good manners, faith in God, loyalty, fortitude, kindness, generosity, charity, kindness, compassion, honor and other virtues that are associated with the North but rather it's antithesis.

You are indeed a master of intrigue and a mask of contradictions and deceit.

Yet it does not end there.

Are you not the same Atiku whose own running mate, Rotimi Amaechi, said, just a few weeks ago, was "unelectable", had "been there before and lost" and had "nothing new to bring to the table?"

Are you not the same Atiku who, after a young Christian girl by the name of Deborah Samuel, was burnt alive by a wild mob in Sokoto on May 12th 2022, initially posted your condolences and commiserations on your X handle and yet removed it one hour later for reasons best known to yourself?

This was after President Muhammadu Buhari, the Sultan of Sokoto and Senator Aminu Tambuwal, who was the Governor of Sokoto state at the time, had ALL condemned Deborah's murder and expressed their regrets.

Yet you could not bring yourself to do the same and instead publicly queried your aide when he did so on your behalf.

Worse still, when asked, you LIED 7 months later at a Channels Television Town Hall meeting that you had earlier condemned the killing.

Expecting any form of genuine love, decorum and decency from you is like expecting kindness from a pit bull terrier and compassion from a hungry wolf.

The truth is that you have no respect, no decorum and no sense of restraint and the only thing you are loyal to is your ambition.

You are finally manifesting your true colours, inordinate ambition, pathological obsession and sheer desperation to get power at all costs.

Yet the truth is that questionable characters that still have so many questions to answer should be embarrassed to question anybody on accountability.

Vain promises we all know you are incapable of achieving due to your greed and lack of patriotism cannot deceive anyone into trusting you.

And because you lack basic respect for the Office of the President and insist on calling him 'Bola', you, my dear Waziri, may NEVER attain that height.

(FFK)

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100 DAYS TO GO: INEC Braces for Nigeria's 'Election of the Century'

Amupitan rallies parties, security chiefs, diplomats, observers as commission unveils readiness for high-stakes 2027 polls

By Peter Salami

With barely 100 days to the start of Nigeria's 2027 general election cycle, the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) is set to move preparations into a decisive phase as it gathers political parties, security agencies and other critical stakeholders in Abuja on Tuesday.

The Commission will use a World Press Conference and National Stakeholders' Meeting on October 6 to give Nigerians a comprehensive account of its readiness for what is shaping up to be one of the most consequential and closely watched elections in the country's democratic history.

INEC Chairman, Prof. Joash Amupitan, SAN, is expected to unveil the state of preparations, including updates on the voters' register, candidate nominations, election logistics and measures designed to protect the credibility and integrity of the polls.

The presidential and National Assembly elections are scheduled for February 20, 2027, while governorship and State Houses of Assembly elections will follow on March 6.

In a statement issued on Sunday by the Chief Press Secretary and Media Adviser to the INEC Chairman, Adedayo Oketola, the Commission said the Abuja meeting would mark the formal 100-day countdown and provide a platform for engagement with major actors in the electoral process.

"The Commission will provide updates on preparations for the elections, including the voters' register, candidate nominations, logistics, and critical measures to ensure the integrity of the electoral process," the statement said.

The meeting comes as preparations enter a crucial stretch, with the Commission expected to demonstrate that the machinery required to conduct elections across Africa's most populous country is being put firmly in place.

Beyond the voters' register and nominations, attention is expected to focus heavily on logistics, election security, technology, transparency, and the systems for protecting the integrity of results.

Amupitan, who assumed office as INEC Chairman in October 2025, has repeatedly pledged that the Commission will work towards elections that are free, fair, credible, transparent, and inclusive.

INEC said Tuesday's gathering would underscore its commitment to "absolute transparency, proactive public communication, and collaborative engagement with key actors in the electoral ecosystem."

The scale of participation reflects the stakes surrounding the 2027 contest.

Political party leaders will attend alongside security agencies operating under the Inter-Agency Consultative Committee on Election Security (ICCES), members of the diplomatic corps, development partners, and civil society organisations.

Also expected are domestic and international observer groups, disability rights advocates, religious and traditional leaders, youth organisations, and media executives.

INEC has already rolled out its electoral timetable, covering party primaries, nomination of candidates, and other statutory pre-election activities under the legal framework governing the polls.

The 100-day milestone will now shift greater public scrutiny towards the Commission's operational preparedness and its ability to coordinate the vast logistical and security operation required for the elections.

For political parties, it also signals that the race is entering its final and most intense phase as campaigns gather momentum ahead of the February presidential and parliamentary contests.

Tuesday's event will hold at the Bola Ahmed Tinubu International Conference Centre, Abuja, with proceedings beginning at 10 a.m.

Attendance will be strictly by invitation, while accredited journalists and invited guests will be required to present accreditation badges or invitation cards at security checkpoints.

INEC said the proceedings would be broadcast live on major national television networks and streamed through its official social media platforms, opening its 100-day readiness presentation to Nigerians at home and abroad.

With the countdown now entering double digits, the Abuja gathering effectively marks the beginning of the home stretch towards January 16— and a major test of INEC's preparations for Nigeria's defining 2027 electoral contest.

Tinubu, Atiku Camps Intensify War Over 'Bola'

Fani-Kayode says ex-VP crossed line of presidential decorum; Atiku camp insists title doesn't matter as 2027 rhetoric heats up

By Abu Adamu

A fierce new front in Nigeria's 2027 presidential battle seems to have opened after former Vice President Atiku Abubakar repeatedly stripped away the President's official title and referred to him simply as "Bola" in his October 1 national address.

The choice has triggered accusations from the Tinubu camp that Atiku deliberately crossed a longstanding boundary of political and presidential decorum, turning legitimate criticism of an incumbent into an apparent attempt to diminish the office he himself is campaigning to occupy.

Former Aviation Minister Femi Fani-Kayode led the charge in a blistering intervention titled "And Now You Call Him Bola!", accusing Atiku of displaying unnecessary disrespect towards the sitting President.

Atiku's Media Adviser, Paul Ibe, has fired back, arguing that "his name is Bola" and insisting that Nigerians are more interested in food prices, petrol, electricity, jobs and insecurity than the form in which the President is addressed.

But beneath the increasingly personal exchange lies a larger question: Does political opposition excuse dispensing with the traditional courtesies attached to the office of President?

Established presidential and diplomatic etiquette suggests otherwise.

In mature presidential democracies, political opponents routinely attack an incumbent's policies, competence and record without ordinarily dispensing with the title of the office in formal addresses.

In the United States, for example, conventional protocol provides for a sitting President to be formally addressed as "Mr President," "the President" or "President" followed by the surname. A politician repeatedly referring to the President merely by his first name in a formal national political address would represent a conspicuous departure from that convention.

Presidential traditions have historically maintained the significant distinction because presidential titles are generally understood as courtesies attached to the office, rather than personal honours bestowed on its occupant.

That is essentially the argument advanced by Fani-Kayode.

He described Atiku's October 1 address as calm and well-delivered but said the former Vice President undermined himself by repeatedly referring to President Tinubu simply as "Bola."

"Surely this level of pettiness is below even you," Fani-Kayode wrote.

His intervention followed similar concerns raised last week by Akin Osuntokun, a former Political Adviser to President Olusegun Obasanjo and Director-General of Peter Obi's 2023 Presidential Campaign Organisation.

Osuntokun, who cannot reasonably be described as a Tinubu partisan, had argued that Atiku was perfectly entitled to criticise the President as sharply as he wished but that repeatedly calling him "Bola" was unnecessary and disrespectful.

"This is not a demand for deference to Tinubu's policies or person. It is a demand for decorum and decency," he said.

Osuntokun posed a simple test: imagine a former Vice President delivering a formal national address and repeatedly referring to a sitting President simply as "Segun" or "Muhammadu."

"The rudeness would be unmistakable," he argued.

His intervention gives the controversy a dimension beyond the predictable APC-ADC divide. Osuntokun was a leading figure in Peter Obi's 2023 presidential campaign and therefore comes from outside the Tinubu political camp.

Fani-Kayode went considerably further, arguing that the episode fitted what he described as a longstanding pattern in Atiku's political conduct.

He revisited Atiku's turbulent relationship with President Olusegun Obasanjo during their second term in office and recalled the bitter political confrontation between the two men.

He also criticised Atiku's more recent comments about former President Goodluck Jonathan and Vice President Kashim Shettima, arguing that a politician seeking the presidency should demonstrate respect for the institutions and individuals occupying the country's highest offices even while disagreeing with them.

The former minister contended that Atiku could have delivered every criticism contained in his Independence Day address without repeatedly reducing "President Bola Tinubu" to simply "Bola."

