

The New Daily Prime



Gov Abdulrazaq promotes Kwara's creative economy as Nollywood stars converge in Ilorin **pg 15**

Customs Ondo/Ekiti reaffirms commitment to business-friendly environment

PAGE 3

Nigerians to witness world-class cancer hospital—Indian Group reveals

PAGE 3

Gov Mutwang presents N471.13 billion 2025 budget to House of Assembly

PAGE 4

Edo Policewoman dismissed for reporting rape case; threatens suicide

PAGE 2

Former vice president, Prof Yemi Osinbajo and wife, celebrates 35th wedding anniversary **PAGE 4**

Edo Policewoman dismissed for reporting rape case; threatens suicide

By Olamilekan Botti

Former police officer, Inspector Edith Uduma, has issued a heart-wrenching threat to end her life along with her children following her termination from the police force. Uduma claims her dismissal was a direct consequence of exposing an alleged rape incident involving a colleague. The situation has garnered significant public attention, with Uduma emphasizing that her side of the story has not been heard in the media.

The controversy began when Uduma recorded a shocking video in October, which went viral. The footage depicted Sergeant Abraham, a fellow officer, in an inappropriate situation with a 17-year-old girl inside the police station located in the South Ibie area of Edo State. In the video, Abraham is seen hastily pulling on his trousers and questioning why Uduma was filming the scene, while the visibly distressed girl lies on a chair in the room.

Following the incident, both Uduma and Abraham were subjected to an orderly room trial resulting in their respective dismissals. The Edo State Police Command, through a statement released in November by its Public Relations Officer, Moses Yamu, accused Uduma of conspiring with her husband, Inspector Ibrahim Mohammed, to extort N1 million from Sergeant Abraham to cover up the scandal. According to the command, when Abraham countered with an offer of N45,000 instead, the incriminating video was subsequently leaked online.

In addressing the allegations, the police command stated, "The female officer, instead of reporting the incident to the Divisional Police Officer or the Incident Duty Officer, took advantage of the situation to enrich herself by conspiring with her husband to demand N1 million from the sergeant." This assertion has been vehemently denied by Uduma, who



insists that she has been wronged and was not given a chance to defend herself adequately.

In an emotional interview with NEW DAILY PRIME, Uduma expressed her despair over the situation. "What the Edo Command is saying is not true. They know I lack the connections to fight back," she lamented. She asserted that her dismissal was unjust, and she remains adamant that the truth behind her actions has been obscured and manipulated.

Uduma further revealed that an ongoing investigation by the Force Headquarters in Abuja remains unresolved, yet the Edo command acted swiftly to dismiss her. "I want justice. My dismissal is unjust," she stated with tears in her eyes. She also added details of her husband's demotion, which she claims has no bearing on his involvement in the incident.

"During that time, he merely brought me food at the station," she clarified. As the fallout continues, Uduma has voiced her desperation. "If nobody listens to me if they keep searching for me to arrest me, I will poison my children and myself. I feel trapped," she said, highlighting her current state of anguish and isolation, having been in hiding and away from her children for an extended period.

Uduma accused the Divisional Police Officer at her station of prompting her to request the N1 million for

negotiation purposes when Abraham reportedly fled after the incident. "It surprises me how other officers have turned against me," she remarked. "If the police can do this to one of their own, what chance do ordinary civilians have?"

Mystery surrounds the previous DPO, SP Lilian Osemwegie, who has since retired. Attempts to reach her for comments were unsuccessful. Meanwhile, the situation has sparked outrage among human rights organizations. The Take It Back Movement has submitted a petition to the Inspector General of Police, Kayode Egbetokun, calling for a thorough investigation into Uduma's unjust dismissal.

The petition emphasizes the grave injustice faced by Uduma and her husband, urging the police hierarchy to review the circumstances surrounding their dismissals. "It is disturbing that rather than commend the bravery of Uduma for revealing the alleged rape, the police command chose to punish her," the petition stated, emphasizing the implications of this action on the broader context of justice and accountability within the police force.

As the situation unfolds, calls for justice and a fair investigation into Uduma's allegations grow louder, shining a light on the challenges of integrity and accountability within law enforcement agencies.

Customs Ondo/Ekiti reaffirms commitment to business-friendly environment

By Friday Omosola

The Nigeria Customs Service (NCS) Ondo/Ekiti Area Command has reiterated its commitment to fostering a business-friendly environment to boost trade facilitation and promote economic growth in Nigeria.

This assurance was given by the Command's Area Controller, Comptroller Morenikeji Bewaji, during a visit from delegates of the Africa Association of Professional Freight Forwarders and Logistics of Nigeria (APFFLON) at the Command's headquarters in Akure.

In a press statement by the Deputy Superintendent of Customs, Herbert Dzungwenen, who serves as the Command's Public Relations Officer, quoted Bewaji as praising APFFLON's critical role in Nigeria's supply chain and logistics sectors.

Custom She described freight forwarders as crucial partners in ensuring seamless trade facilitation and advancing Nigeria's global economic objectives. "APFFLON has consistently been a strong partner to the Nigeria Customs Service, and our continued dialogue

only strengthens our mutual efforts to streamline trade processes and ensure compliance with international standards," Bewaji remarked. The Customs boss outlined several initiatives by the Command aimed at supporting the ease of doing business.

These included regular consultations with trade stakeholders to address challenges, continuous training programs for Customs officers and stakeholders, and a robust commitment to providing clear guidelines to eliminate trade uncertainties.

Comptroller Bewaji also emphasised the need for stakeholders to prioritize training, innovation, and efficiency in driving a competitive trading environment. She expressed gratitude to the APFFLON delegation and assured them of the Command's steadfast support for the federal government's Ease of Doing Business initiative.



Earlier, Otunba Frank Ogunojemite, the National President of APFFLON, who led the delegation, called for deeper collaboration between Customs and freight forwarders to remove trade barriers and stimulate economic growth. He stressed the importance of strong partnerships to enhance trade facilitation and achieve shared objectives.

Both parties reaffirmed their commitment to strengthening cooperation for the benefit of Nigeria's economy.

Nigerians to witness world-class cancer hospital—Indian Group reveals

By Helen Okechukwu

An Indian group, Padiyath Healthcare, has revealed that the new health initiative to be executed in Nigeria will be a world-class cancer hospital in western Africa with an affordable cost.

The sum of \$100 million has been proposed for investment in Nigeria's healthcare sector.

The chairman of the group, Hazeeb Padiyath, made this known after Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi visited Nigeria.

The aim of this investment is to provide quality and affordable healthcare across Africa.

As part of the long-term goal, Padiyath announced that the group of companies is set to commission Padiyath Mayfields Hospitals in Abuja.

The ongoing constructed hospital is a 300-bed tertiary care hospital at Suncity Estates, Galadimawa.

He stated that upon completion, it would become Nigeria's largest private-sector hospital.

The investor noted that the hospital will be ready for operation by February 2025.

Addressing Modi, he highlighted the hospital's incorporation of advanced diagnostic equipment, including a 3T

MRI and a 256-slice CT Scan Machine—the first of its kind in West Africa.

Additionally, it will feature a cardiac cath lab, 24 super-speciality centres of excellence, a 25-bed intensive care unit, and an emergency department equipped with its operating theatre.

He explained that the third floor will house an operating theatre complex, designed to be crucial in saving lives during emergencies.

He also announced plans for Padiyath Cancare Hospitals in Abuja, a state-of-the-art 200-bed cancer institute.

Padiyath said, "This centre will be a full-fledged cancer hospital with equ

Former vice president, Prof Yemi Osinbajo and wife, celebrates 35th wedding anniversary

By Eyitayo Jemimah Ajayi

The chemistry between former vice president Prof Yemi Osinbajo and his wife, Dolapo knows no time. The couple has been married for 35 years yet they radiate true love.

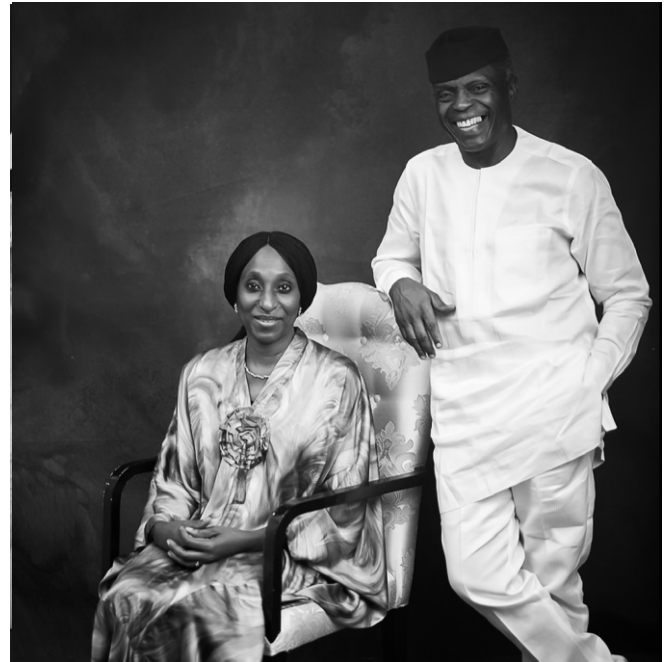
Today marks the 35th wedding anniversary of the power couple. The former vice president announced this in an Instagram post in a batch of pictures featuring his wife and family taken by popular photographer, Tolani Alli.

