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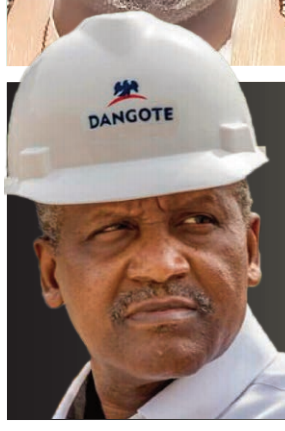


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SPOTLIGHT

U.S. removes S'Africa, Rwanda from $33tr AGOA duty-free trade deal

THE United States has moved to terminate South Africa and Rwanda's eligibility for its African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA), threatening their preferential access to the world's largest economy, valued at approximately $33 trillion, from January 1, 2027.

President Donald Trump has formally notified Congress and the governments of both countries of his intention to remove them from the trade preference programme, according to a November 2 statement by the Office of the United States Trade Representative (USTR).

U.S. Trade Representative Jamieson Greer said the decision followed an annual interagency review of sub-Saharan African countries' eligibility and found that both governments were engaging in practices inconsistent with AGOA's requirements.

"President Trump found that the governments of Rwanda and South Africa are engaging in practices that are inconsistent with AGOA's eligibility criteria," Greer said.

"These concerning and pervasive practices include, but not limited to, barriers that undermine American trade and investment and practices that pose a threat to U.S. national security and foreign policy interests in the region." the statement added.

UK reviews requirements for permanent residency

THE United Kingdom (UK) has revised its proposed immigration reforms, retaining plans to double the waiting period for most migrants seeking permanent settlement from five to 10 years while exempting hundreds of thousands of care workers from the extended requirement.

The revised policy, announced on Monday, follows opposition from trade unions and members of the governing Labour Party over the potential impact of the changes on low-paid foreign workers, particularly those employed in the care sector.

UK had initially proposed that lower-skilled foreign workers should wait between 10 and 15 years before getting permanent residency, known as indefinite leave to remain. But under the new arrangements, care workers will be exempt from longer waiting period, retaining a five-year route to settlement, subject to eligibility requirements.

NDLEA, Australian police unite against transnational drug cartels

By Bertram Nwannekanma

THE National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) and the Australian Federal Police (AFP) yesterday strengthened their partnership against international drug trafficking with the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to tackle criminal networks operating along the Nigeria-Australia drug route.

The agreement, signed at the NDLEA national headquarters in Abuja, formalises existing cooperation between the two agencies into a structured strategic alliance targeting transnational drug cartels.

NDLEA Chairman/Chief Executive Officer, Brig. Gen. Mohammed Buba Marwa (rtd.), described the agreement as a declaration of war against drug trafficking networks, warning that criminals would no longer find safe havens by operating across national borders.

He expressed confidence that the combined operational strength of the NDLEA and the AFP would make the Nigeria-Australia drug route increasingly hostile and unprofitable for traffickers.



Chairman of the Board of Trustees (BoT), Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), Mao Ohuabunwa (right); Chairman, Gwagwalada Area Council, Kassim Mohammed; Minister, Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Nyesom Wike; APC Senatorial candidate, Philip Aduda; candidate for Abuja South, House of Representatives, Danladi Chiya and others, during the Minister's Town Hall meeting with stakeholders in Gwagwalada Area Council, yesterday.

FG unveils USSD credit code for household needs, solar

THE Federal Government has unveiled a USSD-based consumer credit service that will enable Nigerians to access loans using basic mobile phones without internet connectivity or smartphones.

The service, SPARK, was introduced by the Nigerian Consumer Credit Corporation (CREDICORP) to expand access to affordable consumer loans, particularly for first-time borrowers with limited or no formal credit history.

The platform is designed to help Nigerians finance essential goods, household equipment, and productive assets; improve their quality of life; and repay over an agreed period.

CREDICORP's Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer, Uzoma Nwagba, disclosed this in a post on X following the pilot unveiling of SPARK at the inaugural CREDICORP for All event in Aba, Abia State.

The corporation unveiled '*347*333#' as the USSD code for accessing SPARK, with wider availability expected before the end of 2026.

As of 31 October, CREDICORP said 353,561 Nigerians had accessed credit through its programmes, with over N61.40 billion disbursed.

... DAY 4573

OUR GIRLS STILL MISSING

Tope Templer Olaiya, News Editor
@TopeTempler

RANDOM FACTS

- Google Wallet and Google Pay are now available in Nigeria.
- RCCG has 50,000+ branches worldwide in 197 countries, making it the first African church to achieve this. It was founded by Pastor Josiah Akindayomi in 1952. When he died in 1980, there were only 40 parishes. Pastor Enoch Adeboye took over from the founder in 1981.
- The fastest growing mammal is the Blue Whale, and the slowest growing mammal is the human.
- A tortoise named Adwaita lived from 1750-2006.

TODAY'S QUOTE

"Haste makes waste. What's done suddenly is done by the devil.

Unhappiness comes in pairs. Misery loves company.

POLISH PROVERB

Understanding, love and tolerance are the highest forms of interest on our small and interdependent planet.