Ibe, however, insisted otherwise, saying, "His name is Bola. And that is not Nigeria's problem."

He argued that Nigeria was a republic rather than a monarchy and that a President was an elected public servant, not an emperor before whom opponents were required to "genuflect."

"'President' is an office, not a compulsory prefix shielding its occupant from criticism," he said.

That argument, however, does not directly answer the distinction raised by Atiku's critics: acknowledging the title of an elected President neither confers monarchical powers on him nor shields his policies from attack.

Opposition politicians across presidential democracies routinely employ the title "President" while subjecting incumbents to severe criticism.

Indeed, the presidency is precisely an office — the point Ibe himself makes — and conventional protocol attaches the title to whoever legitimately occupies it.

Ibe nevertheless sought to shift the debate away from etiquette towards Tinubu's record in office.

He asked whether food had become cheaper, petrol and electricity more affordable, Nigerians safer, incomes stronger and businesses more prosperous, arguing that these would ultimately be the issues on which Nigerians cast their ballots.

"It is easier to debate 'Bola' versus 'Mr President' than to defend what Bola's policies have done to Nigerians," he said.

The Tinubu administration has consistently countered that argument by maintaining that the difficult reforms undertaken since 2023 were required to pull Nigeria away from an unsustainable economic path characterised by massive petrol subsidies, distorted foreign-exchange markets and severe fiscal pressures.

The government points out that the painful adjustment is increasingly yielding gains through stronger macroeconomic fundamentals, expanding access to consumer and business credit, infrastructure investment, student loans and other social interventions intended to transmit the benefits of reform to ordinary Nigerians.

KTH Daily sources insist that those competing economic claims will undoubtedly dominate the campaign.

But observers hold that the dispute over Atiku's language raises a different question about the standards candidates themselves intend to bring to the presidency.

Said Ufuoma Enakhire, a Lagos-based political analyst, " As a former Vice President, Atiku knows perhaps better than most Nigerians the distinction between an individual and the office he occupies. For eight years, Atiku himself enjoyed the protocols and courtesies attached to Nigeria's second-highest constitutional office. That is why his repeated use of "Bola" has attracted attention.

It could have happened once inadvertently. Repetition in a prepared national address makes that explanation considerably harder to sustain and leaves critics arguing that the informality was calculated rather than accidental," he said.

Atiku's camp says it does not matter.

Tinubu's supporters say it does — because a man asking Nigerians to entrust him with the presidency should be capable of fiercely opposing its present occupant without diminishing the institution he hopes to inherit.

FG Approves N185bn to Clear Legacy Gas Debts

The Federal Government said the National Economic Council (NEC) has approved N185 billion to settle validated legacy debts owed to upstream gas producers.

The Minister of State for Petroleum Resources (Gas), Dr Ekperikpe Ekpo, disclosed this at a news conference on Friday in Abuja.

Ekpo said settling the debts would improve gas supply to power plants and strengthen investor confidence in Nigeria's gas sector.

"This is not merely about settling debt. It is about restoring commercial discipline, improving supply reliability and rebuilding investor confidence," he said.

The minister said the approval was aimed at restoring commercial discipline and improving reliability across the gas-to-power value chain.

On infrastructure, Ekpo said the OB3 Gas Pipeline was 100 per cent complete, with pre-commissioning concluded ahead of first gas.

He said the pipeline had capacity to transport two billion cubic feet of gas daily (BCF/D).

According to him, the project is expected to unlock more than 500 million standard cubic feet per day (MMscf/D) of additional domestic gas supply.

Ekpo said the Ajaokuta-Kaduna-Kano (AKK) Gas Pipeline was about 95 per cent complete.

He added that the Midstream and Downstream Gas Infrastructure Fund (MDGIF), with N671 billion in public funding, had attracted N1.6 trillion in private investment.

The minister said the funding covered 31 projects and 205 infrastructure assets, capable of delivering about 475 MMscf/D to the domestic market.

Ekpo said the Federal Government was targeting about 30 billion dollars in gas investment by 2030.

He said Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) conversions had risen from about 11,000 vehicles in 2023 to more than 120,000.

The government, he added, was targeting at least one million CNG-powered vehicles and up to 1,000 refuelling stations nationwide.

Ekpo said the government was also targeting five million households for Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) access by 2030.

He said distribution of 27,000 free LPG cylinders per state was already underway as part of efforts to expand cleaner cooking energy access.

The minister said President Bola Tinubu had approved extending the National Grassroots LPG Penetration Programme to 2060.

He said the extension would provide a long-term pathway for wider adoption of cleaner cooking energy across the country.

On gas flaring, Ekpo said 42 companies had been awarded contracts to convert flare gas into energy, feedstock, LPG, CNG and power.

He said the government would sustain regulatory and commercial measures to end routine gas flaring by 2030.

Ekpo said Nigeria's gas agenda was anchored on raising production, expanding infrastructure and attracting investment.

He added that the agenda included improving gas supply to the power sector and ensuring producing communities benefited from the sector.

The minister said Nigeria would also use its growing role in international energy organisations to advocate increased gas investment.

He said the country would promote transparent markets, affordable energy access and a just energy transition.



From left: Deputy Director, Gender Mainstreaming and Disability Unit, Raw Materials Research and Development Council (RMRDC), Grace Uzoamaka-Abidoye; Chief Executive Officer, Blissomo International Nigeria Ltd., Blessin Irabor-Oza, and Namibian High Commissioner to Nigeria, Walde Natangwe-Ndevashiya, during the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between Blissomo International Nigeria Ltd. and MT Event and Projects Management CC, Namibia, yesterday in Abuja.

Air Peace Rolls Out Free Door-to-Airport Transfers for London First, Business Class Passengers

By Emmanuel Olugua

Air Peace has expanded its premium travel services with the introduction of complimentary airport pick-up for eligible First Class and Business Class passengers travelling on its London routes, extending its ground transportation package from passengers' doorsteps to their destinations.

The new service, which complements the airline's existing complimentary airport drop-off arrangement, will operate in Lagos, Abuja, Heathrow, and Gatwick airports in partnership with mobility service provider SIMPLAA.

Under the arrangement, eligible passengers can be picked up from their homes, offices, or other preferred locations and transported to the airport before departure. They will also continue to enjoy complimentary onward transfers after arriving at their destinations.

Air Peace said First Class passengers in the United Kingdom would receive complimentary transfers covering distances of up to 70 miles from Heathrow or Gatwick airports, while Business Class passengers would be entitled to transfers of up to 60 miles.

In Nigeria, the complimentary service covers journeys of up to 60 kilometres in Abuja and 40 kilometres in Lagos.

The airline said the offer applies to eligible tickets booked from October 1, 2026. Qualifying passengers will receive email notifications containing links through which they can activate the service and confirm their pick-up and drop-off locations.

Air Peace Chief Commercial Officer, Nowel Ngala, said the initiative was designed to extend the airline's premium experience beyond the aircraft and make international journeys more convenient.

"At Air Peace, we remain committed to continuously improving the travel experience for our customers," Ngala said.

He said the partnership with SIMPLAA was intended to provide passengers with a seamless journey "from doorstep to destination."

The latest initiative represents another push by the Nigerian carrier to strengthen its premium offering on the highly competitive Nigeria-United Kingdom travel corridor.

Air Peace said passengers could access its London services through its website and mobile application, accredited travel agencies, and major global booking platforms.

The airline operates domestic, regional, and international services with a fleet that includes Boeing 777, Boeing 737-700, Boeing 737-800, and Embraer aircraft, connecting destinations across Africa and routes extending into Europe, the Middle East, and the Caribbean

Showdown With Gov Lawal: Eight Zamfara Lawmakers Dump APC, Cite 32 Months Without Pay

By Our Correspondent

A long-running political battle between Governor Dauda Lawal and a group of Zamfara State lawmakers has erupted into a fresh crisis, with eight members of the State House of Assembly announcing their resignation from the All Progressives Congress (APC).

The lawmakers blamed their decision on unresolved political differences, worsening insecurity, alleged injustice, and the non-payment of their salaries, allowances, and other entitlements for 32 months.

At the heart of the dispute, according to the lawmakers, is their confrontation with Governor Lawal over insecurity in rural communities—a disagreement they said began when they raised security concerns on the floor of the House and subsequently deteriorated into an open political rift.

Aliyu Ango Kagara, who represents Talata Mafara South, said the legislators had challenged the Lawal administration over what they considered inadequate attention to communities suffering attacks and insecurity.

Kagara said raising the security situation in the Assembly "did not go down well with the governor," alleging that the dispute eventually contributed to their suspension and political estrangement from the administration.