Dolapo Osinbajo radiates humility and meekness as a wife little wonder why her husband showered her with

so much praises on the course of the wedding anniversary.

Their marriage is blessed with two kids, Fiyinfunoluwa and Kiki who are also happily married.

Prof Yemi Osinbajo served as a vice president during the democratic regime of President Buhari from 2015-2023. His wife, Dolapo also is an astute role model for Nigerian women because of her lifestyle and philanthropic works.



Gov Mutfwang presents N471.13 billion 2025 budget to House of Assembly

By Friday Omosola

Plateau State Governor, Caleb Mutfwang, on Monday, presented the 2025 Budget Estimate of N471.13 billion to the Plateau State House of Assembly.

The budget, titled the “Budget of Consolidation and Sustainability”, is designed to improve the well-being and welfare of the state’s residents, reinforcing the administration’s commitment to people-centred development.

Governor Mutfwang emphasised that the budget would focus on executing programs and projects aimed at fostering sustainable development and directly impacting the lives of Plateau’s citizens.

Governor Caleb Mutfwang presenting the budget to the House of Assembly [PHOTO CREDIT: X]

He assured that the budget would be implemented in line with the principles of the Fiscal Transparency, Accountability, and

Sustainability (SFTAS) program, which is supported by the World Bank.

This approach aims to ensure transparency, accountability, and inclusivity while incorporating feedback from grassroots communities for a more participatory governance process.

READ ALSO: PDP govts reaffirm commitment to rebuilding party at strategic meeting in Jos

Governor Mutfwang appealed for the lawmakers’ cooperation and swift passage of the budget.

He stressed that timely approval would allow for the prompt commencement of critical projects that are vital to the state’s development.

The governor also directed all



Heads of Ministries, Departments, and Agencies (MDAs) to actively engage in their scheduled defence sessions and provide the necessary information to support effective deliberations.

Governor Mutfwang concluded by reaffirming his administration’s determination to transform and reposition Plateau State for peace, progress, and prosperity.

Banks, others raise N2.7tn from capital markets in 11 months

By Olamilekan Botti

The Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) has revealed on Monday that banks and various corporate entities raised an impressive N2.7 trillion from the Nigerian capital market during the first eleven months of 2024. This robust figure underscores the heightened activity in investments, securities, and financial instruments as businesses strive to expand operations, contribute to economic growth, and enhance overall financial market dynamics.

The SEC's report highlights that the significant sum includes equity capital while explicitly excluding funds raised by investment managers within the capital market framework. Notably, banks emerged as the front-runners in this fundraising exercise, generating approximately N1.7 trillion through various recapitalization initiatives. This development aligns with the ongoing efforts to fortify the financial sector and boost investor confidence.

Dr. Emomotimi Agama, the Director General of the SEC, delivered this pivotal information during his keynote address at the SEC's 2024 Journalists Academy in Abuja. The conference, themed "Fintech: Leveraging Technology to Drive Capital Market Participation," shed light on the critical role of technology in enhancing capital market engagement.

"We are excited to report that the banking recapitalization exercise has yielded substantial success, raising about N2.7 trillion from the market. This accomplishment promises to bolster financial stability, reinforce investor confidence, and ultimately enhance the Nigerian economy," Dr. Agama stated, emphasizing the importance of robust capital markets.

He elaborated further, stating, "Of the N2.7 trillion total, N1.7 trillion was raised from the banking sector, while the remainder comprises equity rates and rights issues. It is essential to note

that this figure excludes the additional amounts raised and refinanced by asset management companies during this period."

Beyond this financial success, Dr. Agama highlighted the workshop's significance in reinforcing the commission's shared responsibilities to promote transparency, build confidence, and raise awareness about the capital market among stakeholders.

The SEC Director-General provided a broad economic overview, elaborating that macroeconomic indicators have shown notable shifts since the current management's inception. The commission has undertaken pivotal steps to reposition its operations effectively, including the establishment of specialized departments targeting specific market developments to ensure more efficient regulation. Among the newly created units are the Fintech and Innovation Department, the Derivatives and Risk Management Department, and an office dedicated to managing municipal bonds and unclaimed dividends.

Dr. Agama emphasized the critical nature of these departments in regulating burgeoning areas such as crypto-assets, derivatives, and Foreign Exchange Contracts for Differences (CFDs). He noted that addressing longstanding issues like unclaimed dividends is vital for nurturing financial innovation and managing emerging risks, ultimately enhancing service delivery to market participants.

Dr. Agama also pointed out the SEC's collaboration with the Nigerian Financial Intelligence Unit in its quest to help Nigeria exit the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) grey list. Exiting this list is a crucial step for the advancement of the Nigerian financial sector, ensuring that the nation maintains its international financial credibility and avoids potential



economic sanctions.

He commended the proactive initiatives of the Presidential Enabling Business Environment Council, which introduced a 90-day Regulatory Reform Accelerator Programme aimed at improving service delivery within ministries, departments, and agencies (MDAs). Such reforms are anticipated to attract both local and foreign investments by enhancing transparency and access to vital information.

Looking ahead, Dr. Agama outlined the SEC's Revised Capital Market Masterplan (2021-2025), which emphasizes stakeholder engagement, awareness, capacity building, and developing regulatory frameworks that support innovative financial products.

In conclusion, Dr. Agama presented a snapshot of the SEC's objectives for 2025, focusing on enhancing market transparency and confidence, leveraging technology for financial inclusion, and strengthening partnerships with domestic and international stakeholders to sustain financial stability. He acknowledged the pivotal role of the media in fostering public understanding and trust in the capital market, underscoring the necessity for accurate reporting and constructive dialogue in this vital sector of the Nigerian economy.

Oba of Benin plans lawsuit withdrawal after rights restoration

By Olamilekan Botti

The Benin Kingdom, Oba Ewuare II, the revered Oba of Benin, alongside the Benin Traditional Council, is poised to withdraw the legal actions they initiated against the Edo State government. This shift comes after Governor Monday Okpebholo made a landmark decision on Sunday to restore the full statutory rights of the Oba and dismantle the policies imposed by the previous administration under Governor Godwin Obaseki.

The announcement was made through an official statement from the Chief Press Secretary to the Governor, Fred Itua. Within the statement, it was revealed that Governor Okpebholo has abolished the newly established traditional councils in Edo South that were created by Obaseki's administration, thereby reaffirming the authority of the Benin Traditional Council and the Oba's position within the community. Governor Okpebholo's measures reflect a commitment to rectify the governance issues that led to tensions between the Benin monarchy and the state government during Obaseki's tenure. The governor's actions also include backing the federal government's recognition of the Oba's palace as the rightful custodian of valuable Benin artefacts that were looted during the British colonial expedition in 1897.

Dr. Samson Osagie, the state Attorney General and Commissioner for Justice, clarified that the governor's decision is pivotal in resolving the disputes that resulted in lawsuits initiated by the Oba of Benin and the Benin Traditional Council against the state government. Osagie remarked, "These cases are civil matters initiated by the Oba of Benin and the Traditional Council against the state government, so there is a strong encouragement for parties to settle amicably."

He further noted that as the two



The Benin Kingdom, Oba Ewuare II,

parties explore reconciliation, it is expected that the Oba and the Traditional Council will soon direct their legal representatives to withdraw their lawsuits from the court, marking the end of a contentious chapter in their relations. Osagie elaborated that the government's actions symbolize a proactive approach to fostering harmony and peace, paving the way for a collaborative future between the Benin monarchy and state governance. He stated that the governor's declaration serves as a precursor to the cessation of all legal proceedings related to the controversial concession of the Oba Akenzua Cultural Centre to the Benin Traditional Council, as well as the establishment of the additional councils that were previously contested.

The statement from Okpebholo's office emphasized the administration's dedication to upholding the dignity and authority of the Oba of Benin. "This administration hereby abolishes the new traditional councils in Edo South created by the last administration," it asserted.

Moreover, Governor Okpebholo has rescinded the prior administration's decision to convert the historic Oba Akenzua II Cultural Centre into a motor park, affirming intentions to restore the site to its intended cultural function.

In the spirit of revitalizing the Benin Traditional Council's financial entitlements, the governor has mandated a return to the status quo before the creation of the newly established councils, ensuring that the Council's resources are adequately preserved.

Additionally, the governor has reiterated his support for the federal gazette recognizing Oba Ewuare II as the legitimate owner and custodian of the repatriated Benin artefacts. Distancing his government from the Museum of West African Art, Okpebholo has thrown his support behind the establishment of the Benin Royal Museum, which aims to house these invaluable cultural treasures.

"The Federal Government has released a gazette recognizing the ownership and custody of the repatriated Benin artefacts by Oba Ewuare II," the statement concluded. "Governor Okpebholo respects the rights of the traditional ruler and is committed to ensuring that the Oba plays a vital role in preserving the rich cultural heritage of the Benin people." This pivotal resolution promises to usher in a new era of cooperation and respect between the Benin monarchy and the state government, emphasizing cultural heritage and traditional governance.

Borno receives 100 trucks of grain from Tinubu

By **Olamilekan Botti**

In a determined effort to alleviate food shortages and ease the plight of flood-stricken communities, Borno State Governor, Babagana Umara Zulum, on Monday, launched the distribution of 100 trucks of food items donated by President Bola Ahmed Tinubu.

The flag-off ceremony took place in Ngala Local Government Area, one of the regions hardest hit by recent flooding that severed the area from the rest of the country.

