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As merchants sit next to their box stores at the new Alade market in Ikeja, Lagos, most sales are for imported clothing and textiles. Tailors unwrap bales of Dutch waxwork, known as Ankara print, on their cutting tables, while saleswomen hang racks of colorful outfits originally designed for European tastes.

Nigeria was once home to Africa's largest textile industry with 180 factories employing more than 450,000 people in the 1970s and early 1980s, according to the Cornell Alliance for Science. As of 2017, there were only 25, according to a 2017 survey of the sector by the Oxford business group. Cheap imports combined with weakened infrastructure have brought Nigerian textile artisans to the brink of collapse. Now many fabrics recognized worldwide as "African prints" are mass-produced abroad. But in recent years, Nigerian luxury brands working with locally produced fabrics have breathed new life into the industry.