He maintained that the conditions which prompted their confrontation with Lawal had deteriorated rather than improved.

"Our constituents in rural areas who voted us into power to address their security concerns were not being given any attention," Kagara said.

The lawmakers also alleged that they had spent 32 months without salaries, allowances, and other entitlements, adding another dimension to their confrontation with the state political establishment.

Those identified in multiple reports as part of the group include Kagara; Ibrahim Tukur of Bakura; Faruk Musa Dosara of Maradun I; Bashir Abubakar Masama of Bukkuyum North; Bashar Aliyu of Gummi I; Basiru Bello of Bungudu West; Nasiru Abdullahi of Maru North; and Muktaru Nasiru, popularly known as Jikan Shehu, of Kaura Namoda North.

The lawmakers said their decisions followed consultations with constituents and political associates. Their resignation letters cited divisions among party stakeholders, alleged injustice and uncertainty, alongside their complaints about insecurity and governance.

The development came as Lawal separately warned dissatisfied political appointees that they were free to resign. Speaking at an APC stakeholders' meeting in Gusau on Saturday, the governor urged party members to abandon factional politics and unite ahead of the 2027 elections.

However, the Zamfara APC said it had not formally received the lawmakers' resignation letters.

State APC Publicity Secretary Ibrahim Birnin-Magaji said the party had seen copies circulating on social media but was awaiting formal communication through the lawmakers' ward and local government structures before taking a position.

The lawmakers have not publicly announced their next political destination.



L-R: Vice President Kashim Shettima; Katsina State Governor, Mallam Dikko Umaru Radda; his wife, Zulaihat Dikko Umaru; Katsina State Coordinator, Nigeria for Women Programme Scale-Up Project, Aisha Mohammed Yusuf, and Katsina State Deputy Governor, Faruk Lawal Jobe, during the flag-off of the Community Investment Fund disbursement in Katsina, yesterday.

IPAC Urges Sustained Govt-party Dialogue to Address Nigeria's Challenges

The Inter-Party Advisory Council (IPAC), Lagos State, has urged the Federal Government and political parties to sustain dialogue in addressing the challenges confronting the nation.

The Lagos State IPAC Chairperson, Mrs Temilola Akinade, made the call in an interview on Sunday while reacting to Nigeria's 66th Independence Anniversary.

Akinade said continuous dialogue between government and political parties was necessary to strengthen democratic engagement and promote good governance.

"IPAC calls for continuous dialogue between government and political parties in addressing the challenges facing our nation.

"All political parties and stakeholders must support peaceful democratic engagement, national unity and good governance.

"At 66, Nigeria remains a nation of immense potential, and we must work together to build a peaceful, prosperous and inclusive Nigeria," she said.

The IPAC chairperson said the council welcomed the President's renewed focus on moving the country from economic reforms to shared prosperity.

She said the emphasis on job creation, food security, infrastructure development, education, healthcare, youth empowerment and support for vulnerable citizens was important to the nation's development.

Akinade, however, said the success of the reforms should ultimately be measured by their impact on the daily lives of Nigerians.

"The success of these reforms must ultimately be reflected in the daily lives of Nigerians through reduced cost of living, increased employment opportunities, improved security and better access to essential services," she said.

She urged government to remain responsive to the concerns of citizens and deepen engagement with political parties and other stakeholders in finding sustainable solutions to the country's challenges.

Akinade expressed optimism that collective commitment to peace, unity and inclusive development would help unlock Nigeria's potential.



NPFL: Pillars Force Sporting Lagos to Score Draw in Kano

Kano Pillars and Sporting Lagos played out a 1-1 draw in a Match Day 7 fixture of the Nigeria Premier Football League (NPFL) at the Sani Abacha Stadium, Kano, yesterday.

The match, watched by a large number of spectators, saw both sides share the points after a keenly contested encounter.

Sporting Lagos opened the scoring in the 45th minute through Valentine Ugwu to give the visitors a 1-0 lead at the break.

Kano Pillars, however, responded quickly after the restart, with Abdullahi Musa equalising in the 49th minute.

Musa's goal came after a fine assist from experienced midfielder Rabiu Ali, as the hosts restored parity before the match eventually ended 1-1.

The result saw both teams settle for a share of the points after 90 minutes of action.

Speaking after the match, Kano Pillars coach, Daniel Ogunmodede, said his team showed improvement despite settling for a 1-1 draw with Sporting Lagos in the NPFL Match Day 7 fixture.

Ogunmodede said Pillars dominated the first half but conceded from Sporting Lagos' first chance before equalising early in the second half.

He apologised to the fans and urged them to remain patient, insisting that the team remained contenders for the league title.

"We are sorry to our fans, but they should keep believing. Patience is very important," he said.

Speaking also, Sporting Lagos coach Jeffrey Buter, also praised his young players for showing character against Pillars in front of their home fans.

Buter said the result extended Sporting Lagos' unbeaten run to four matches, adding that the team needed to improve despite its recent away form.

"We are a young team and we need to keep improving. Hopefully, this unbeaten run will give us confidence," he said.

FIFA Sanctions Katsina United Over Unpaid N28m to Ex-coach Bulus, Threatens More Penalties

FIFA has sanctioned Katsina United over the club's failure to comply with a ruling in a contractual dispute involving former coach Tony Tope Bulus.

The club has been ordered to pay Bulus N28 million in compensation for the wrongful termination of his contract and a $5,000 fine to FIFA for failing to comply with an earlier ruling.

The decision was conveyed to Katsina United through the Nigeria Football Federation (NFF) in a letter dated October 2, 2026.



FIFA gave the club 15 days from receipt of the letter to pay the outstanding amounts and submit proof of payment.

Failure to comply within the stipulated period could lead to a ban on registering new players, while further sanctions, including points deduction or relegation, could be imposed if the club continues to default.

The dispute followed Katsina United's termination of Bulus' contract in 2023. The coach subsequently sought legal redress over the decision.

The Court of Arbitration for Sport, CAS, ruled on June 30, 2026, that Katsina United should pay Bulus N28 million as compensation.

Katsina United chairman, Surajo Baba Malumfashi, declined to comment on the FIFA decision, saying he was not aware of the letter.

Super Sand Eagles Coach Highlights Benefits of Senegal Friendlies

The Super Sand Eagles Head Coach, Abdullahi Isa, has said that the team's friendly matches with Senegal will be beneficial as it prepares for the 2026 Beach Soccer Africa Cup of Nations (BSAFCON) qualifiers.

Isa made the submission in an interview in Kaduna yesterday, noting that the two-series friendly would provide quality competition to the team.

The coach said that Senegal, as the tournament's defending champions, would provide a stern test for the team to prepare adequately for its two-legged qualifier against Ghana.

"We played Senegal on Oct.3 and lost but valuable lessons were learnt as we prepared for the second friendly.

"We have met Senegal several times in the past; they have beaten us and we have also beaten them.

"The matches provide an opportunity to reunite with old friends, including Senegal's Head coach, Jean Sylla, among others," he said.

Isa, who is the Golden Eaglets Goalkeeper Trainer, thanked the Nigeria Football Federation (NFF) for organising the friendlies and its Senegalese counterpart for accepting the invitation.

"The friendlies would enable the technical crew to assess the players, identify areas of improvement ahead of the Ghanaian encounter.

"The team is focused on the task ahead and hope to translate the friendlies' experience into a credible outing against Ghana," he said.

Nigeria lost 4-6 to Senegal in the first friendly played on Saturday at the Murtala Muhammed Square Beach Soccer pitch, Kaduna.

Abdullahi Hassan scored all Nigeria's four goals, while Senegal's goals came through Laye Diagne, Mamadou Sylla, who scored a hat-trick, Ninou Diatta and Asane Ba.

The second friendly between the two teams is scheduled for Monday at 9 a.m., at the same venue.



Mountain of Fire and Miracles Pip First Bank, Win Zenith Bank Women's Basketball Final 8

Mountain of Fire and Miracles (MFM) Basketball Club emerged champions of the 2026 Zenith Bank Women's Basketball National Final 8 on Saturday.

MFM defeated First Bank 66-64 after overtime in a thrilling final that saw both teams battle fiercely for supremacy.

The Yaba-based side started strongly, displaying quick movement, excellent ball rotation and disciplined defence to win the opening quarter 11-6.

MFM maintained its advantage in the second quarter in spite of First Bank's aggressive approach and determination to regain control.

The champions won the quarter 13-12 to take a 24-18 lead into halftime following impressive teamwork and attractive basketball.

The third quarter produced another closely contested battle as both teams raised their intensity, with every possession becoming increasingly important.