As a Buddhist, I was trained to be tolerant of everything except intolerance. I was brought up to develop the spirit of tolerance and attain a certain degree of emotional equilibrium.

U THANT"

TODAY IN HISTORY

• 2022 - Nigeria
United Arab Emirates carrier, Emirates, suspended flights to Nigeria indefinitely, citing its trapped funds It also said it was yet to get its allocation from the $260 million released by Central Bank of Nigeria to clear part of the blocked funds belonging to foreign airlines.

• 2020 - USA
The 2020 United States presidential election held between Republican incumbent Pres. Donald Trump and Democratic Joe Biden. On November 7, Biden was declared the winner.

• 2016 - Nigeria
Pres. Muhammadu Buhari said he almost left the country when he discovered that the nation's treasury was empty after he assumed office in 2015.

• 2014 - USA
One World Trade Center opened in New York City, replacing the Twin Towers that were destroyed during the September 11 attacks.

• 1997 - USA
The United States imposed economic sanctions against Sudan in response to its human rights abuses of its own citizens and its material and political assistance to Islamic extremist groups across the Middle East and East Africa.

• 1992 - USA
Democratic Arkansas Governor Bill Clinton defeated Republican President George H. W. Bush and Independent candidate Ross Perot in the 1992 United States presidential election

• 1988 - Sri Lanka
Sri Lankan Tamil mercenaries attempted to overthrow the Maldivian government. At Pres. Maumoon Abdul Gayoom's request, the Indian military suppresses the rebellion within 24 hours.

• 1961 - Burma
U Thant was unanimously appointed as the 3rd Secretary-General of the Uni-ted Nations, becoming the first non-European individual to occupy the post.

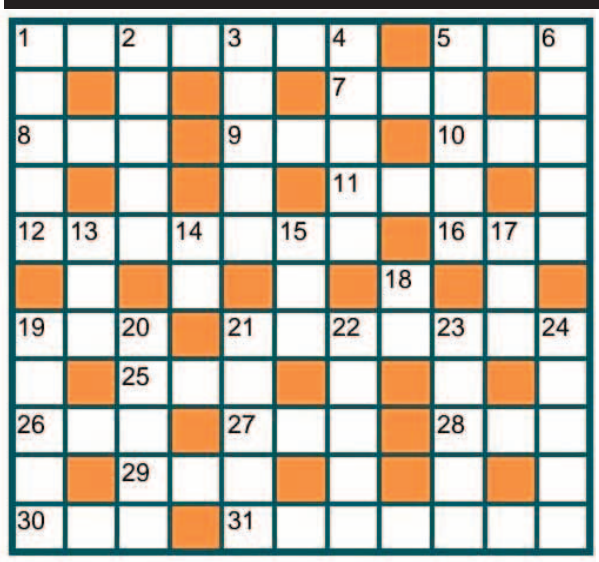
• 1918 - Poland
Poland declared independence from Russia.

• 1838 - India
The Times of India, world's largest circulated English language daily broadsheet newspaper was founded as The Bombay Times and Journal of Commerce.

• 1817 - Canada
Bank of Montreal, Canada's oldest chartered bank, opened in Montreal, Quebec.

• 1534 - UK
English Parliament passed the first Act of Supremacy, making King Henry VIII head of the Anglican Church, supplanting the pope and the Roman Catholic Church.

CROSS WORD PUZZLE



• ACROSS
I. Have relevance, (7).
5. Tap gently, (3).
7. Frozen water, (3).
8. Hotel, (3).
9. Asst. Inspector-General, abbr., (3).
10. Spoil, (3).
11. Owl's sound, (3).
12. Basic unit of matter, (7).
16. Baby food, (3).
19. Consumed, (3).
21. Allowance, (7).
25. Permit, (3).
26. 'Three' in Hausa language, (3).
27. LGA in C/River state, (3).
28. Indicating 'one', (3).
29. Not seeing clearly, (3).
30. Town in Osun state, (3).
31. Fictitious, (7).

• DOWN
1. Accolade, (5).
2. Collection, (5).
3. Subside, (5).
4. Hour of darkness, (5).
5. Evil spirit, (5).
6. Magnate, (5).
13. Luck, (3).
14. Madam, abbr., (2).
15. Internet, abbr., (3).
17. Association for Better Nig., abbr.
18. Out of bed, (5).
19. Ondo State capital, (5).
20. Get away from, (5).
21. Impression, (5).
22. Chemical from ammonia, (5).
23. Wash out material, (5).
24. Desiccated, (5)

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Check page 39 for solution to the puzzle

News

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NLC insists on right to negotiate N70,000 transport palliative for workers

Three unions ditch JNPSNC, back TUC

By Gloria Nwafor

PRESIDENT of the Trade Union Congress of Nigeria (TUC), Festus Osifo, and the National President of the Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC), Joe Ajaero, have taken conflicting stances over whose authority it is to negotiate wages and allowances on behalf of Nigerian workers with the Federal Government.

Meanwhile, three registered public service unions have publicly disowned a statement issued in the name of the Joint National Public Service Negotiating Council (JNPSNC), declaring that no one can speak for workers without their mandate.

The controversy followed the Federal Government's approval of a six-month palliative for workers at all levels.