The relief items, comprising maize, millet, and sorghum, were transported to Ngala as part of a coordinated effort to address the food supply crisis caused by months of isolation.

New Daily Prime report at the event, Governor Zulum outlined the critical need for the intervention and expressed gratitude to the federal government for its timely support. "This town was completely cut off from the rest of the country for about four months due to heavy rainfall and severe flooding," Zulum said. "The movement of food items to Ngala was obstructed, leaving residents in dire need. This informed our visit today to provide relief and help mitigate the hardships faced by the people.

The governor commended President Bola Tinubu for his proactive leadership and the federal agencies involved in making the aid possible. He disclosed that the donation included 100 trucks of assorted grains, while another 100 trucks of rice had been allocated for victims of a separate flood disaster in Maiduguri.

"On behalf of the people of Borno State, I want to extend my deepest appreciation to President Bola Ahmed Tinubu for his unwavering support," Zulum stated. "The 100 trucks of maize, millet, and sorghum distributed today are a testament to his commitment to assisting vulnerable communities.

Additionally, the federal government



has provided another 100 trucks of rice for the victims of the Maiduguri flood disaster."

While highlighting the importance of immediate relief measures, Zulum also emphasized his administration's focus on long-term solutions to foster self-sufficiency among residents. He revealed plans to transition from food distribution to sustainable agricultural initiatives aimed at empowering communities.

"As part of our medium- and long-term strategy, the state government is establishing irrigation structures, particularly in Ngala Local Government Area, to enable year-round farming," the governor explained. "Our goal is to ensure that affected communities can return to cultivating their lands and reduce dependency on aid."

The governor reaffirmed his administration's commitment to

addressing the challenges faced by vulnerable populations, particularly those impacted by natural disasters and displacement. He assured residents that the government's support would evolve from emergency relief to initiatives that promote stability and resilience.

Ngala Local Government Area has faced significant challenges in recent years, including displacement caused by insurgency and natural disasters. Monday's distribution was welcomed by residents, who expressed gratitude for the relief materials and the state government's continued efforts to address their needs.

The governor's initiative marks another step in Borno State's ongoing recovery and underscores the importance of collaboration between state and federal authorities in responding to humanitarian crises.

LASTMA rescues driver as 40-foot container collapses on Toyota Camry

By Friday Omosola

The officers of the Lagos State Traffic Management Authority (LASTMA) and other emergency responders have rescued a yet-to-be-identified driver whose 40-foot container collapsed on his Toyota Camry at Mile 2, along the road to Apapa. LASTMA in a statement on its X page on Monday said the Toyota Camry was severely damaged. The incident occurred when the container, which was heavily loaded, fell onto the car, trapping the driver inside.

The joint rescue operation involved personnel from the Federal Road Safety Corps (FRSC) and the Lagos State Emergency Management Agency (LASEMA), who worked together to extricate the victim from the wreckage.]

Furthermore, LASTMA said the driver had been transported to the hospital for medical treatment. According to LASTMA, security

at the scene was provided by officers from the Kirikiri Police Division, ensuring the safety of both emergency workers and bystanders during the operation.

cer extorting motorists in Lagos arrested

“Once the driver was safely rescued, efforts to remove the fallen container were initiated. LASTMA officers continue to manage the scene, working to ease traffic congestion while ensuring that normalcy is restored as quickly as possible.”

Olalekan Bakare-Oki, the General Manager of LASTMA, emphasised the importance of proper container securing by truck drivers and owners.

He warned that negligence in securing loads could lead to accidents that endanger lives and



02102 Lagos

property.

LASTMA is urging all road users to comply with safety regulations to avoid such incidents in the future.

“The authorities remain committed to ensuring road safety and are collaborating with relevant agencies to improve the security and efficiency of Lagos roadways.”

LASU announces applications for HND/BSc conversion top-up degree programme

By Friday Omosola

The Lagos State University (LASU) has announced the commencement of its 2023/2024 HND/BSc Conversion Top-Up Degree Programme.

The university in a statement on Monday said the initiative seeks to eliminate the perceived disparity between Higher National Diploma (HND) and Bachelor's Degree holders, offering a platform for graduates to enhance their qualifications.

The university added that the programme will provide opportunities for individuals

dissatisfied with their degree classifications to upgrade their credentials.

Available programs according to the institution include Accounting, Business Administration, Marketing, Computer Science, Mass Communication, Public Administration, Economics, Geography and several others.

Admission requirements include relevant HND certificates with a minimum of lower credit or a bachelor's degree (of any class), NYSC discharge or exemption certificate.



The university cautioned prospective students against making payments to unauthorized accounts, warning that such actions would be at their own risk.

Lagos govt hails Supreme Court ruling on lottery regulation

By Friday Omosola

The Lagos State Government has commended the Supreme Court of Nigeria for its historic ruling affirming the constitutional authority of states to regulate lotteries and gaming activities within their jurisdictions.

In the case Attorney-General of Lagos State and Ors vs. Attorney-General of the Federation & Ors (Suit No. SC/1/2008), the court nullified the National Lottery Act, declaring the regulation of lotteries a residual matter under state control.

Describing the judgment as a victory for federalism and the rule of law, the Lagos government lauded the contributions of key political figures, including President Bola Tinubu, who has championed the cause of true federalism for years.

They also praised former Governor Babatunde Fashola for pursuing the legal challenge and Governor Babajide Sanwo-Olu for his unwavering commitment to upholding the rule of law.

The ruling reinforces the position of the Lagos State Lotteries and Gaming Authority (LSLGA) as the sole regulatory body for gaming activities in Lagos State.

The government called on all illegal and unlicensed operators to regularize their operations through the LSLGA or face prosecution.

“This outcome is a testament to the tenacity of Lagos State leadership in defending its constitutional rights

and ensuring a transparent and responsibly managed gaming sector,” said Commissioner for Information and Strategy, Gbenga Omotoso.

The state government expressed commitment to fostering a business-friendly environment for legitimate



operators while safeguarding residents from the adverse effects of unregulated gaming.

https://twitter.com/Mr_JAGs/status/1860767405162541550?t=iu-otv72NTzzCF0QFMTsKg&s=1

Gov Diri proceeds on annual leave, assures governance continuity

By Friday Omosola

Bayelsa State Governor, Douye Diri, has proceeded on his annual leave, effective Monday. In a statement posted on his X page on Monday, Governor Diri emphasised that his absence would not disrupt governance or delay ongoing projects in the state.

Reflecting on the year so far, he described it as exceptionally busy, particularly following his inauguration for a second term in February.

“My absence will not in any way affect governance in the state, as the Deputy Governor, His Excellency, Senator Lawrence Ewhrudjako, has the mandate to take charge of all state functions,” he assured. The governor also addressed the

prolonged blackout affecting the state, which has caused significant economic losses, particularly for businesses.

He expressed satisfaction with the progress made in repairing the vandalised Ahoada-Yenagoa 132kV transmission line.

“Our intervention in the repairs is yielding results with the completion of restringing of the damaged line,” he said, noting that the Bayelsa State Government’s involvement was driven solely by the need to alleviate citizens’ suffering.

READ ALSO: Gov Diri inaugurates 15 Permanent Secretaries

Governor Diri said to ensure the security of repair sites, local and conventional security forces have been deployed to Ula Ikata and Ihuike communities in Ahoada-East Local



Government Area of Rivers State.

The governor is optimistic that power will soon be restored, pending the replacement of recently vandalized conductors between towers 29 and 31.

Looking ahead, he revealed plans to develop an Independent Power Plant to secure a stable electricity supply in the state.

FG continues inquiry into civil servants' overseas salaries

By **Olamilekan Botti**

The Head of the Civil Service of the Federation, Didi Walson-Jack, addressed the public on Monday, affirming that the investigation initiated by the Federal Government, aimed at identifying civil servants who are still receiving salaries while residing abroad, is currently in progress.

In a clear response to allegations suggesting the discontinuation of this critical investigation, Walson-Jack emphasized the government's unwavering commitment to addressing the issue.

She remarked that individuals who have relocated to foreign countries in pursuit of better employment opportunities should no longer benefit financially from the Nigerian civil service system.

This statement was delivered during a significant event in Abuja, commemorating her first 100 days in office as the Head of the Civil Service. Walson-Jack took this occasion to reflect on her achievements and the current state of the civil service under her leadership.

The timing of this announcement is particularly notable as it follows a directive from President Bola Tinubu five months ago, which mandated that any civil servant found to be accessing government salaries after moving abroad must return the funds.

This investigation illustrates the government's commitment to uphold financial integrity within the civil service sector. Walson-Jack stated, "We are diligently continuing the process by meticulously scrutinizing the Integrated Payroll and Personnel Information System (IPPIS) payroll.

This effort aims to delineate between those civil servants who

are actively present in the country and those who are no longer residents." She further emphasized that the investigation is an ongoing endeavor, essential to ensuring that financial resources are not unjustly disbursed to individuals living outside the nation.

Additionally, the Head of the Civil Service noted that some progress has already been achieved in the investigation. "We will remain vigilant in monitoring the situation until it has been thoroughly resolved," she asserted, reiterating the importance of accountability within the service.

During her address, Walson-Jack took the opportunity to express her gratitude toward her dedicated staff and highlighted the instrumental role of what she termed the 'Super Permanent Secretaries' in facilitating a smooth transition in her new role. "The first 100 days in office mark a crucial milestone.