MFM, however, produced another impressive display, winning the quarter 19-17 through fluid ball movement and effective teamwork.

The side's performance also drew strong reactions from the crowd, which became increasingly vocal whenever MFM scored.

First Bank responded strongly in the fourth quarter, mounting sustained pressure and refusing to allow MFM to secure victory.

The Lagos-based rivals battled throughout the final quarter, with First Bank eventually forcing the encounter into overtime.

Regulation time ended 56-56, setting up a tense five-minute overtime period to determine the new national champions.

Both teams created opportunities during overtime, but MFM remained composed under pressure to complete a 66-64 victory.

MFM player Abigail Isaac, who played an important role in the triumph, expressed delight after her team secured the championship.

"We are happy to win the championship. We were not going to give up because we were confident that this was our year.

"We also have respect for First Bank because we know they are a great team. It was not an easy match for us.

"At the end, we are proud of our achievement," she said.

First Bank player, Olanrewaju Ayodeji, said her team had worked hard and believed it possessed the quality to win the tournament.

"It was a match we wanted to win because we knew we had the qualities to achieve it.

"We worked hard for this tournament, trained hard and were confident of another fine outing.

"Unfortunately, it did not come our way, but above all, we are proud of our achievement," Ayodeji said.

MFM received N7.5 million as champions, while First Bank earned N5 million after finishing as runners-up.

Both finalists also secured automatic qualification to represent Nigeria at the continental championships scheduled to hold later in the year.

Earlier, Nigeria Customs defeated Aso Sky Queens 51-38 to finish third and claim the N3 million prize.

Sabalenka Out of China Open in third Round, Medvedev into Semis

Aryna Sabalenka was swatted aside in straight sets in the third round of the China Open on Sunday, leaving the women's draw without its top two seeds, while Daniil Medvedev went through for the men.

Czech player Nikola Bartunkova, 20, sent down four aces to beat the former world No. 1 6-4, 6-3 in one hour and 35 minutes.

"I focused on myself, to be calm," 34th-ranked Bartunkova said.

"She's a legend... so I'm really happy that I won the match," she said of the four-time Grand Slam champion.

Bartunkova next faces Austria's Sinja Kraus in the round of 16.

Second-seeded Sabalenka squandered five chances to break serve in the sixth game of the first set, with Bartunkova strong on defence and firing deep.

The 28-year-old from Belarus threw on a cap for the eighth game of the first set as the women switched between playing in the shade and the sun, but it did not turn the tide in her favour.

A frustrated Sabalenka tossed her racquet at a break down in the fourth game of the second set, and lost on the first match point when she returned into the net.

Top seed Elena Rybakina – who replaced Sabalenka as world No. 1 weeks ago – is also out, having lost to Alina Charaeva in the second round on Saturday.

Also on Sunday, Roland Garros champion Mirra Andreeva of Russia set up a fourth-round match with Ukraine's Daria Snigur, while Wimbledon champion Linda Noskova breezed past Viktorija Golubic 6-2, 6-1.

Noskova next faces 28th-ranked Russian player Ekaterina Alexandrova.

In the men's draw, former world No. 1 Daniil Medvedev dispatched Francisco Cerundolo 7-6 (7/4), 6-3 to set up a semifinal thriller with either Alexander Zverev or Novak Djokovic.





Djokovic

Djokovic Beats Zverev to Reach China Open Semis

Novak Djokovic battled back from a set down to defeat top seed Alexander Zverev and book his place in the China Open semi-finals.

The 39-year-old Serbian triumphed 4-6 6-4 6-4 against world number two Zverev and will play Daniil Medvedev in the last four.

Djokovic's victory over Zverev dented the German's quest to finish the year as the world's number one-ranked player.

"These are the kind of moments that I still play for, compete for," Djokovic said.

"The motivation is big when you are feeling good and competing at par with the best players in the world in front of 15,000 people.

"These are the kind of moments that define dreams, I think, of every tennis player."

In their first meeting in just under 16 months, Djokovic initially struggled to handle Zverev's power, and the 29-year-old secured the first set after capitalising on a break in the first game.

However, Djokovic managed to work his way back into the contest, and the 24-time Grand Slam winner seized an opportunity with a break at 5-4 in the second set to level the match.

Little separated the pair in the third set, but the veteran struck again at 5-4 on Zverev's serve to clinically seal victory.

Modric 'Ashamed' of Croatia's 'Catastrophic Night'

Croatia captain Luka Modric said he felt "ashamed" of his side's performance in Saturday's 7-0 defeat at home to England in the Nations League.

It was the first time in 20 years as an international that the AC Milan midfielder said he had felt such emotion, describing it as a "catastrophic night".

Modric, 41, was making his 205th appearance for his country after recently agreeing to extend his international career under returning manager Slaven Bilic.

"You can't play football like that... we looked like we had four or five players less," said the former Real Madrid player, who helped Croatia to second-place and third-place finishes at the 2018 and 2022 World Cups during a storied career.

"It is difficult to find an explanation for such a performance without duels, fouls, aggressiveness, togetherness.

"I've been here for 20 years, but for the first time I feel ashamed after a game."

Croatia kicked off Bilic's second spell in charge with a 2-1 Nations League win away to the Czech Republic that put them above England in Group A3.

They followed that up with a chastening 4-1 defeat away to world champions Spain but were still level on points with Thomas Tuchel's Three Lions before Saturday's humiliating loss in Rijeka.

With the top two qualifying for the latter stages, Croatia had the chance to put themselves in pole position to beat England to a place in the quarter-finals.

Yet by the time Modric was substituted in the 57th minute, the home side were already 5-0 down after conceding two goals from Harry Kane and one apiece from Jude Bellingham, Anthony Gordon and Bukayo Saka.

Modric was forced to watch from the sidelines as further goals from Saka and Morgan Rogers extended England's advantage before the final whistle.



Hamilton Bemused After Glitch Turns F1 Into 'Lego Race'

Max Verstappen and Lewis Hamilton likened the effects of a software bug that affected multiple cars before the Bahrain Grand Prix in Malaysia to a "Lego race".

The problem led to several cars, including those of the two multiple world champions who were sharing the front row of the grid, not working in the wet conditions that preceded the race.

A tropical downpour delayed attempts to get the Grand Prix under way for the best part of an hour. And when the cars set off on formation laps behind a safety car to test the conditions, audiences were treated to the bizarre sight of many of them struggling to move.

A bug in the software that mandates how the engines' electrical power can be used in wet conditions had been triggered by a combination of low engine speeds, low grip and specific aspects of the circuit layout.

Verstappen, who went on to take a dominant win that was his first victory of the year, said: "These engines are so complicated, and a lot of software is implemented.

"I triggered [the problem] first and then I looked in my mirror; I was like, 'Wait, are they waiting for me or what's going [on]...?' It was like the Lego race."

Verstappen was referring to a show run in battery-powered Lego F1 cars that was held before the British Grand Prix in July.



Hamilton

Hamilton, sitting beside Verstappen in the post-race news conference after finishing third, interjected to say: "Yeah, we had the same speed. I had to stop on track and stop the car and engine and restart it. I've never done that before."

Verstappen added: "It was insane. Like, it's the Lego power. At some point we were five-wide on the straight because we couldn't understand what was going on.

"Then we did a lap, and then I saw eight other cars crawling still, and I saw you (Hamilton) by yourself crawling. That's not what you want, right, for the sport."

Mercedes driver George Russell, who retired from the race with an engine failure, said: "It didn't feel very F1."

Nikolas Tombazis, the single-seater director for the governing body, the FIA, said there would be a full investigation.

The issue arose, he added, because, while the software had been tested, it had not been tested in these specific conditions. Largely because there has been so little running in the wet this year.

"Cars are complicated," Tombazis said. "We would all like it to be simpler, but when you have electrical energy and combustion energy all working together, and obviously when you want to ensure that there's sporting fairness between the teams, that is complicated.

"We haven't done a full debrief of the situation and see how we can avoid such an issue. Every race, we have a long debrief afterwards, where we identify criticalities."

Tinubu Orders Troops Closer to Vulnerable Communities, Fast-Tracks New Barracks, as Military Wages Rise

By Jeremy Fregene

President Bola Tinubu has announced the operationalisation of new Nigerian Army formations in four states as part of measures to bring troops closer to vulnerable communities and strengthen the military's capacity to respond rapidly to security threats.

The President said the new formations in Zamfara, Kebbi, Oyo and Osun states became operational this week, giving the Army an expanded presence in areas where quicker intervention may be required.

Tinubu, who personally announced the measures on Sunday, said the Federal Government was simultaneously accelerating the construction of new military barracks and depots in Abuja, Ekiti, Ebonyi and Kogi, while the facility in Osun had already been completed.