While speaking on Channels Television's 'The Morning Brief' yesterday, Ajero argued that NLC "has the power" to negotiate alone on labour matters based on the principle of most workers' representatives of the International Labour Organisation (ILO).

"TUC can negotiate along with NLC, but NLC can negotiate alone based on the principle of most workers' representatives of the ILO," the NLC president noted.

On his part, the TUC president, while also appearing as a guest on Channels Television's 'The Morning Brief' yesterday, described the N70,000 agreement by NLC as an aberration, saying that the TUC was not carried along in the negotiations.

Osifo challenged Ajaero to produce the ILO regulation document that said either labour union could negotiate on behalf of the other.

"He should show me in the ILO Regulations where it says one party is going to negotiate without the other being there or consulted. He should show Nigerians!" he said.

But Ajaero insisted: "NLC determines how TUC participates. The NLC does not submit its proposal to TUC. It is the other way round."

He stated that the Ministry of Labour and other labour authorities would not engage with TUC, as it acts alone on workers' welfare negotiations.

The trade congress leader, in his reply, said, "As I listened to Ajaero today, I was wondering if it is the same NLC that produced the likes of Adams Oshiomole, Hassan Sumonu, Ayuba Wabba and so on.

Tinubu, govs seek divine intervention for Nigeria at Kaaba

Makinde faults President's economic claims in Mecca, says 140m Nigerians live in poverty

From Terhemba Daka and Azimazi Momoh Jimoh, Abuja

PRESIDENT Bola Tinubu, alongside Kaduna State Governor Uba Sani and his Yobe State counterpart, Mai Mala Buni, has sought divine intervention for Nigeria's peace, unity, stability and prosperity during prayers inside the Holy Kaaba in Makkah, Saudi Arabia.

Tinubu made this known yesterday in a post on his verified X handle, @officialABAT, following the conclusion of his visit to the Gulf kingdom.

But the Makinde-Daura Presidential Campaign Organisation (MDPCO) faulted the President's claim that Nigeria's economy had emerged from the "dark tunnel". It insisted that millions of Nigerians remain trapped in poverty amid worsening economic hardship.

The governors said they used the rare spiritual opportunity to intercede for the country, expressing hope that their prayers would attract divine blessings at a critical period in Nigeria's history.

Speaking in separate interviews after gaining access to Islam's holiest sanctuary alongside the President during his Umrah pilgrimage, they described the experience as a lifetime achievement and an extraordinary privilege.

Governor Sani said the opportunity was particularly significant given the country's need for enduring peace, national cohesion and stability.

According to him, the prayers focused primarily on Nigeria's unity, peace, and harmony, and expressed confidence that their supplications would be answered.

"Actually, this is a lifetime wish for every Muslim because it is a rare privilege. What is more important is securing this very rare opportunity to enter the Kaaba and pray at this critical moment in our country's history.

"We seized the opportunity, most importantly, to pray for our country, to pray for the unity of our country and to pray for the peace of our country. I believe this is the right time for that," he said.

The Kaduna governor expressed appreciation to Tinubu for extending the rare privilege to members of his delegation, describing the gesture as an indication of the President's leadership and consideration for others.

Similarly, Governor Buni described entering the Kaaba as a remarkable spiritual milestone, noting that the privilege was a rare honourgranted only by divine providence.

He said the opportunity also enabled them to seek God's blessings for Nigeria, their respective states and the well-being of their people.

President Tinubu and members of his delegation were granted the rare privilege of entering the Holy Kaaba by the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud.

The President expressed gratitude to the Saudi monarch for the honour, saying he also used the spiritual exercise to pray for Nigeria's peace, unity, development and prosperity, while reaffirming his commitment to building a stronger nation and securing a better future for Nigerians.

MDPCO, in a statement yesterday by its Director of Strategic Communications, Richard Ihediwa, described the President's assessment of the economy as disconnected from the realities confronting citizens.

Tinubu had reportedly made the remarks while in Mecca, where he also acknowledged that power comes from God, who can give and take it from whomever He wills.

However, MDPCO argued that the President's optimism about the economy was contradicted by persistent poverty, rising living costs, business closures, unemployment and worsening food insecurity.



Sheikh Dahlulah Muthawal of Masjid Haram (left); President Bola Tinubu; State Protocol of Jeddah, Ahmad Zafeer and others during the opening of the Holy Kaaba for the President at Haram in Makkah, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, yesterday.

Imo West Senate ticket: Aide dismisses Uzodimma's loss as injustice

By Kehinde Olatunji

CHIEF of Staff to the Imo State Governor, Enyinnaya Onuegbu, has defended Governor Hope Uzodimma's legal standing in the contentious All Progressives Congress (APC) primary for the Imo West Senatorial District, declaring the court judgment favouring former Governor Rochas Okorocha as a "miscarriage of justice".

Speaking yesterday on Channels Television's 'Politics Today', Onuegbu addressed the spiralling political and legal tussle between Uzodimma and his predecessor, Okorocha, over the party's senatorial candidacy.

Responding to claims that Uzodimma would not appear on the ballot following recent court rulings, Onuegbu asserted that the electoral law "safeguards a candidate" whose name had been submitted to the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) pending the exhaustion of all legal appeals.