It provides us with the opportunity to review our accomplishments, assess our progress thus far, and outline our objectives moving forward," she stated, emphasizing the importance of strategic planning.

Walson-Jack also recognized President Tinubu's pivotal role in her appointment, expressing her appreciation for the opportunity to serve in this capacity.

Underlining the ongoing challenges facing the civil service, she mentioned that her office is actively collaborating with the Federal Civil Service Commission to combat the issue of job racketeering practice that undermines the integrity of the recruitment process within the civil service.

"I fully understand that the Federal



MRS. DIDI ESTHER WALSON-JACK, OON, mni.
HEAD OF THE CIVIL SERVICE OF THE FEDERATION

Civil Service Commission is tasked with overseeing recruitment; however, we are fully supporting their work in this area. Our commitment to eradicating job racketeering remains strong," Walson-Jack affirmed.

She further pledged that the civil service will take decisive action against individuals who have secured employment through fraudulent methods, stating, "Where evidence of unethical recruitment practices is found, we will collaborate with the commission to ensure that appropriate sanctions are imposed.

However the investigation continues, and the commitment of the Federal Government and the Head of the Civil Service to maintaining the integrity and fidelity of the civil service is made clear.

As Walson-Jack leads this critical initiative, the accountability measures implemented will serve to preserve the fundamental principles upon which the civil service was built.

Access bank denies N500m missing from customer account

By **Olamilekan Botti**



Access Bank has categorically denied claims suggesting that a sum of N500 million is unaccounted for in a customer's account. This statement was released on Sunday via the bank's official social media channels, firmly asserting the institution's commitment to ethical banking practices and customer satisfaction.

The controversy arose from a viral video posted by social media influencer Vincent Otse, known widely as VeryDarkMan. In this video, Otse accused Access Bank of engaging in dubious practices involving the account of a deceased customer, alleging discrepancies that allegedly amount to N500 million.

Such accusations, if true, would represent a severe breach of trust in the banking industry. However, Access Bank did not shy away from addressing these serious claims. In their Sunday statement, bank representatives made it unequivocally clear: "Our attention has been drawn to a video on social media wherein allegations of missing funds and unethical behaviour have been made against Access Bank Plc."

The bank underscored that the protection of its customers' funds is a primary concern, stating, "First and foremost, we wish to emphasise that

the safety and security of our customers' funds are core priorities that we take seriously."

This commitment highlights Access Bank's ongoing mission to maintain a safe banking environment in an age where digital interactions are ubiquitous. Furthermore, the institution elaborated on its ethical stance. "Access Bank Plc does not engage in or condone any unethical behaviour.

In the instant case, the allegations of missing funds in the bank are most untrue and baseless," the statement read confidently. The bank went on to assert, "There is no N500 million or any other fund or amount missing from the subject customer's account or any other customer's account with us."

To bolster its position, Access Bank explained that it, along with other independent stakeholders in the banking sector, has conducted a thorough investigation into the claims made by Otse. The findings from these inquiries reached a consensus that aligns with the bank's assertion: the allegations are unfounded.

Access Bank's commitment to maintaining the highest ethical standards is a cornerstone of its operation, as it continuously strives to protect the interests of its customers while upholding stringent privacy

regulations. The bank urged the public to critically assess the reliability of the information they encounter, especially when it comes to sensational or unverified claims.

"We urge the public not to rely on or believe sensational and unverified claims," Access Bank implored, recognizing the broader implications such accusations can have on public trust in financial institutions. Access Bank has established itself as a reputable entity in Nigeria's banking landscape, continuously reinforcing its dedication to trust and transparency.

Given the significant impact that social media can have on public perception, consumers need to approach such information with caution, ensuring they obtain facts from verified sources.

Furthermore, while the digital age brings numerous platforms for discussion and debate, Access Bank remains firmly planted in its commitment to ethical banking and customer assurance.

In conclusion, investigations continue, and the bank is hopeful that clarity and trust will prevail in the marketplace, alleviating concerns and fostering a continued spirit of confidence among its clientele.

Okpebholo honors Thomas Oleghe, Nigeria's oldest catholic priest

By Olamilekan Botti

Edo State Governor, Senator Monday Okpebholo, has expressed deep sorrow and solidarity with the Catholic community across the state in light of the recent passing of Monsignor Thomas Oleghe, who holds the title of the oldest Catholic priest in Nigeria.

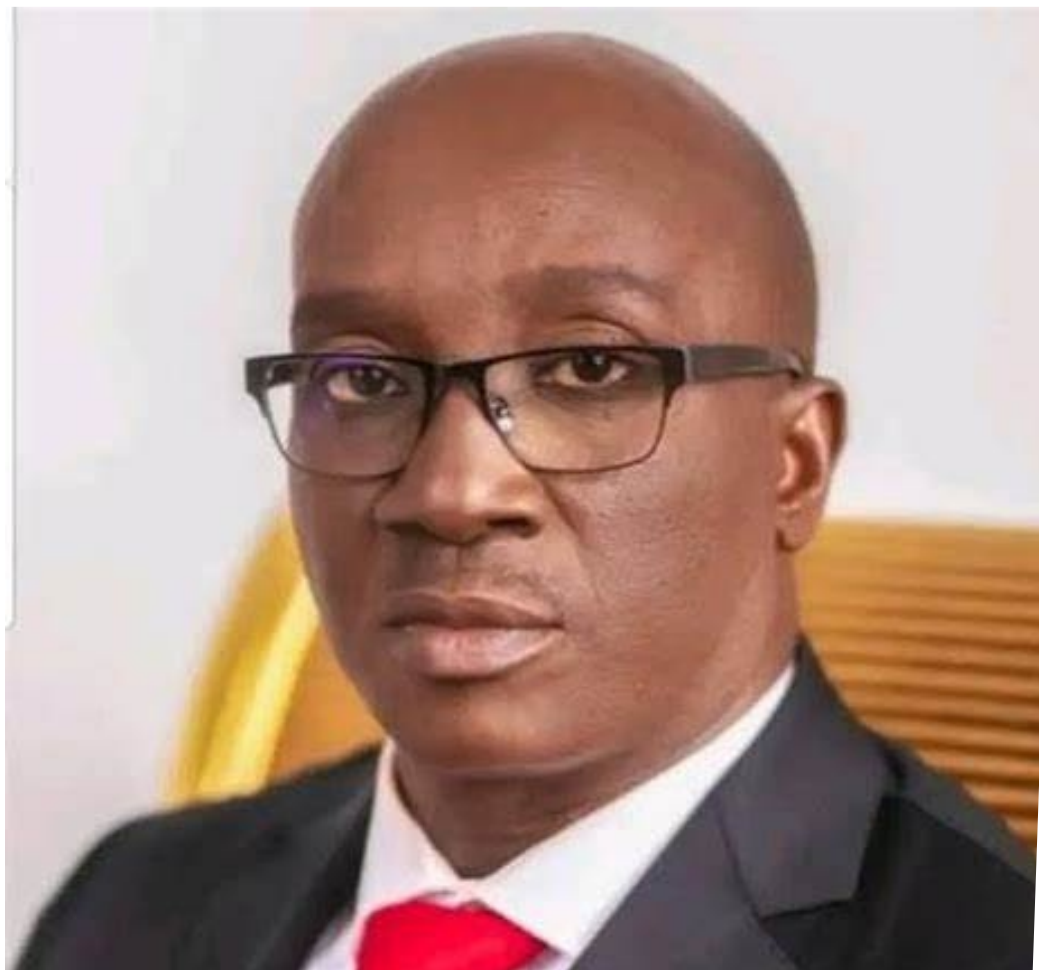
Monsignor Oleghe breathed his last at the remarkable age of 104 years on the morning of Sunday, November 24, 2024. In an official press statement released on Monday by the governor's Chief Press Secretary, Fred Itua, Senator Okpebholo reflected on the profound legacy left behind by Fr. Oleghe, describing his exemplary life as a powerful lesson for all Nigerians.

He underscored the remarkable qualities of humility and selflessness demonstrated by Fr. Oleghe throughout his life, emphasizing that his sacrifices and the lives he influenced will be remembered for generations to come.

Governor Okpebholo extended heartfelt prayers for the family during this trying time, as well as for the broader Catholic community in Nigeria, especially the Auchi Diocese, urging for strength and resilience in facing the tremendous loss of such a beloved figure.

He stated, "Fr. Oleghe originated from the Igiode town in Agenebode, located in the Etsako East Local Government Area of Edo State. Although he lived a fulfilled life and reached the extraordinary milestone of 104 years, we will dearly miss his fatherly presence and the countless lives he impacted throughout his years."

The governor also conveyed his condolences on behalf of the people of Edo State, expressing profound respect for the late priest's contributions to the community and the church. "On behalf of the people and Government of Edo State, I wish



to extend my deepest condolences to the family of the late Fr. Oleghe and the Catholic Church Community in Nigeria, particularly the Auchi Diocese. May God grant his soul eternal rest, amen," the governor concluded.

In a related statement issued on Sunday, the Bishop of Auchi, Gabriel Dunia, announced the sad news of Monsignor Oleghe's passing, confirming that he departed this world at approximately 2:30 AM.

The bishop stated, "With gratitude to God for a life well-lived on earth, I hereby inform you of the passage of the Rt. Rev. Monsignor Thomas Oleghe, the oldest Catholic priest in Nigeria, departed to the Great Beyond at about 2:30 AM this morning on the 24th of November, 2024."