According to the President, the combination of new formations, improved military infrastructure and enhanced personnel welfare is intended to strengthen the Armed Forces' operational capacity while providing better support for servicemen and women and their families.

The announcement comes days after military personnel began receiving their newly increased salaries approved by the President in August.

Under the revised package, which took effect from September 1, junior personnel from Private to Staff Sergeant received an 80 per cent increase, personnel from Warrant Officer to Colonel received 50 per cent, while senior officers above Colonel received 30 per cent. About 250,000 Armed Forces personnel are expected to benefit.

Tinubu said feedback reaching him from servicemen and women indicated that the salary adjustment was already having an impact on personnel and their households.

He stressed that improving Nigeria's security architecture must go hand-in-hand with improving the welfare of those required to defend the country, noting that military deployment also imposes sacrifices on spouses, children and other family members.

"Every deployment is a sacrifice made by a family too," the President said.

Tinubu said the new Army formations would place troops nearer communities requiring protection, thereby strengthening their ability to act quickly and decisively when threats emerge.

The President also pledged to continue providing the military with the resources required to discharge its responsibilities, saying his obligation as Commander-in-Chief extended beyond personnel on the frontlines to the families supporting them at home.

"As our Armed Forces stand watch over Nigeria, my duty as Commander-in-Chief is to ensure they have the resources and support to do their job, and that Nigeria stands firmly behind the families waiting for them at home," Tinubu said.



Delta State Governor, Rt. Hon. Sheriff Oborevwori (left), and his wife and Founder of You Matter Charity Foundation, Deaconess Tobore Oborevwori, displaying the separate Awards of Recognition conferred on them by the Youth Ministry of Living Faith Church (Winners' Chapel), Osubi Branch, for their contributions to the advancement of Christendom and the development of Delta State, on Sunday. PHOTO: pressunit/DTSG

Delta Expands University Infrastructure as Enrolment Rises — Aniagwu

Delta State Government has stepped up infrastructure development across its four state-owned universities to cope with rising student enrolment and provide a better learning environment.

Commissioner for Works (Rural Roads) and Public Information, Mr Charles Aniagwu, disclosed this on Saturday after inspecting the Faculty of Management Sciences and Social Sciences building at Dennis Osadebay University, Asaba.

Aniagwu, who inspected the project alongside the Commissioner for Higher Education, Prof. Nyerhovwo Tonukari, and the Vice-Chancellor of the university, Prof. Samuel Aghalino, said the facility was part of the infrastructure expansion programme of Governor Sheriff Oborevwori's administration.

He said the increasing number of students seeking admission into the state-owned universities had made the provision of additional lecture halls, offices and other facilities imperative.

According to him, the government was not only focused on recruiting and retaining staff but was equally concerned about providing the infrastructure required to support the growing student population.

Aniagwu said similar projects were being executed in the other state-owned universities, particularly institutions established around the same period as Dennis Osadebay University, with projects spread across the three senatorial districts.

"What we have observed is that there are a few things they need to put finishing touches to. But, on the whole, we are very much impressed with the quality of work," he said.

The commissioner said the administration would remain focused on governance and project delivery despite the increasing political activities ahead of the 2027 elections.

He said: "Our campaign is going to be evidence-based. What we have come here to do is part of that evidence.

"Building structures like this is not only to give the university infrastructure. It is also aimed at ensuring that the purchasing power of our people is enhanced".

Also speaking, Tonukari said the infrastructure programme was designed to meet the changing needs of the state's tertiary institutions, particularly as student enrolment continues to increase.

He said the government established three universities to expand access to tertiary education and cater for the growing number of Deltans seeking admission.

"For the students, I can tell you that they are very happy. If you look back, three universities were commissioned at the same time to take care of the high number of Deltans seeking admission," he said.

The Vice Chancellor, Prof. Aghalino, described the project as a major boost to the university, saying the facility would provide essential academic and administrative spaces for students and lecturers.

He described the building as a state-of-the-art facility equipped with a library and other modern facilities, adding that it would significantly address the university's infrastructure challenges.

"I can tell you it's a state-of-the-art building. And we are grateful to the governor," he said.

2027: Jonathan Gives Blessing to APC Candidates in Bayelsa East, Calls for Peaceful Elections

By Emmanuel Olugua

Former President Goodluck Jonathan has given his blessings to candidates of the All Progressives Congress (APC) seeking elective offices in Bayelsa East Senatorial District in the 2027 general elections, while urging politicians to ensure peaceful campaigns and elections across Bayelsa State.

Jonathan spoke when a high-powered delegation of APC leaders visited his residence in Yenagoa to formally present the party's candidates for the Senate, House of Representatives, and Bayelsa State House of Assembly.

The delegation was led by former Bayelsa State Deputy Governor, Rear Admiral Gboribiogha John Jonah (rtd.), and included the Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC), Chief Samuel Ogbuku, as well as the Bayelsa State APC Chairman, Hon. Warman Weri Ogoriba.

Presenting the candidates, Jonah appealed to the former president and other stakeholders in the senatorial district to support them, describing the flagbearers as experienced and credible politicians capable of providing effective representation.

He said the candidates possessed the competence to defend the interests of their constituents, attract development to their communities, and contribute to the overall progress of Bayelsa State.

Among those presented to Jonathan was Hon. Israel Sunny-Goli, the APC candidate for Bayelsa East Senatorial District.

The party's House of Representatives candidates were Hon. Jonathan Robinson Obuebite, PhD, for Brass/Nembe Federal Constituency and Barr. Jude Amidator Rex-Ogbuku for Ogbia Federal Constituency.

Nine APC candidates seeking election to the Bayelsa State House of Assembly were also introduced.

For Nembe, they are Hon. Oteigbanyo George Braah for Constituency 1, Hon. Edward Brigidi Irigha for Constituency 2 and Hon. Alalibo West for Constituency 3.

The Brass candidates are Hon. Daniel Charles for Constituency 1, Hon. Timi Agala for Constituency 2 and Rt. Hon. Abraham Ngobere for Constituency 3.

In Ogbia, Jonathan's home local government area, the candidates are Chief Ebiango Okoba Egain for Constituency 1, Hon. Godknows Obein for Constituency 2 and Chief Gabriel Michael Ogbara for Constituency 3.

Responding, Jonathan acknowledged the experience and records of the candidates, saying he was familiar with virtually all of them and could attest to their capacity based on their previous performances in public service.

The former president subsequently offered the candidates his blessings and urged them to see politics principally as an avenue for service rather than a contest for power.

He charged them to remain focused on the welfare of their constituents, pursue meaningful development and fulfil the promises they make to voters during the campaign.

Jonathan also used the occasion to appeal for peace as political activities gather momentum ahead of the 2027 elections.

He urged political leaders, candidates and other stakeholders in Bayelsa to promote unity and cooperation, stressing that political competition should not undermine the peace required for the state's development.

Jonathan further emphasised that the ultimate purpose of political leadership should be to improve the lives of the people, urging those seeking public office to place development and the interests of their constituents above personal or partisan considerations.



L-R: Borno State Deputy Governor, Umar Kadafur; Bauchi State Deputy Governor, Auwal Jatau; Adamawa State Governor, Umaru Fintiri; Borno State Governor, Prof. Babagana Umara Zulum; Gombe State Governor, Muhammadu Inuwa Yahaya, and Yobe State Deputy Governor, Idi Barde Gubana, during the 13th meeting of the North-East Governors' Forum in Maiduguri, Borno State, at the weekend.

WAEC Appoints Kum, New Head, Nigeria National Office

The West African Examinations Council (WAEC) has appointed Mr Suleiman Kum as new Head of its Nigeria National Office.

Kum succeeds Dr Amos Josiah Dangut, the immediate past Head of National Office (HNO), now Registrar of the Council.

The appointment was contained in a statement by the Head, Public Affairs, Mrs Moyosola Adesina, issued to newsmen on Sunday in Lagos.

According to the statement, Kum, the new (HNO), joined WAEC on July 17, 1998, as Assistant Registrar II and rose through the ranks to become Senior Deputy Registrar in 2024.

It said that before his appointment, he had served as deputy registrar in the Office of the HNO.

"He has held several key positions within the council, including Director of Administration, Zonal Coordinator in Port Harcourt and Ikeja, Head of Security Printing Department and Branch Controller in Gusau and Kano," it stated.

The statement added that Kum also served as Senior Deputy Registrar, Test Administration, from September 2025 to August 2026.

"His extensive experience covered Test Development, Examination Administration, Examination Security, as well as branch and zonal office management.

"Kum pioneered several administrative and technological innovations during his career, including Variable Data Printing and enhanced security features in the council's security printing operations.