"The judgment referred to is the judgment of the court of first instance. It hasn't ended," Onuegbu stated, revealing that the governor's legal team filed an appeal within 48 hours of the judgment.

"The Electoral Act says if you are a candidate and there is a dispute about your candidacy, if your name is submitted to INEC, your name remains in the INEC process until the final determination by the highest court." Onuegbu dismissed arguments questioning the eligibility of a sitting governor to run for a legislative seat, noting that the 1999 Constitution does not bar executive officeholders from seeking elective positions.

WHO recalls pandemic treaty as Ebola kills more than 5,300 in Africa

From Nkechi Onyedika-Ugoeze, Abuja

- NCDC: N10b emergency fund not for Ebola alone, says Nigeria needs N522b in five years
- With no active case, FG rules out travel restrictions, election shift

AFRICA'S latest Ebola outbreak has killed more than 5,300 people, the vast majority of them in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), according to the continent's top health agency.

For the World Health Organisation (WHO), deadly outbreaks like the Ebola epidemic raging in DRC show the urgent need to complete an international pandemic treaty.

Meanwhile, the Director-General of the Nigeria Centre for Disease Control and Prevention (NCDC), Dr Jide Idris, said the controversial N10 billion emergency intervention fund approved by President Bola Tinubu was not meant for Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) alone, but to strengthen Nigeria's preparedness against multiple epidemics.

In mid-May, the DRC declared its 17th Ebola outbreak, a deadly disease transmitted through contact with bodily fluids that causes haemorrhagic fever and has killed more than 15,000 people in Africa over the past 50 years.

According to data shared with AFP by the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (Africa CDC) yesterday, the recent outbreak, which has spread to other countries on the continent, has killed 5,376 people — 5,372 in the DRC and two each in Kenya and Uganda.

A total of 10,444 cases have been confirmed, with a fatality rate of more than 50 per cent.

The virus has crossed borders several times in recent months. Neighbouring Uganda recorded 20 cases, almost all involving people who had travelled from the DRC, before being declared Ebola-free in August.

Last month, Kenya recorded nine infections, marking the first time the country had reported an Ebola case.

That same month, Nigeria, Africa's most populous country, reported an Ebola case involving a 42-year-old Swiss woman whose husband works at the Swiss embassy in Abuja. The couple had travelled to Uganda before returning to Nigeria.

The outbreak is caused by the Bundibugyo strain of Ebola, for which no approved vaccine or treatment is available.

In recent weeks, clinical trials have begun with the Ervebo vaccine, which has proved effective against the more common Zaire strain of the virus.

WEALTHY countries and developing nations remain at loggerheads over how an agreement, adopted last year as a framework to handle future COVID-like pandemics, will work in practice.

As the ninth meeting towards finalising the deal opened in Geneva yesterday, WHO chief, Tedros Ghebreyesus, called on countries to "finish the job".

Pointing to recent deadly disease outbreaks, he stressed that completing a pandemic treaty was "about protecting people".

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News Analysis

Search for affordable transport, economic relief lingers despite fuel rebate

For households already stretched by soaring transport fares and rising food and service costs, a token N66-per-litre reduction feels more like policy on paper than real relief. As the 30-day discount nears its October 31 deadline, many motorists and commuters say the promised relief has barely touched their daily lives, WALIAT MUSA reports.



FOR Lagos resident Bolanle Alebiosu, the rising cost of petrol is already a heavy burden, without the added hassle of hunting for a few designated filling stations just to save N66.

With fuel prices squeezing her budget, Alebiosu, like millions of Nigerians, is questioning the rationale for limiting dispensing outlets to NNPC Retail outlets. She said the savings are too small to matter, and if government truly wants to ease the pressure, relief should be available across all stations, not confined to a specific dispensing network.

Her frustration isn't only about the token reduction per litre; it reflects the wider reality for consumers as official announcements of relief often fade at the pump, leaving everyday expenses unchanged when boarding a bus, planning tomorrow's commute, or covering household needs.

For commuters, the strain showed up not just in petrol prices but in transport fares, during school runs, and in the rising cost of moving goods to markets. A discount that doesn't reach transport operators or isn't passed on to passengers leaves much of the burden untouched.

These are some of the troubling issues besetting the Federal Government's 30-day petrol discount as it approaches its October 31 terminal date. Presently, the questions on the lips of many include: how much relief has reached ordinary Nigerians, and how many have barely felt it?

In *The Guardian* survey of over 30 respondents across the Federal Capital Territory (Abuja), Lagos, Edo, Abia, Bauchi, Borno, Ogun, Rivers, Oyo, Kwara, Osun and Imo states, at least 20 said they never benefited from the discount, while six said they were unaware of it. Three reported receiving a reduction on some or all purchases but said the discount they received was below N66 per litre.

For Adekunle Olawale, the clearest measure of relief is whether it has changed what he pays to move around.

"The 30-day discount to me is more like policy on paper because nothing changed. Transport fares have remained high. For crying out loud, how many NNPC fuel stations do we have in the country, and what can N66 do for any Nigerians? If the government wants to reduce fuel prices, going below N1,000 will make some sense," he said.