The bishop's announcement further revealed that Monsignor Oleghe would be laid to rest on Wednesday, following appropriate memorial tributes from the community and church. Monsignor

Thomas Oleghe's extraordinary life and service have made him an enduring figure within the Catholic Church, not just in the state of Edo but throughout Nigeria.

His dedication and commitment to his faith and community have inspired many, as reflected in the warm sentiments shared by Governor Okpebholo and Bishop Dunia. As the Catholic community mourns the loss of this monumental leader, the legacy of Monsignor Oleghe serves as a beacon of hope and an illustration of a life devoted to service, compassion, and faith.

His teachings will continue to resonate within the hearts and minds of those he touched, ensuring that his impact remains felt long into the future. The state and church stand united in honouring his memory and providing comfort to those grieving this significant loss.

Share

Sokoto state approves N200,000 monthly allowance for principals

By Olamilekan Botti

Governor Ahmed Aliyu Sokoto has approved a monthly maintenance allowance of N200,000 for each school principal. This announcement was made during the Sokoto State 2025 Citizens Budget Discussion, which took place on Monday at the Sultan Abubakar Maccido Institute of Quranic and General Studies.

The governor's decision comes as a response to appeals made by various stakeholders in the education sector. Notably, former Deputy Governor Chiso Abdullahi urged the state administration to allocate funds specifically for school principals. Abdullahi highlighted the pressing need for financial resources to address immediate maintenance issues within the schools, stating that such funds would enable principals to quickly repair minor damages to infrastructure without navigating the often lengthy government approval processes.

"The timely provision of these funds will empower our school principals to take immediate action when issues arise," Abdullahi remarked. "It is crucial for maintaining a conducive learning environment that allows our educators and students to thrive."

In support of this initiative, the Chief Press Secretary to the Governor, Abubakar Bawa, confirmed that the monthly allowance would extend to all secondary schools within the state's 23 local government areas. The scheme is set to commence in January 2025. "Let me assure this esteemed gathering that the governor has taken into consideration the plea from the former deputy governor," Bawa stated. "Each school principal will receive N200,000 monthly, allowing for swift responses to maintenance needs and ensuring that our educational facilities remain in good condition."

The introduction of this maintenance



allowance speaks volumes about the government's commitment to improving education in Sokoto State. It aligns with ongoing efforts to enhance the overall quality of education by addressing not only the academic needs but also the infrastructure that supports learning. By enabling principals to swiftly respond to repair requests, the initiative is expected to foster a more efficient and effective management of school facilities.

Furthermore, Governor Sokoto's administration is taking steps to review the allowances of traditional rulers within the state. In light of the current economic climate, the governor has tasked the state Commissioner for Local Government Affairs, Dadi Adare, with evaluating and adjusting the financial provisions for these community leaders. This directive follows a request made by Muhammad Jabbi Kilgori, the district head of Kilgori, who represented the Sultan of Sokoto, Muhammad Sa'ad Abubakar, during the budget discussion. The request was for improved allowances that reflect the existing economic realities faced by traditional leaders.

This dual initiative not only underscores the governor's responsiveness to the

pressing needs of both educational and traditional institutions within Sokoto State but also marks a concerted effort to adapt to the economic challenges impacting the populace. By providing meaningful financial support for school maintenance and reevaluating the compensation of community leaders, the Sokoto administration aims to foster a stronger foundation for governance and social development.

As the state prepares for the implementation of these measures in the coming year, stakeholders, educators, and community leaders alike await the positive impact this policy will have on the educational landscape of Sokoto.

The commitment to enhancing school infrastructure and supporting community leadership reflects a holistic approach to governance, paving the way for a brighter future for the residents of Sokoto State. The anticipation is that these initiatives will invigorate the state's education sector and improve the standard of living for its citizens.

Unemployment rate falls 4.3% in Q2, reports:- NBS

By Olamilekan Botti

The Nigerian unemployment rate has dropped to 4.3 per cent in the second quarter of 2024, indicating a significant improvement in labour market conditions. This latest statistic, released on Monday by the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), signifies a decrease from the previous quarter's rate of 5.3 per cent and represents a gradual recovery from 5.0 per cent recorded in the third quarter of 2023.

The report provides a comprehensive overview of the employment landscape in Nigeria, revealing a favourable trend in workforce engagement. The Labour Force Participation Rate, which tracks the proportion of the working-age population actively participating in the labour market, increased to 79.5 per cent, up from 77.3 per cent in the first quarter of 2024.

This uptick reflects an enhanced willingness of individuals to seek and secure employment opportunities. Furthermore, the Employment-to-Population Ratio, a critical indicator of employment levels, also painted a bright picture, climbing to 76.1 per cent in Q22024 from 73.2 per cent in Q1.

This improvement suggests that a larger segment of the working-age population has been able to secure gainful employment during this period, a welcome sign of economic resilience. Self-employment continues to dominate the labour market, representing 85.6 per cent of total employment, an increase from 84 per cent in the previous quarter.

This trend emphasizes the entrepreneurial spirit of Nigerians, even as informal employment rose slightly to 93.0 per cent, underscoring the economy's heavy reliance on informal jobs for livelihood.



The report further highlighted a significant development in youth unemployment, particularly among individuals aged 15 to 24. The youth unemployment rate declined markedly to 6.5 per cent, down from 8.4 per cent in the previous quarter.

This reduction signals a positive shift for younger Nigerians entering the workforce amidst the challenging economic landscape. However, the report also sheds light on gender disparities within the labour market.

The unemployment rate for females stood at 5.1 per cent, higher than the 3.4 per cent rate for their male counterparts. This discrepancy suggests an urgent need for targeted, gender-inclusive policies aimed at bridging the employment gap and ensuring equitable access to job opportunities for all segments of society.

The NBS defined the unemployment rate as the percentage of the labour force that is unemployed while actively seeking work. It is an essential component of labour underutilization metrics.

The Q22024 unemployment rate represents a slight increase of 0.1 percentage points compared to the same period last year. Geographically, the unemployment rates revealed interesting patterns: urban areas

experienced a rate of 5.2 per cent, while rural areas enjoyed a lower rate of 2.8 per cent.

This regional disparity calls for tailored strategies to address employment challenges specific to various locales across the country. Additionally, time-related underemployment, which measures individuals desiring more hours of work, fell to 9.2 per cent in Q22024 from 10.6 per cent in Q1.

Labour underutilisation metrics also demonstrated improvement, with LU2 (encompassing unemployment and time-related underemployment) decreasing to 13.0 per cent from 15.3 per cent in the preceding quarter.

The report concluded with notable declines recorded in LU3 and LU4 metrics, which include potential labour force participation, now at 5.9 per cent and 14.5 per cent, respectively. Collectively, these figures present an optimistic outlook for Nigeria's labour market, affirming the potential for ongoing economic recovery and employment growth.

As the nation continues to navigate its complexities, these developments signal a step forward in creating a more robust and inclusive labour market for all Nigerians.

Gov Abdulrazaq promotes Kwara's creative economy as Nollywood stars converge in Ilorin

By Friday Omosola

Kwara State became the epicentre of Nigeria's film industry on Sunday night, as Governor Abdulrahman Abdulrazaq hosted the 16th edition of the Best of Nollywood (BON) Awards at the state-of-the-art Sugar Factory Film Studio in Ilorin.

The governor welcomed some of the biggest names in Nollywood to the state, urging them to explore Kwara's cutting-edge facilities and unique environment for their future projects.

Governor Abdulrazaq highlighted the significance of the BON Awards as a celebration of excellence in the Nigerian movie industry.

He commended the organisers for choosing Kwara as the venue for the prestigious event, positioning the state as a burgeoning hub for quality cinematography, tourism, and creative industries.

"I warmly welcome you all to Kwara State, and thank you for honouring us with your presence. Tonight's event takes place at the Sugar Factory Film Studio, a purpose-built facility designed to elevate cinematography, nurture local talent, and position Kwara as a hub for high-quality film production," the Governor said.

He further emphasised that the Sugar Factory Film Studio represents his administration's commitment to the creative economy.

READ ALSO: Gov Abdulrazaq approves bonus for Kwara workers
"This facility offers state-of-the-art resources to enhance movie production, build local capacity, conserve foreign exchange, and boost our economy," he added.

The governor also showcased Kwara's expanding creative ecosystem, which includes notable



projects like the Visual Arts Centre, Ilorin Innovation Hub, International Conference Centre, the remodelled Kwara Hotel, and natural attractions such as Owu Falls and Sobi Hill.

He highlighted Kwara's accessible road networks, proximity to an international airport, and robust sports facilities as key factors that make the state an ideal destination for both creative and leisure activities.

As part of the event, the governor acknowledged the contributions of Nollywood stars and stakeholders to national development, urging them to consider Kwara for their future projects, vacations, and creative endeavours.

The BON Awards 2024 was graced by some of Nollywood's finest actors, including Fred Amata, Hilda Dokubo, Gloria Anozie, Ayo Magaji, Toyin Abraham, and Kanayo O. Kanayo, who received a lifetime achievement award from Governor Abdulrazaq.

Other big winners included Femi Adebayo, who took home the Best Actor of the Year award along with three others for his role in Jagun Jagun, and Wumi Dada, named Best Actress for her performance in

Unknown Soldier. Both stars received N5 million worth of wardrobe funds, courtesy of Ilorin-based firm Wura Fadaka.