"He also led the introduction of facial recognition biometric devices to replace the council-wide attendance system," the statement said.

It added that the new HNO played a key role in the seamless delivery of 'Achievement Tests' through the Computer-Based Examination mode.

The statement noted that the new WAEC boss, who hails from Langtang North Local Government Area (LGA) of Plateau, was born on Oct. 16, 1970, in Minna, Niger.

According to the statement, he obtained a Bachelor of Agriculture in Animal Production from the University of Agriculture, Makurdi, in 1992, with Second Class Honours, Upper Division.

It added that he later obtained a Postgraduate Diploma (PGD) in Education from the National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN) in 2025.

He is currently completing a Master of Education (M.Ed.) in Educational Administration and Planning.

It added that Kum started his professional career in 1993 during his National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) programme at the Division of Agricultural Colleges, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, where he served as Head of the Animal Production Unit.

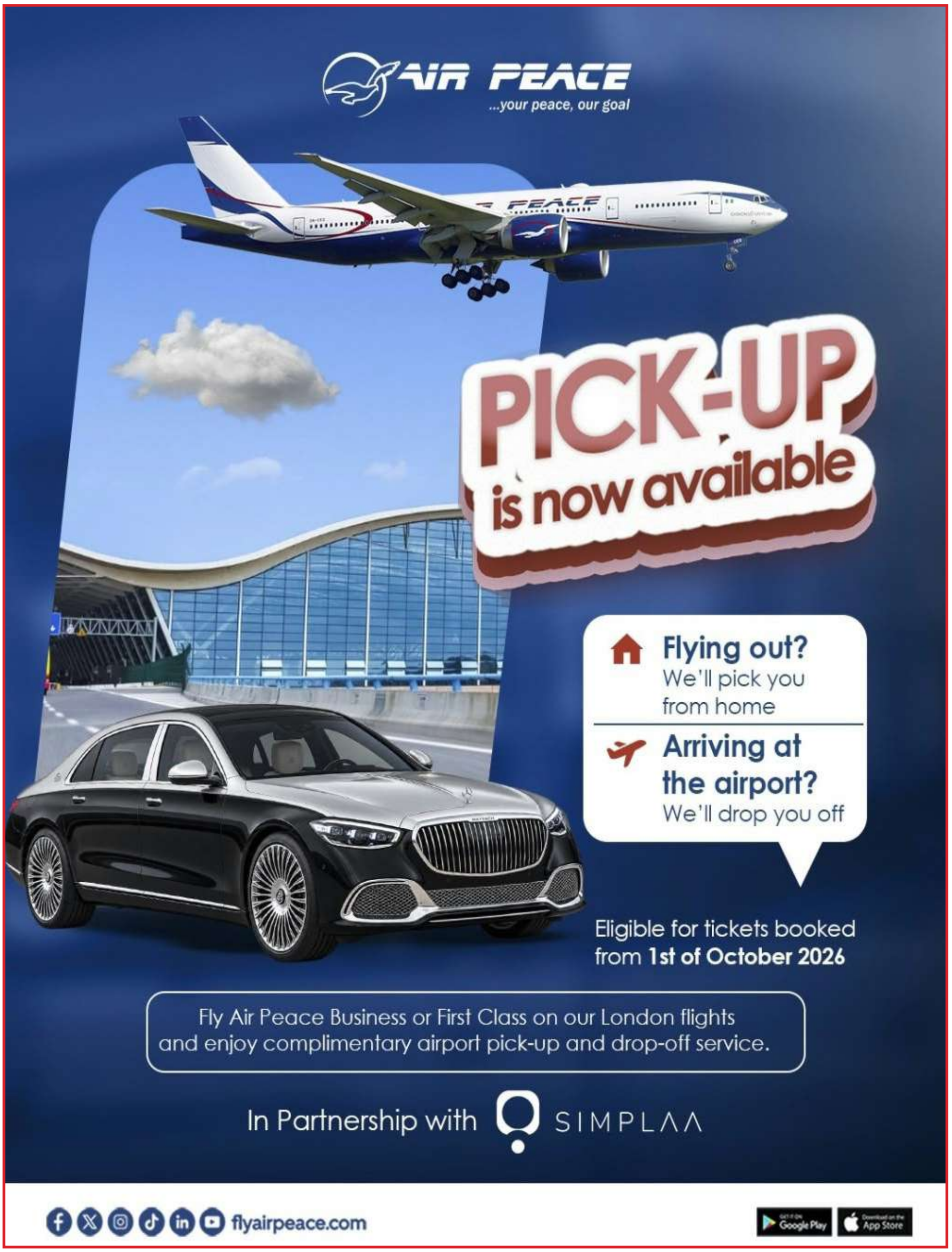
According to the statement, Kum subsequently taught at Baptist High School, Jos, between 1995 and 1998, serving in various capacities including Form Master, Labour Master, Classroom Teacher and Health Master.

The statement further noted that Kum's contributions to council had earned him several commendations, accolades and awards within and outside the test body.

It added that he had attended several national and international trainings, conferences and symposia, including programmes in the United Kingdom.

The statement also said he is a member of the Nigerian Institute of Management and had published works in national and international volumes, while also presenting academic and professional papers.

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Kyiv Bridge Hit in Further Russian Drone Attack as German Chancellor Makes Surprise Visit

Major bridges in Kyiv have been hit by Russian drone strikes for four consecutive days, as Moscow ramps up attacks on critical infrastructure in Ukraine's capital.

Two people were injured when the Pivnichnyi (Northern) Bridge was struck on Sunday morning for the second day in a row, while the Pivdennyi (Southern) Bridge was hit multiple times earlier in the week.

The latest attack came as German Chancellor Friedrich Merz made a surprise visit to Kyiv in a show of support against Russia's continuing full-scale invasion.

Russia's military said it would be intensifying strikes on Kyiv and other Ukrainian regions. It earlier said it had hit the two bridges used to transfer Ukrainian troops.

Video footage of Sunday's strike, verified by the BBC, shows cars moving on Pivnichnyi Bridge, as a drone crashes into it before exploding, creating a ball of fire. A cloud of black smoke can be seen rising above the bridge.

Other videos and pictures have emerged on social media showing a gaping hole in the middle of a traffic lane on the bridge.

Kyiv Mayor Vitali Klitschko said two people were injured in the latest Russian attack. He earlier said that the Pivnichnyi Bridge's roadway was hit.

Kyiv's bridges across the wide Dnipro River link the western and eastern parts, and many of the capital's estimated three million residents rely heavily on the metro lines to travel across the city.

The two struck bridges are still standing - but the damage and restrictions to traffic and public transport have caused gridlock in parts of the capital at times.

Large numbers of commuters cross the river, especially on weekdays. Repair teams are working to fix the damage, and officials say they are planning temporary pontoon bridges, ferry services and even a tunnel under the river to keep Kyiv connected.

Klitschko also said a separate Russian drone strike had damaged a heating main, adding that there would be a temporary lack of hot water in the north-eastern Desnyanskyi district as a result.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said on Sunday morning Russian drones had also attacked a warehouse in the north-eastern region of Sumy, killing one person.

Meanwhile, in the central city of Dnipro, six people were injured after a communications facility was struck, he said.

Ukraine's Air Force said that overnight Russia had launched 135 drones, including 52 jet-powered ones. It said that 125 projectiles had been shot down.

As emergency services responded to the incidents, Germany's Merz met Zelensky in Kyiv. They laid wreaths for Ukrainian soldiers who have been killed in the war.