His complaint captures the gap between a petrol discount and the broader relief many Nigerians are seeking. Even when a motorist receives a reduction, it does not automatically mean that transport fares will fall or that households will have more money left after meeting daily expenses.

Since the discount began on October 1 as an NNPC Retail promo to mark the country's 66th Independence Anniversary, customers using the company's application access a reduction of N66 per litre at participating NNPC Retail outlets.

The Federal Government subsequently announced the discount as a temporary relief measure amid rising energy costs, and the campaign was extended to October 31.

But for some consumers, access to the offer has been a problem before they even reach the pump.

Adekunle Onabanjo, a driver, questioned how people without Android phones were expected to benefit from a discount linked to an application.

"They said they are using an app. Is it someone like me who doesn't even have an Android phone that would have an app?" he asked.

His question highlighted a basic difficulty with using a digital platform to distribute relief. An application may make it easier to record transactions and manage a promotion, but it can also become a barrier for customers who do not have compatible phones, are unfamiliar with the technology or have difficulty completing registration.

The Guardian survey found that eight respondents were unaware of the NNPC application, while another eight had not downloaded or used it. Only three respondents reported successfully using it, although one person said registration and use had been difficult.

While these figures do not show the rate of app adoption nationwide, they do, however, suggest that among the people reached by the survey, awareness and use remained limited.

A respondent from Owerri, who reported using the application, said the process eventually worked, but the reduction received was below N66 per litre. Another respondent in Port Harcourt, who identified a station around Mercy Land Junction, said there had been "No price change."

In the survey, 10 respondents reported encountering an NNPC Retail station that did not apply the discount, while five said they had not experienced that problem. Eight had not visited a station or lacked sufficient information to assess compliance. Asked more broadly about compliance, 11 said they lacked sufficient information, four believed some stations complied, and two said most complied.

The company has not provided figures in its response to *The Guardian* on the number of participating stations, customers using the application, transactions completed or litres sold under the promotion.

An Abuja respondent, Usman Alkali, questioned why transport fares had not changed despite the announcement; Olawale Oseni similarly said he noticed no meaningful difference in the fare he paid to travel out of Abuja.

For households whose incomes are already stretched to cover food, transport and other essentials, the difference between a small saving and a substantial reduction matters. A discount that is difficult to access or too limited to alter daily expenses may not feel like relief, even if some customers benefit from it.

> "The policy objective should remain affordable energy—not artificially cheap petrol. That distinction is fundamental to preserving the gains from deregulation while addressing the immediate welfare consequences of high energy prices."

Energy expert, Dr Ayodele Oni, said the intervention should be viewed as modest relief rather than a cure for the wider cost-of-living crisis. He argued that its commercial funding arrangement was important because the cost was being borne by NNPC Retail rather than public funds.

"It is fair to call the relief modest, and nobody is claiming it is a cure. What is worth noting is how it is funded. The discount comes out of NNPC's retail margin rather than public funds, so it gives some relief without reopening the subsidy hole the country spent three years closing," he said.

Oni said the savings could have a greater effect if commercial transport operators benefited and passed them on to passengers. An operator buying around 40 litres of petrol daily could save about N2,600 a day, or roughly N79,000 over a month, if the full N66 reduction applied to every litre purchased.

That is a conditional estimate, not evidence of savings already made by transport operators. It assumes the operator buys that volume every day at an eligible NNPC Retail station and receives the full discount on every litre. It also does not establish that passengers have paid lower fares as a result.

Responding to *The Guardian's* inquiries on the discount, the NNPC spokesperson, Andy Odeh, said the discount was a commercial promotion, and not a government-funded subsidy. The company said NNPC Retail was bearing the cost and would assess customer response and commercial performance before deciding whether to conclude or extend the campaign.

"The N66-per-litre discount is a promotional initiative introduced by NNPC Retail on October 1 to mark Nigeria's 66th Independence Anniversary. Product discounts are part of our customer engagement activities, and this is not our first campaign.

"NNPC Retail bears the full cost as a commercial decision. The campaign does not depend on government funding or reimbursement, directly or indirectly. Any cost beyond the retail margin remains NNPC Retail's responsibility," he said

According to the Finance Minister and Coordinating Minister of the Economy, Taiwo Oyedele, the NNPC supplied about 70 million litres of petrol to the market monthly. If the N66 discount were applied to all 70 million litres, the potential value would be N4.62 billion for a month.

NNPC's position is that the offer is commercially funded and does not involve government reimbursement. The estimate should therefore not be presented as public expenditure or as proof that the company incurred that amount.

The wider challenge is that a reduction at selected filling stations cannot by itself resolve the pressures driving up the cost of living.

Petrol prices affect transport, the distribution of goods and the operating expenses of businesses. A short-term discount may help some customers, but it does not automatically lower the cost of supplying fuel or ensure that savings reach households that do not buy it directly.

Professor Wumi Iledare, a petroleum economist and executive director of the Emmanuel Egbogah Foundation, said an intervention should be judged by who bears its economic cost and who receives the benefit, rather than the label attached to it.