READ ALSO: Governor AbdulRazaq distributes educational materials to students

The event was attended by notable dignitaries, including the First Lady of Kwara State, Amb. Olufolake Abdulrazaq, House of Representatives member Mukhtar Tolani Shagaya, and various political, cultural, and business leaders.

Renowned thespian Patrick Doyle praised the governor for transforming Ilorin into a clean and beautiful city, while other guests, including Samuel Olatunji (Big Sam) and Seun Oloketuyi, lauded the state's infrastructure and growing influence in the creative sector.

Seun Oloketuyi, founder of the BON Awards, expressed his gratitude to Governor Abdulrazaq and his team for showcasing Kwara as a rising force in Nigeria's creative landscape.

Having less than three wives is a sin- Actor Uwaezuoke

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

Nollywood veteran Stephen Alajemba, widely recognized by his stage name Uwaezuoke, has boldly articulated his views on polygamy.

According to Alajemba, it is a grave sin for a man to limit himself to marrying fewer than three wives, a claim that has sparked considerable intrigue.

During an engaging interview with Ugwumba TV, the seasoned actor made his controversial stance clear, effectively stirring the pot of social and cultural dialogue surrounding contemporary marriage practices in Nigeria.

“It’s a sin to marry one or two wives. But if you marry three or four, you will be free from sin,” he stated emphatically.

Alajemba’s perspective raises a number of thought-provoking questions about marital practices and the societal norms that influence them. Delving deeper into his rationale, Alajemba warned of the potential dangers that accompany monogamous and even bitheist unions.

He expressed a belief that men who opt for a singular or double matrimonial commitment expose themselves to considerable risk, especially from their spouses.

“If you marry one wife your life is at risk,” he cautioned, suggesting a sinister interpretation of interpersonal relationships that could lend itself to conflict and betrayal.

What lies behind Alajemba’s viewpoint may reflect a traditional perspective rooted in cultural practices that often celebrate larger family units.

In his view, marrying two wives could lead to conspiratorial behaviour between the spouses, implying that strife and jealousy are inevitable when a man limits his affections to just two partners.



He stated, “If you marry two wives, they will conspire to poison you,” suggesting that the strain of rivalry could escalate into harmful action.

In contrast, Alajemba believes that such tensions would dissipate in a polygamous arrangement where three or more wives are involved.

“But if you marry three or more wives, they will all be on their own and you will only be providing for them,” he asserted.

This statement reflects a notion that diversity within a marriage allows for a more harmonious existence, where each wife can coexist without feeling threatened by the presence of another.

Furthermore, he elaborated on the dynamics of sharing responsibilities, stating, “You will be taking turns with their meals and bedrooms.”

This comment echoes an age-old understanding of how polygamous relationships can be structured, often emphasizing communal living arrangements and resource sharing.

Such a model, as he suggests, could potentially lessen the emotional burdens that might arise in a more traditional marriage.

However, it’s essential to recognize that Alajemba’s views may not resonate

universally. Opinions on marriage practices have evolved significantly, particularly within modern Nigerian society.

Debates on gender equality, personal choice, and the rights of women in relationships continue to dominate conversations throughout the nation and beyond.

Regardless of where one stands on the issue, Alajemba’s bold declarations certainly have reignited discussions around the complexity and varied interpretations of marriage in contemporary society.

His remarks serve as a critical reminder that discussions about familial structures, gender roles, and societal expectations remain highly relevant and multifaceted.

While Stephen Alajemba, through his provocative statements, calls attention to the age-old practices of polygamy, the broader societal conversation about marital norms continues to unfold.

As Nigeria grapples with its cultural identity, the implications of such viewpoints will undoubtedly influence future discussions around marriage practices and personal relationships across the country.

Many pastors struggle to enjoy marriage- Mike Bamiloje

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

Prominent Nigerian gospel film actor and founder of Mount Zion Film Production, Mike Bamiloje, has recently raised eyebrows with a candid observation about the marital lives of many pastors.

In a post that has quickly gained traction across social media, Bamiloje asserts that numerous clergymen are not truly enjoying the sanctity of marriage but are, instead, merely enduring it.

In his viral statement shared on his X account, Bamiloje highlighted the complex dynamics that sometimes arise between pastors and their wives, particularly indicating that some women leverage their husbands' roles in ministry to manipulate them.

"Many women seem to believe that pastors are not subject to the same vulnerabilities as ordinary men. They feel as though pastors cannot physically confront them, unlike their secular counterparts, nor can they simply walk away from the marriage," he stated.

Bamiloje argues that the calling to serve in a spiritual capacity can

sometimes be used against them by their spouses.

He remarked, "Some women use their husband's divine calling or ministry as tools for emotional blackmail, casting a shadow over the essence of their relationship."

The actor emphasized that these troubling dynamics often lead to a scenario where, while the public may view these pastors as leading flourishing and blessed lives, the reality is quite different.

"Several pastors are not enjoying their marriages, but rather, are just enduring them," Bamiloje lamented, conveying a poignant sense of concern.

Bamiloje's statements serve as a call to attention not only for married couples within the ministry but also for church communities to foster environments where honest dialogue about marital issues can take place.

As this revelation continues to resonate with many, it poses important questions about the support systems in place for those tasked with spiritual leadership.

In shedding light on this three-



dimensional struggle, Bamiloje has sparked a necessary conversation within the church about the complexities of marriage, especially among leaders, opening avenues for deeper understanding and potential healing.

It's difficult to survive in Nigeria – says Tiwa Savage

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

Afrobeats superstar, Tiwa Savage, has recently articulated a thought-provoking observation regarding the surge of Nigerian entertainers, attributing their success largely to the pervasive condition of poverty within the nation.

Savage, speaking candidly on the 'Shopping The Sneakers' podcast, elaborated on how economic hardship is motivating a wave of young individuals to tap into and hone their creative talents.

She emphasized that the day-to-day challenges faced by the citizens of Nigeria play a significant role in shaping the country's vibrant entertainment scene.

"In Nigeria, the environment is a

relentless teacher," Savage remarked.

"You only need to step foot in this country to truly grasp why we can produce so many superstars. The will to survive in Nigeria takes a multifaceted approach, and that's precisely why the artists emerging from our nation are akin to hustlers. They embody the spirit of relentless perseverance."

Savage's statements reflect a broader narrative about Nigeria, which boasts Africa's most expansive industries in film, music, comedy, and fashion.

The renowned Nollywood film industry stands as a testament to this assertion, being recognized as the second-largest movie industry in the world, just behind Bollywood.

Savage's insights serve as a reminder of the intricate relationship between

adversity and creativity.

The pressing societal issues that countless Nigerians face daily seem to act as a catalyst for artistic expression, fueling innovation and talent as individuals strive to overcome their circumstances.

Thus, while poverty may be viewed through a lens of despair, for many of Nigeria's young creators, it has become a formidable force that drives them to greatness.

Tiwa Savage's reflections shed light on this phenomenon, encouraging a deeper understanding of how challenges can cultivate extraordinary talents in the heart of Africa's largest nation.

Jagun Jagun bags award at 2024 BON Awards

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

In a spectacular showcase of cinematic talent, the Netflix Original Yoruba film “Jagun Jagun,” featuring renowned actor Femi Adebayo, triumphed at the 2024 Best of Nollywood Awards (BON), securing victories in an impressive six categories.

This epic film has been honoured with awards for Best Indigenous Film, Best Actor, Best Production Design, Best Special Effect, Best Costume, and the prestigious Director of the Year title.

The 16th edition of the BON Awards took place at the extravagant Sugar Factory Film Studios on a glittering Sunday night in Ilorin, Kwara State, with the ever-charismatic Toyin Abraham assuming the role of host for the evening.

“Jagun Jagun” stood out in a competitive field, having garnered 12 nominations in total, showcasing its exceptional storytelling, production quality, and outstanding performances.

The movie’s success not only highlights its cultural significance but also marks a significant milestone in the representation of Yoruba cinema on a global platform. The film industry’s recognition at the BON Awards underscores the dynamic growth and evolving landscape of Nollywood, further solidifying its status as a powerhouse in the world of film.

As such, Femi Adebayo and his team have undoubtedly set a new standard, paving the way for future filmmakers in Nigeria.

See the full list of winners below:

BEST CINEMATOGRAPHY: Adire

BEST SOCIAL MESSAGE: Unleashed

DIRECTOR OF THE YEAR: Bayo Tijani & Tope



Adebayo (Jagun Jagun)

BEST SHORT FILM: Out of Many

BEST ACTRESS: Wunmi Dada (Unknown Soja)

BEST SUPPORTING ACTOR: Keppy Ekpenyong (The Weekend)

BEST SUPPORTING ACTRESS: Mercy Aigbe (Ada Omo Daddy)

BEST ACTOR: Femi Adebayo (Jagun Jagun)

BEST EDITING: Momiwa

BEST COSTUME: Jagun Jagun

BEST SOUNDTRACK: Oloku Ada

BEST SOUND: Offshoot

BEST USE OF FOOD: Nwanyi Abacha

BEST INDIGENOUS FILM: Jagun Jagun

BEST CHILD ACTRESS: Darasimi Nadi (Unknown Soja)

BEST CHILD ACTOR: Nifemi Lawal

MOST PROMISING ACTRESS: Chioma Okafor

MOST PROMISING ACTOR: Ozechi Franklin Izuchuchukwu

BEST PRODUCTION DESIGN: Jagun Jagun

BEST SCREENPLAY: Momiwa

BEST KISS: Halima Ganiyu & David Akande (Eti Keta)

BEST DOCUMENTARY: Is It Your Money?