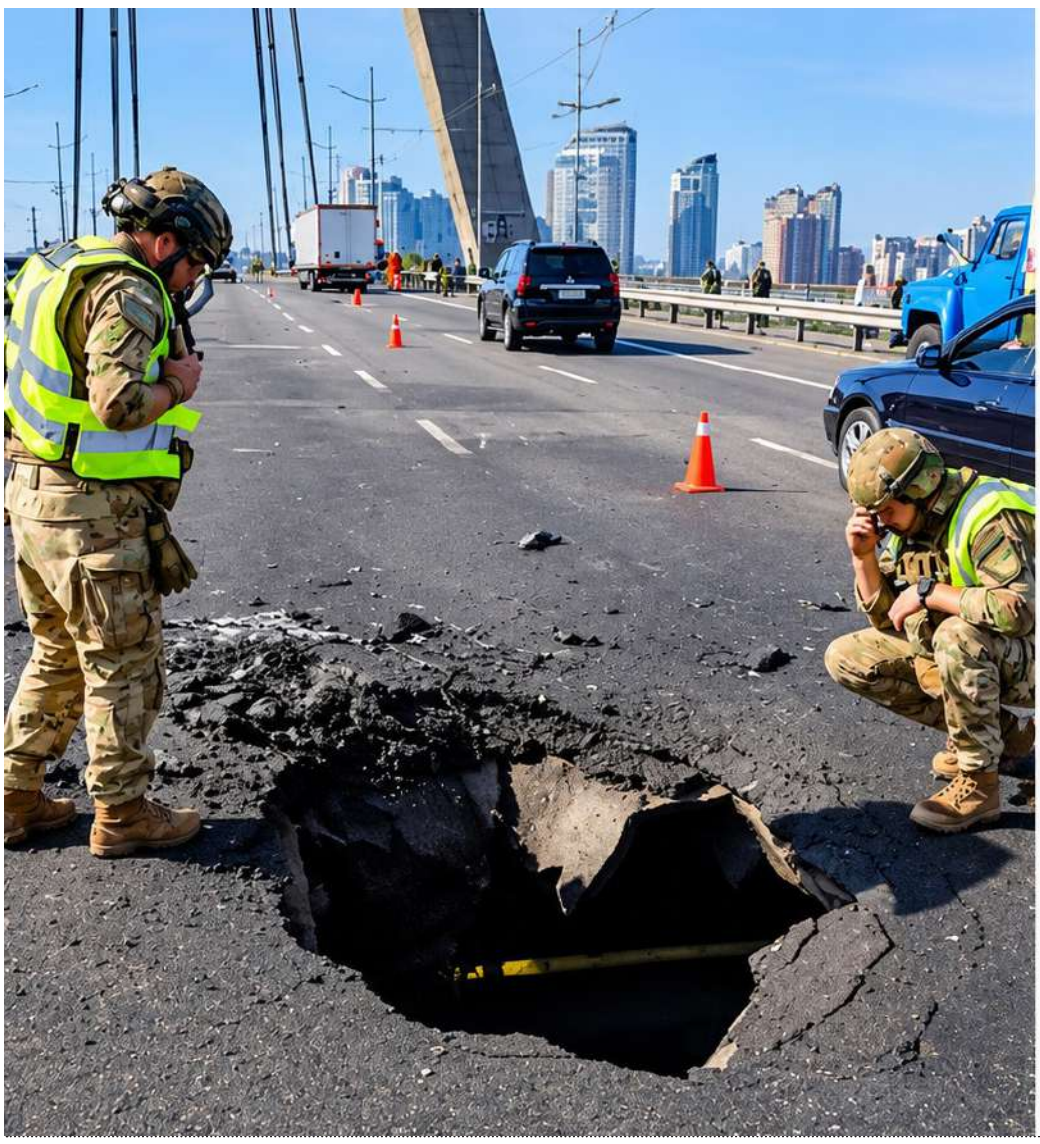
Merz reaffirmed his country's support for Ukraine, writing on X: "Ukraine is facing decisive weeks. That is why I travelled to Kyiv today with the message: You can rely on us.

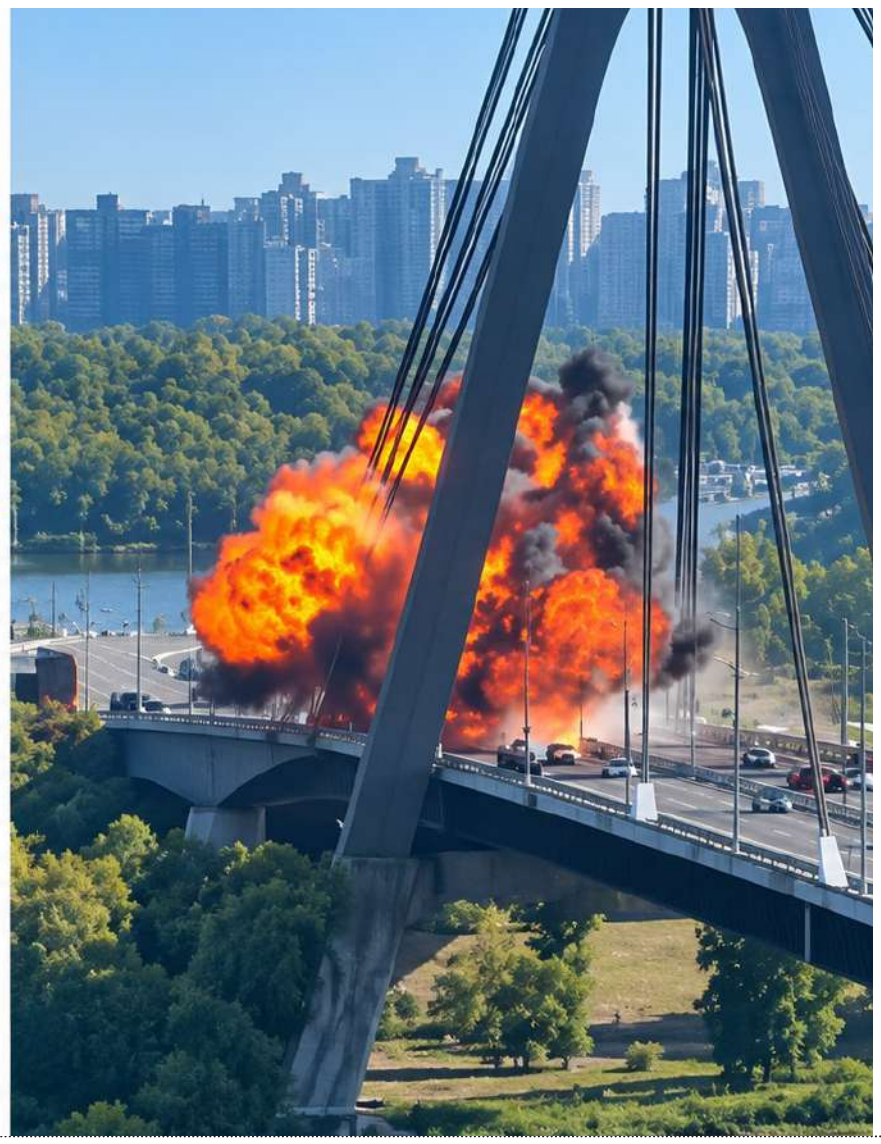
"Germany's security also depends on the outcome of this war. That is why we are helping out of our own self-interest as well."

Since Merz became chancellor in May 2025, Germany has become the single largest donor to Ukraine.

He said the country "needs all our support in the coming weeks", adding: "If Russia is not stopped, its war machine will sooner or later turn against us."

Zelensky said there would be "important agreements" made between Ukraine and Germany.





Spanish Police Clear Migrant Camp on Ceuta Beach Ahead of Royal Visit

Spanish police on Sunday cleared a migrant camp on a beach in the North African enclave of Ceuta, where tens of thousands crossed the border from Morocco over two months ago, the Spanish government said.

More than 72,000 crossed the border from Morocco into Ceuta in late July. While most of the migrants later went back, at least 10,000 remain in the Spanish enclave in North Africa, straining local resources and fuelling tensions.

The Misinformation Monitor newsletter rounds up international misinformation narratives, with a "Real or Fake?" quiz in every edition. Sign up here.

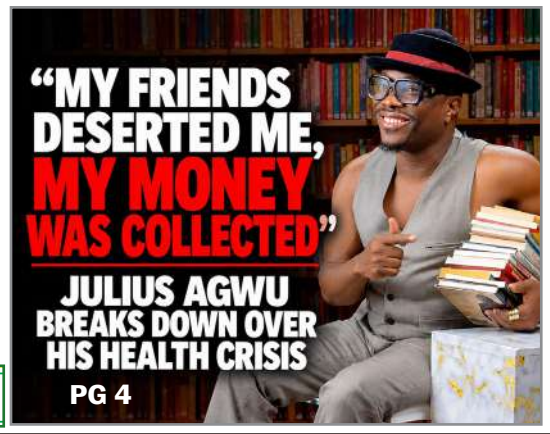
Police moved migrants from Trampolin beach, where around 3,000 people were living in tents and makeshift homes for two months, to temporary accommodation where they will be processed or can go back to Morocco, a Spanish interior ministry spokesman told Reuters on Sunday.

Tensions have persisted over the presence of migrants sleeping rough in the tiny enclave, which is home to 80,000 people. Locals held a demonstration on Saturday calling for the migrants to leave.

King Felipe and Queen Letizia are due to visit Ceuta on October 13 to 14 for the first time in his 12-year reign. The visit comes amid longstanding friction with Morocco, which claims sovereignty over both Ceuta and Spain's other North African enclave, Melilla.