"I would call it a subsidy-equivalent risk unless the incidence is demonstrated otherwise. The test is not the name attached to the policy. The test is who bears the economic cost and who receives the benefit," he said.

Iledare said temporary relief should be targeted, time-bound, transparent, independently auditable and fiscally capped. He also warned against weakening competition in the downstream market by making NNPC a government-directed price setter.

"The policy objective should remain affordable energy—not artificially cheap petrol. That distinction is fundamental to preserving the gains from deregulation while addressing the immediate welfare consequences of high energy prices," he said.

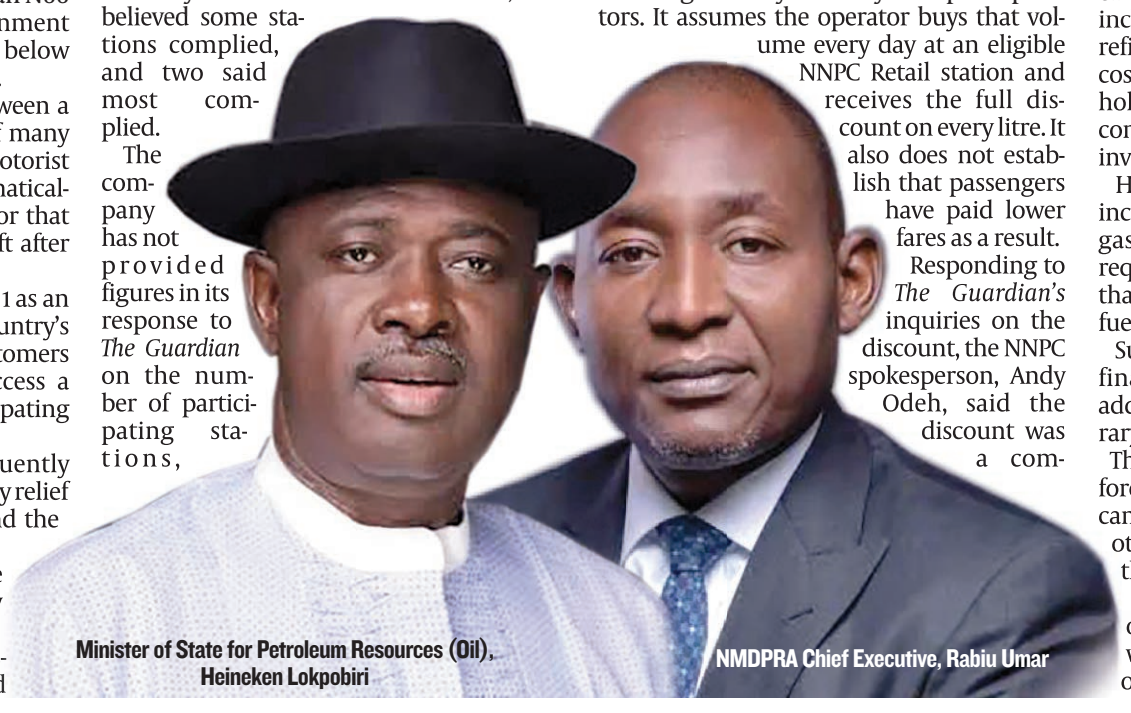
The don argued that more durable relief would require measures that reduce the cost of supplying fuel and moving people, including domestic crude supply to local refineries, reducing avoidable distribution costs, targeted support for vulnerable households and transport operators, expanded compressed natural gas infrastructure and investment in mass transit.

He said the constraints facing CNG users included the availability of stations, reliable gas supply and financing. Those issues require investment and coordination rather than simply asking consumers to switch fuels.

Such changes will not resolve immediate financial pressure overnight. But they address the underlying costs that a temporary retail discount can only partly offset.

The challenge for the government is therefore twofold: to establish what the 30-day campaign has delivered, and to explain what other measures will help consumers when the promotion ends.

As the deadline approaches, the question on the lips of motorists and commuters is whether the discount will end, continue or be replaced by a different intervention.



Minister of State for Petroleum Resources (Oil), Heineken Lokpobiri

NMDPRA Chief Executive, Rabiu Umar

$19.7b hot money dominates inflows to Nigeria as FDI remains below $1b

By **Oludare Richards**

NIGERIA attracted $19.74 billion in foreign portfolio investment (FPI) in 2025, more than 21 times the $923 million recorded as foreign direct investment (FDI), highlighting the country's continued difficulty in attracting long-term foreign capital despite a sharp rebound in overall inflows.

The figures, contained in the 2025 Consolidated National Investment Reports compiled by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), show that portfolio investment accounted for about 85 per cent of Nigeria's total capital importation of $23.22 billion during the year, while FDI contributed less than four per cent.

The development underscores the imbalance in the country's foreign capital profile, with investors showing stronger interest in financial instruments than in direct investments associated with establishing businesses, expanding productive capacity and creating jobs. FPIs are often regarded as hot money.

The ECOWAS compilation, prepared by its Directorate of Private Sector and Industry, brings together investment reports submitted by 10 member states: Benin, Cabo Verde, Côte d'Ivoire, The Gambia, Ghana, Liberia, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Togo. The reports were presented to the Technical Committee of the ECOWAS Common Investment Market (ECIM) Council in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, in April 2026.