BEST SPECIAL EFFECT: Jagun Jagun

I've experienced dangerous women - Fireboy

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

Nigerian music sensation Fireboy DML has opened up about his experiences with certain types of women throughout his life and career.

The Afro-fusion artist, known for his chart-topping hits and captivating performances, took to his verified X handle on Monday to share insights into the romantic encounters that have shaped him as both an artist and an individual.

Fireboy, whose real name is Adedamola Adefolahan, made a rather intriguing statement, alluding to his involvement with “dangerous women.”

While he did not elaborate on the specifics of these experiences, his brief yet striking comment “I have experienced some dangerous women in this life” has sparked a flurry of speculation amongst his fanbase and the media.

Such a notion hints at stories of passionate, tumultuous, and possibly tumultuous relationships that may have influenced his artistry.

This admission comes on the heels of Fireboy’s recent musical endeavours. The singer-songwriter has been on a successful trajectory since his debut, consistently enthralled audiences with his melodies, lyricism, and unique sound.

His latest release, the self-titled fourth studio album “Adedamola,” has already made waves in the industry, showcasing his growth as an artist and his ability to blend different musical genres seamlessly.

In a previous interview, Fireboy discussed his intentions following the release of his fourth album, noting that he plans to take a much-needed vacation.

He expressed an interest in seeking out experiences that could lead to “heartbreak,” suggesting that he believes personal heartaches can serve as a powerful source of inspiration for his music.

This perspective resonates deeply within the realm of songwriting, where emotional authenticity can



significantly elevate a narrative and connect with listeners on a profound level.

Fireboy’s reflections on his past relationships point to a deeper understanding of love, attraction, and the complexities of human connections.

The notion of “dangerous women” could represent a host of characteristics from the allure of their passion to the challenges that may arise from their confidence, independence, and intensity. Such experiences often serve as rich fodder for creativity, enabling artists like Fireboy DML to delve into themes of love, loss, and self-discovery in their work.

As fans eagerly anticipate what Fireboy will embark on next, the singer’s willingness to explore his narrative offers a glimpse into the depth of his artistry.

The themes of relationships and personal growth are not only central to his songwriting but also echo the experiences of many young people in contemporary society.

Fireboy’s ability to articulate these

sentiments resonates widely, reaffirming his status as a voice for his generation.

However, Fireboy DML stands at the forefront, poised to inspire and entertain through his music.

The singer’s candidness about his experiences with women, coupled with his upcoming exploration for new inspiration following his album release, illustrates a commitment to honesty in both life and art.

As fans await his next moves, it is clear that Fireboy DML continues to captivate audiences not only with his sound but also with the narratives that enrich it.

As Fireboy DML continues to share his journey through music, it’s evident that the rich tapestry of love and relationships will persist as a cornerstone of his artistry, promising fans a relatable and engaging experience for years to come.

I still love Nigerian Men- says American despite romance scams

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

In a striking revelation that has captivated online audiences, an unidentified American woman has recounted her harrowing experiences with two Nigerian internet fraudsters, widely known as “Yahoo boys,” who deceived her out of a significant amount of money through elaborate romance scams.

In her candid narrative, the woman, who is over 50 years old, expressed her appreciation for Nigerian men, affectionately labelling them as the “sexiest and most handsome men on this planet,” despite the heartbreak she endured during her encounters.

The woman’s story gained traction through a viral video shared on Sunday, wherein she delved into how her unfortunate relationship with one of the scammers began in 2020 on TikTok.

With a striking blend of vulnerability and resilience, she displayed the photographs of the young Nigerian man and the false image he presented to unwitting victims.

The truth about his identity was accidentally revealed when he inadvertently dialled her number from his Nigerian phone, leading her to uncover his impending marriage to a girlfriend in Nigeria.

“Back in 2020, I met this man and was involved with him for ten months,” the woman recounted with palpable emotion. “Initially, everything seemed fine, but soon he began relentlessly asking for money. His demands were insatiable. Eventually, I reached a breaking point when he mistakenly called me from a Nigerian phone number. He tried to pass it off as a friend’s number, but that was the moment I realized the truth.”

When she finally decided to end the relationship, the scammer unexpectedly revealed his plans, stating, “Now, he is about to get married to his Nigerian girlfriend,” as she showcased a picture of the couple. With surprising grace, she added, “May God bless them, and hopefully, they have a long life together. I also

congratulated him and sincerely hope everything goes well for them.”

In recounting her second tumultuous experience, the woman described a different scenario involving another young man who initially approached her under a false identity.

However, he later confessed that he had resorted to deception to support his ailing mother, who required urgent medical care.

“This second encounter was a little different,” she reflected. “He was much more polite and considerate of my feelings. After spending a year together, he eventually decided to come clean, explaining that he was a young Nigerian man striving to put himself through school while his mother was gravely ill. He expressed immense gratitude, insisting that I had been instrumental in saving her life.”

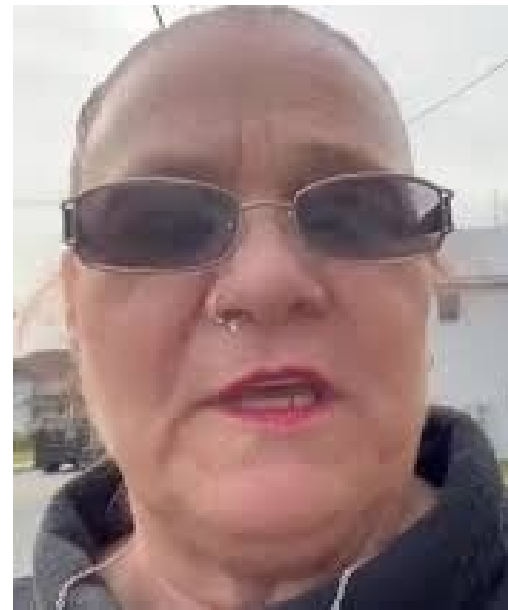
Reflecting on this experience, she commented, “That one doesn’t hurt me as much because I know the money I sent went to a good cause.” In contrast, she lamented how the first scammer frivolously spent money on lavish pursuits, sharing videos of himself splurging on extravagant items and dating local women.

“I’m over it,” she stated with resilience. “I will bounce back one day. My love for the Nigerian people remains intact; after all, the men are the sexiest and most handsome on this planet.”

However, her experience has left a bitter taste, as she cautioned others about the risks associated with romances formed online.

“I pray that nothing like this ever happens to me again, as I now know all the red flags,” she added, emphasizing the financial scars left by the scams. “Please be cautious in your dealings because both Nigerians and American women face their struggles; it can be tough for women here, especially for those without partners.”

In light of such fraudulent schemes, the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) in Nigeria continues its relentless fight against internet fraudsters across the nation.



The commission has recorded notable successes, with its chairman, Mr Ola Olukoyede, announcing in May 2023 that the EFCC secured 3,175 convictions and recovered over ₦156 billion within a year.

This remarkable achievement coincided with President Bola Tinubu’s assumption of office. The recovery also included substantial sums in foreign currencies and cryptocurrencies, reflecting the far-reaching ramifications of cybercrime. Olukoyede, speaking during the launch of the Zero Tolerance Club at the University of Abuja, highlighted ongoing concerns regarding youth involvement in internet fraud.

“Despite the commendable performance of the EFCC, we are alarmed by the rising participation of young individuals, including students, in cybercrime, colloquially known as Yahoo Yahoo,” he noted.

“Hundreds of suspects are apprehended each month, and many face incarceration.” The woman’s tale serves as a poignant reminder of the perils of online relationships and the need for heightened vigilance in the digital age.

As the battle against internet fraudsters continues, so does the call for awareness about the risks associated with online interactions, ensuring that hopeful romantics are equipped with the knowledge to protect themselves from manipulative schemes.

G7 Ministers Convene near Rome for Middle East, Ukraine Issues

By Dave Oludare Oso

On Monday, the foreign minister's Group of Seven (G7) nations gathered near Rome for a crucial two-day summit aimed at addressing pressing global issues, with a particular focus on the Middle East.

The discussions will shift later to the ongoing conflict in Ukraine as the ministers seek to forge a unified response to the challenges facing both regions. Hosted by Italy's Foreign Minister Antonio Tajani, this significant meeting brings together high-ranking officials from Canada, France, Germany, Japan, the United Kingdom, and the United States.

U.S. State Secretary Antony Blinken is amongst the key participants in this diplomatic forum, which is poised to tackle several critical topics affecting international stability.

According to Italy's foreign ministry, the agenda will include a discussion on the International Criminal Court's recent arrest warrants for Israel Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and the military chief of Hamas.

The implications of these warrants on the current crises unfolding in Lebanon and Gaza will also be a focal point of the meeting. This move underscores the heightened international scrutiny regarding accountability and justice in conflict zones.

The inaugural session on Monday afternoon is set to concentrate on the tumultuous situation in the Middle East and the Red Sea. Specifically, the ministers will explore avenues for achieving a ceasefire in the ongoing conflicts in Gaza and Lebanon.