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Disturbing Signals from The Gambia

OPINION

BY

SIMON KOLAWOLE

Something is brewing in The Gambia, our fellow West African country. Ordinarily, it looks like a simple, routine banking regulation exercise which should not worry any observer, but I fear there may be more to it — and Nigerians may be at the receiving end yet again. I hope I am proved wrong at the end of the day, but I want to raise my voice and draw the attention of the Nigerian authorities to it before whispers turn into shouts and push comes to shove. We must remember that for years, Nigerian immigrants suffered resentment in South Africa until the xenophobic attacks exploded. Also, Ghana has been hurting the interests of Nigerian businesses while, at the same time, smiling with us.

On September 16, 2026, the Central Bank of The Gambia (CBG) sent a letter titled "Directive on the Recruitment of Non-Gambian Staff" to the MDs of all banks. It was signed by the second deputy governor, Dr Paul J. Mendy, who, I understand, was trained by the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN). It followed a meeting with bank chiefs on August 27, 2026, which, I heard, ended abruptly and resulted in the directive. The CBG, in its directive, said its industry study found that banks employ "a relatively high number of non-Gambians… in addition to recognised expatriate staff". It said this breaches the Labour Act 2023 and Guideline 9 of its Management and Technical Services Agreement Guidelines.

All banks are to replace their existing non-Gambian staff with "suitably qualified Gambian nationals". The deadline is December 31, 2026 — about 15 weeks after the letter was issued. This has been well reported. The directive is addressed to all lenders, but Nigerian banks have a large share of the Gambian market and may be disproportionately affected. So you know, there are 11 banks in The Gambia and four are subsidiaries of Nigerian banking groups: Access Bank, FirstBank, Guaranty Trust Bank and one other. Two of them are among their biggest banks. The CBN has now written to the Nigerian parent banks asking for "a detailed action plan and timeline for achieving compliance".

May I, at this point, declare that I do not have anything against any country wanting to empower its citizens with skills or encourage transfer of knowledge. That is a natural progression for any country that wants to develop. The problem is when the rules of engagement seem to have been subverted and unilaterally torn to pieces, leading to suspicion of a hidden motive. For example, the CBG directive said it relied on Guideline 9 it issued in May 2011. I have read the guidelines again and again. It deals only with the composition of boards and senior management. It says a majority of board members must be Gambians or foreigners legally resident in The Gambia. Fair enough.

"Senior managers" are the MD, executive director, general manager, financial controller, company secretary or anyone in a "position of influence". Expatriates among them are limited to three, unless the bank gets a dispensation and has a plan to train local successors. Guideline 9 does not appear to regulate non-Gambian employees generally. The guidelines also let parent banks second staff and top up their pay. On the face of it, therefore, the CBG appears to be relying on Guideline 9 for a directive considerably broader than the guideline itself. How can the CBG quote its own guidelines out of context? This is not about illegal immigration, otherwise I wouldn't be commenting at all.

More worrisome is the questionable application of the Labour Act 2023 by the CBG. Agreed, Part V does give The Gambia a legal basis to limit foreign workers. We have a similar law in Nigeria. Employers need an "expatriate quota" clearance, with fines of at least D500,000 (about $6,800) for not having one. Every expatriate must be paired with a Gambian understudy. No quota is granted where the skills are available locally. This is understandable. The Act defines an "expatriate" as a non-Gambian that possesses skills that "are rarely available in The Gambia". However, it does not order the removal of all foreign staff by a fixed date, as the central bank is set to do with this directive. Africans& Diaspora

Section 177, contained in Part XIX of the Act, is where the directive is weakest. Section 177(1)(b) requires the minister, labour officers and the industrial tribunal to "guarantee equal opportunity and treatment for a person who is a migrant employee… lawfully within The Gambia." Indeed, Section 177(3) expressly prohibits discrimination on grounds of nationality in matters including termination of employment. Section 177(7) puts the burden of proof on the employer. Section 177(6) makes breach a criminal offence. Section 177(4)(c) says it is not discrimination to "employ a citizen in accordance with the national employment policy", but that clause covers hiring citizens.

Furthermore, it does not clearly cover dismissing lawfully employed foreigners because of their nationality. The glaring implication of this is that banks could be caught between a regulator ordering the dismissals and a labour law that may make those dismissals unlawful. Although the stated concern involves foreign employees beyond recognised expatriate arrangements, the CBG instruction refers broadly to replacing "existing non-Gambian staff". It does not expressly preserve approved expatriate positions or specify exemptions. Does the CBG intend to enforce existing quotas or require a substantially broader removal of foreign employees? This is looking like a blank cheque.

There is a reason I am raising this issue. This is how anti-foreigner sentiments start. What looks like an innocuous directive may actually prepare the ground for hostility towards foreigners, whether or not they are legally in The Gambia. Also, it is banking today; it can be replicated in other sectors tomorrow. Most disturbingly, this may encourage copycat policies by other countries. It doesn't look harmful initially until unintended consequences set in. Everything must be done with a good motive and within the law. If any Nigerian-owned bank violates the rules and regulations, the offender must face the regulatory sanctions. No bank is above the law, whether owned by Nigerians or Gambians.

But these are the issues. One, legal inconsistency. The directive applies to all non-Gambian staff, while the guideline it cites deals only with senior management. It also seems to conflict with Section 177's protection of lawful migrant workers. Two, regional obligations. Nigeria and The Gambia belong to ECOWAS, whose free-movement regime recognises the rights of citizens to reside and seek employment in other member states, subject to national laws and regional rules. Three, precedent. Ghana's restrictions on foreign retail traders and the store closures that followed, and the repeated anti-foreigner violence in South Africa, show how economic nationalism can harden into policy.

Nigeria must, therefore, raise the matter diplomatically. The CBN should engage the CBG directly. Nigeria should coordinate regulatory and diplomatic engagement, request the underlying study and precise legal basis, establish how many Nigerians are affected, and seek protection for lawful employment and approved expatriate positions. The Gambia is entitled to set its labour policy, even at a cost to itself. But it must do so within its own laws and its regional commitments, and Nigeria must protect its own interests. May The Gambia not be another country where we have invested so much financially, technically and politically only for us to be rewarded with passive aggression. Amen.

AND FOUR OTHER THINGS…

STRAIT OF PAINS

With US President Donald Trump sucking the whole world into the stress of his unnecessary war with Iran, energy prices are rising. There are complaints all over the world as oil prices keep spiking as a result of the disruption in the Strait of Hormuz which has affected the global economy. From the US to Europe, from Ghana to Nigeria, citizens are crying as pump prices rise, worsening the cost of living crisis. With elections approaching in Nigeria, the situation has encouraged campaign promises of restoring petrol subsidy, which many Nigerians understandably find attractive. I honestly don't know the solution to the soaring prices, but there just has to be some succour somewhere. Harsh.

PILOT SCHEME

It used to be that terrorists would break into the cockpit of an aircraft, hold the pilots hostage and hijack the flight. The 9/11 hijackers took a step further by flying the planes into buildings. Strict measures were introduced to prevent sharp objects on board and restrict access to the cockpit. But what happens if a pilot is a hijacker? Last Wednesday, on a Flydubai flight from the UAE to Israel, the co-pilot reportedly stabbed the captain with an emergency axe, took control of the flight, and the aircraft plunged. A bloodied Smit Machchhar, the captain, said he quickly opened the door and called for help. Two off-duty pilots took charge and landed the aircraft safely in Tabuk, Saudi Arabia..

BOLA OR TINUBU?

This is an election season and I am aware that whatever I write will be interpreted one way or the other, but it still won't stop me from saying it is out of place for Alhaji Atiku Abubakar to keep calling the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria by first name. It is contemptuous, in my opinion. In 1999, Atiku specifically requested that we call him by his first name when he reversed the order of his name from "Abubakar Atiku" to "Atiku Abubakar". That is his choice. But we have to respect the office of the president. It is not about whether or not we like the person. You don't have to call him "his excellency", but addressing him by first name in official communications is ungentlemanly. Low.

NO COMMENT

In 1999, when Chief Olusegun Obasanjo and Chief Olu Falae went head-to-head in the presidential race, northerners devised a way of northernising their names during the campaign in their region. Olusegun Obasanjo became "Baba Sirajo" while Olu Falae was rendered as "Auwalu Falalu". Dr Abdullahi Umar Ganduje, the former governor of Kano state and former APC national chairman, has come up with a similar device for 2027. Addressing APC supporters in Hausa, he said Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu was from Kano, going on to northernise his Yoruba name. He said: "The 'Asiwaju' means 'Ashiru', 'Bola' is 'Bala', 'Ahmed' is 'Ahmadu', and 'Tinubu' means 'Tanimu'." Hahahaha…

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