Nigeria's total capital importation rose from $12.32 billion in 2024 to $23.22 billion in 2025, according to National Bureau of Statistics data. Portfolio inflows increased from $8.38 billion to $19.74 billion over the same period, while FDI rose more modestly from $675 million to $923 million.

The increase in portfolio investment was driven largely by foreign investors' participation in Nigeria's financial markets, particularly money-market instruments and bonds, amid attractive domestic yields and ongoing economic reforms.

Although the return of foreign investors has boosted capital inflows and provided foreign exchange liquidity, the concentration of investment in portfolio instruments leaves the country exposed to possible reversals when market conditions change.

The figures also show that the increase in total capital importation has not translated into a comparable expansion in direct investment. Despite recording year-on-year growth, FDI represented only about four per cent of total inflows in 2025.

Nigeria's investment environment has undergone several policy changes, including foreign exchange market reforms, efforts to improve the petroleum sector's regulatory framework under the Petroleum Industry Act and the introduction of the National Single Window for Trade to simplify import and export procedures.

The Nigerian submission to the ECOWAS compilation also identifies investment facilitation efforts involving the Nigerian Investment Promotion Commission and the Forum of State Investment Promotion Agencies of Nigeria.

SEC gives capital market operators till Nov 5 to submit cybersecurity reports

By **Helen Oji**

SECURITIES and Exchange Commission (SEC) has given capital market operators three days to submit their cybersecurity risk assessment reports as part of efforts to strengthen the financial sector's resilience against cyber threats and emerging digital risks.

The commission, in a circular dated November 2, 2026, directed all capital market operators to complete the cybersecurity assessment form on its electronic portal on or before November 5, 2026.

The directive requires affected operators to ensure that their submissions reflect their current cybersecurity risk profiles, providing the information needed to assess the level of cyber risks facing the financial sector.

In the circular, the Commission stated that the exercise was necessary to facilitate an effective assessment of cybersecurity risks across the financial sector.

World Bank targets $19b minerals financing by 2030

By **Isaac Chibuife**

WORLD Bank Group plans to increase its financing for the metals and minerals sector fivefold to $19 billion by 2030, as it seeks to help mineral-rich developing countries generate more value from their resources.

The target is contained in the bank's latest Commodity Markets Outlook, which stressed the need for countries to build resilience against economic shocks and attract private investment.

The lender said the funds would support mineral-rich emerging market and developing economies "in converting their natural endowments into lasting prosperity."

It said the plan would focus on broader economic gains rather than reliance on raw material exports, while encouraging private investment and job creation, including for young people. The bank added that it had simplified and sped up how it mobilises private capital alongside its financing and advisory services.



Director-General, All Progressives Congress (APC) Presidential Campaign Council, Abdul'Aziz Abubakar Yari (left); National Chairman, Prof. Nentawe Yilwatda; Vice President, Kashim Shettima; Governor of Cross River State, Bassey Edet Otu, and others during the APC's Presidential Campaign rally in Calabar, Cross River State, yesterday.

Atiku berates Tinubu over retired police officers' pension crisis

By **Kehinde Olatunji**

FORMER Vice President Atiku Abubakar has again accused President Bola Tinubu of abandoning retired police officers to a failing pension system, despite their years of service protecting Nigerians.

Atiku said it was unacceptable that officers who risked their lives to keep the country safe now had to stage daily protests at the National Pension Commission (PenCom) to demand the benefits they earned in service.

In a statement by Phrank Shaibu, Director of Strategic Communication of the African Democratic Congress Presidential Campaign Council, Atiku described the situation as disgraceful, questioning how a government that deploys police officers to protect the powerful could fail to secure their welfare after retirement.

The ADC presidential candidate said he was troubled by the protests and had directed his team to meet with the affected officers to hear their grievances first-hand.

He also faulted Tinubu for failing to act on the Police Exit Bill, which, according to the statement, had remained on the President's desk since March.

Atiku accused the administration of treating police officers as expendable, recalling that many spent their careers protecting Nigerians, including political office holders, only to be abandoned when they needed government support most.

To address the situation, he said his proposed Police Dignity Guarantee Plan would prioritise the welfare and retirement security of law enforcement personnel through prompt action on the Police Exit Bill, restoration of gratuity for police officers and implementation of the Police Pension Board Bill.

U.S., Nigeria deepen collaboration against sextortion, cybercrime, others

From **Bridget Chiedu Onochie** (Abuja) and **Ijeoma Nwanosike** (Lagos)

U.S. approves cheaper generic HIV prevention injection for 120 countries

UNITED States Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL), Michael Gonzales, has called for deepened collaboration between the U.S. and Nigeria against cybercrime, sextortion and romance scams.

Gonzales, who has been in Abuja since October 20 over security priorities, said the meeting with the officials of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), Office of the National Security Adviser (ONSA), National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) and the Nigeria Police Force (NPF), centred on measures to enhance cooperation against cyber-enabled crimes.

Coinciding with Nigeria's Cybercrime Awareness Week, he said the meetings also touched on expanding joint efforts against financially transnational cybercrimes.