Italy's foreign ministry expressed hope that this gathering would lead to meaningful dialogue and

concrete solutions. To foster robust discussions, representatives from key regional partners will be included in one of the sessions.

Ministers from Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Jordan, the United Arab Emirates, and Qatar will have the opportunity to engage with G7 members, accompanied by the Secretary General of the Arab League.

Minister Tajani emphasized the importance of regional voices in these conversations, stating, "We have asked for the presence of partners in the region to foster dialogue with the members of the G7.

Only together can we find concrete solutions that can bring peace and stability to the region." The inclusion of these Middle Eastern representatives not only illustrates the G7's commitment to collaborative diplomacy but also highlights the urgent need for resolving ongoing tensions that have resulted in widespread humanitarian crises.

The leaders are expected to discuss not only ceasefire prospects but also strategies for long-term peacebuilding and conflict resolution. As the summit progresses into its second day on Tuesday, attention will shift towards the conflict in Ukraine.

The presence of Ukrainian Foreign Minister Andriy Sybiga signals a commitment to fully understand the implications of the war, which has led to significant geopolitical shifts and affected global security frameworks.

The G7 ministers are likely to converge



on strategies to support Ukraine amidst its ongoing struggle against Russian aggression, reflecting a unified stance in the face of territorial disputes and regional security concerns.

This high-level gathering, marked by dialogue and collaboration, is an essential step towards addressing the myriad challenges facing both the Middle East and Ukraine. The outcomes of these discussions will not only shape the immediate diplomatic landscape but could also lay the groundwork for future international relations and stability.

As the world watches this assembly of influential leaders, the hope remains that through cooperation and understanding, meaningful pathways to peace will emerge in regions where conflict has long been entrenched.

The G7 ministers are poised to reinforce their commitment to global security and collaborative solutions as they navigate these complex topics.

Reece James suffers new hamstring injury in training

Timi-Zacchaeus Oluwaferanmi

Chelsea captain Reece James has been dealt another injury blow, as manager Enzo Maresca confirmed the 24-year-old will miss the Blues' Premier League clash against Leicester City on Saturday due to a hamstring issue sustained in training.

James, who only recently returned to action after undergoing hamstring surgery last season, experienced a "small" problem during training earlier this week. While Maresca downplayed fears of a lengthy absence, he admitted caution would be exercised to prevent aggravating the injury. "We have just one injured player and that's Reece," Maresca said. "Unfortunately, he felt something small in training two days ago, and we don't want to take a risk for the weekend. It's a muscular problem, a hamstring issue.

"We will see. At the moment, it's probably difficult for him to be ready for the Conference League next Thursday, but hopefully, he will be back soon."

The injury is the latest in a string of

setbacks for James, who endured a frustrating 2022/23 season marred by fitness issues. The Chelsea captain underwent surgery in an attempt to resolve chronic hamstring problems but has struggled to maintain full fitness since.

Despite his absence, Maresca will have several key players available, including Cole Palmer, Levi Colwill, Wesley Fofana, Malo Gusto, and Romeo Lavia, all of whom missed international duty but have recovered in time for the trip to Leicester.

Maresca also highlighted concerns about players returning from international duty, particularly those traveling from South America. Moises Caicedo and Enzo Fernandez only returned to training on Friday and are unlikely to be at full fitness for Saturday's game.

"The team will not be at 100%," Maresca admitted. "The players who traveled long distances have only had one training session. We'll assess them carefully before making decisions."



James' absence is a significant blow for Chelsea as they aim to build momentum after a mixed start to the season. The Blues will need to rely on depth in their squad, with Malo Gusto likely to step in at right-back during James' recovery. Chelsea currently sit mid-table in the Premier League and are looking to secure a vital win against Leicester as the season progresses. Balancing league commitments with their UEFA Conference League campaign adds to the challenge, especially with the ongoing injury concerns surrounding their captain.

Giannis Antetokounmpo shines with 41 points as Bucks overpower Bulls

Timi-Zacchaeus Oluwaferanmi

Giannis Antetokounmpo delivered a dominant performance on Wednesday night, scoring 41 points to lead the Milwaukee Bucks to a 122-106 victory over the Chicago Bulls. The two-time MVP showcased his versatility with eight rebounds and nine assists, helping the Bucks secure their fourth win in five games.

The Bucks' resurgence has been critical after a slow start to the season, where they won just two of their first ten games. With this victory, they improved their record and climbed to ninth in the Eastern Conference standings.

Brook Lopez and Damian Lillard also made key contributions, adding 21 and 20 points, respectively. The Bucks pulled away late in the fourth quarter after the Bulls, led by Zach LaVine's 27 points, had closed the gap to 104-102 with just under eight minutes left.

"It's all about staying focused," Antetokounmpo said after the game. "We've been working on our chemistry, and it's starting to show."

Cavaliers Bounce Back with a Blowout

Win Against Pelicans

The Cleveland Cavaliers responded emphatically to their first loss of the season with a dominant 128-100 victory over the New York Pelicans. Ty Jerome was the star of the night, scoring a career-high 29 points and draining six of seven three-pointers.

Jerome's breakout performance included a stellar second quarter where he scored 20 points, energizing the Eastern Conference leaders.

"It was a superstar performance," said Cleveland coach Kenny Atkinson. "Those moments don't happen often in the NBA, and tonight was Ty's night."

The Cavaliers, who had their 15-game winning streak snapped by the Boston Celtics earlier in the week, looked every bit like contenders in their dismantling of the Pelicans.

Warriors Extend Home Streak with Win Over Hawks

The Golden State Warriors,



currently sitting atop the Western Conference, continued their strong form at home with a 120-97 victory over the Atlanta Hawks. Andrew Wiggins led the way with 27 points, while Stephen Curry added 23 in a commanding performance.

The Warriors' win marked their fifth consecutive home triumph, solidifying their place as early-season favorites in the West.

Golden State's defense was crucial in holding the Hawks to under 100 points, while their offense clicked behind strong performances from their core players.

Rodri settles Ronaldo-Messi debate: "He has no natural talent"

By Oluwatosin Ologun

Manchester City and Spain midfielder, Rodri, has ignited debate amongst football fans with his remarks about Cristiano Ronaldo, asserting that the Portuguese star lacks innate talent compared to Argentine's Lionel Messi.

The Ballon d'Or winner made the statement during an interview with the Spanish TV program El Hormiguero on Wednesday.

He said, "Lionel Messi is the greatest player of all time, without any doubt.

"Cristiano has managed to match Messi without innate talent. But those of us who have played against them can see the difference."

The 28-year-old shared his experience of facing the two football icons, emphasizing that Messi posed a far more pervasive threat on the pitch.

He said, "With Cristiano, we didn't want him to step into the box because he was lethal there.



"But with Messi, the danger was everywhere on the pitch."

The Spaniard's comments have sparked widespread debate among fans, with many interpreting his remarks as a dismissal of Ronaldo's natural abilities.

Rodri also used the platform to reflect on winning the prestigious Ballon d'Or last month, beating Real Madrid's Vinicius Junior to the

coveted title.

Recounting, Rodri said, "There was a rumour three weeks prior that Vinicius was going to win, so I had no optimism going to the gala.

"But just before arriving in Paris, many people started congratulating me. I didn't even have a speech prepared, but my father insisted I prepare something just in case."

Leicester City's Abdul Fatawu sidelined for season with ACL injury

Timi-Zacchaeus Oluwaferanmi

Leicester City's promising young winger Abdul Fatawu will miss the remainder of the 2024/25 Premier League season due to a serious knee injury, manager Steve Cooper has confirmed.

The 20-year-old Ghanaian international sustained the injury during his country's recent international fixture against Angola, which ended in a draw. Cooper revealed the extent of the damage, stating:

"It's not good; it's a serious injury. He's had an ACL (anterior cruciate ligament) injury that will rule him out for the rest of the season. It's a real blow, first and foremost for him, being a young player, and for us as a team."

A Rising Star Cut Short

Fatawu has been a bright spark for Leicester this season, playing 11 league matches and registering two assists. His electrifying performance against Southampton in October, where he inspired a dramatic 3-2 comeback victory after coming off the bench, highlighted his potential.

"This guy is absolutely lightning," former Premier League goalkeeper Shay Given said following Fatawu's display against the Saints. "He's a brilliant talent, and probably should be starting."

Fatawu's contribution has been vital for Leicester, who currently sit 15th in the Premier League table with 10 points from 11 matches. His absence leaves a significant gap in Steve Cooper's squad as they look to climb away from the relegation zone.

Leicester's Response
Steve Cooper expressed sympathy for the young winger but remains optimistic about Fatawu's recovery.

"It's a common injury in football, but it's still serious. For it to happen at such a young age is tough for him and us. However, it's only a pause, and we'll make sure he comes back stronger."

Fatawu has shown resilience and determination in his career so far, traits Cooper believes will aid him



during his rehabilitation.

"He's a big talent, with lots to learn. With the mentality and character he has, I have no doubt he'll return as a better player and person."

What's Next for Leicester?

Fatawu's injury adds to Leicester's challenges in a season where consistency has been elusive. The Foxes host Chelsea this Saturday in a critical fixture as they aim to steady their campaign.

For Fatawu, the focus will now shift to a long recovery process, with hopes of returning to action next season stronger than ever. His injury is a harsh reminder of the physical toll of elite football, but his talent and potential suggest this is only a temporary setback in what promises to be a bright career.