Noting how cybercrime can cross borders in seconds, Gonzales challenged U.S. and its Nigerian counterparts to ensure that cooperation to fight such criminality also does the same.

"Recent extraditions showed that when both countries combine investigative, diplomatic and law-enforcement capabilities, international borders will not provide sanctuary to those who prey on our citizens", he said.

Nigeria had extradited two alleged cybercriminals to the U.S. earlier in August for separate charges bordering on financially motivated sextortion cases involving American minors who died by suicide.

In his separate meeting with the EFCC, DAS Gonzales commended the agency as one of Africa's most recognised economic crime enforcement agencies, with a record of high-profile prosecutions, asset recovery and public engagement.

"The EFCC's partnership with the FBI shows what effective international law enforcement cooperation looks like - sharing information, identifying suspects, making arrests and working through complex extradition proceedings.

Going forward, Gonzales said that the U.S. and Nigeria have opportunities for deeper law enforcement cooperation through Information-sharing, faster advancement of cyber and financial intelligence into investigations, wider public awareness of sextortion and romance scams.

Dangote eyes Egypt for next phase of industrial expansion

DANGOTE Group is exploring opportunities to expand its industrial investments into Egypt, a move that could mark a significant milestone in its pan-African growth strategy and deepen economic ties between Africa's two largest economies.

The development follows a visit by a high-level Egyptian delegation, led by the country's Minister of Investment and Foreign Trade, Dr Mohamed Farid Saleh, to the Dangote Industries complex in Lagos. The delegation engaged with senior executives of the Dangote Group to identify areas for industrial collaboration, investment partnerships, and capacity expansion across key sectors.

Accompanied by officials from Egypt's Ministry of Petroleum and senior executives from the country's oil and petrochemical industry.

Tinubu to unveil six books on Olanipekun's landmark cases

By **Opeyemi Babalola**

PRESIDENT Bola Tinubu will on November 19 unveil a six-volume publication documenting landmark cases handled by renowned lawyer and senior advocate Wole Olanipekun during his five decades in the Nigerian legal profession.

Titled Wole Olanipekun Through the Cases, the publication examines the contributions of the senior lawyer to the development of Nigerian law and jurisprudence through commentaries on some of the significant cases he has handled since his call to the Nigerian Bar in 1976.

The unveiling, scheduled to take place under the auspices of the WOC Justice Summit, will come a day after Olanipekun's 75th birthday on November 18, 2026.

The publication features forewords by the Chief Justice of Nigeria, Justice Kudirat Kekere-Ekun.

Solar uptake tests DisCos' revenue model as grid supply falters

By Waliat Musa

- Billed electricity drops 9.9% as 370 solar firms spring up in six years
- REA says reliable power fuels jobs, boosts business earnings

NIGERIA'S electricity market is at a turning point as solar mini-grids, rooftop installations and other decentralised power solutions spread across homes and businesses frustrated by unreliable grid supply.

For distribution companies (DisCos), the development presents a growing commercial risk: customers may remain physically connected to the grid while increasingly meeting their daily electricity needs through generators, solar systems or mini-grids. This makes the grid a backup rather than the main energy source for many Nigerians.

Solar energy still accounts for just 1.6% of Nigeria's total energy mix, highlighting the untapped potential. IRENA estimates Nigeria could generate up to 210 GW if only one per cent of suitable land were used for solar infrastructure.

According to Outbrand Consulting, Nigeria's cumulative installed solar capacity reached 385.7 MW after adding 63.5 MW of new capacity in 2025, adding that the country could add more than 550 MW of new solar capacity before 2029 under moderate growth scenarios, driven by a national grid that consistently underdelivers.

Recent data from the Nigerian Electricity Regulatory Commission (NERC) show pressure on distribution companies. DisCos billed 5,812.31GWh of electricity to end-use customers in the second quarter of 2026, down 9.9 per cent from 6,449.82GWh in the corresponding quarter of 2025.

NERC also reported that the 11 DisCos received electricity valued at N946.57 billion during the quarter but billed customers N744.67 billion, implying billing efficiency of 78.67 per cent. They collected N603.64 billion from the amount billed, a collection efficiency of about 81 per cent.

The Commission said aggregate technical, commercial and collection losses stood at 36 per cent, far above its 16.92 per cent benchmark. Yet revenue collected rose from N564.71 billion in Q2 2025 to N603.64 billion in Q2 2026, an increase of 6.9 per cent.

While there is no national data establishing a direct causal link between solar adoption and the decline in billed electricity, industry operators and consumers say persistent outages, high generator costs and the spread of solar systems are changing how households and businesses use the grid.

For many consumers, prepaid credit lasts longer not because consumption has fallen, but because supply is intermittent. Olaosebikan Solomon, a resident of Ejigbo, Lagos State, said the N5,000 he loads on his prepaid meter can last more than a month because electricity is unavailable for long periods.

"Imagine using N5000 for over a month when the light isn't stable and whenever it comes, I use all my electricity fittings and even AC, but because it's either once in three days or once in a week. Is that supply?" he queried.

His experience reflects a wider dilemma: customers pay for grid electricity but cannot depend on it for daily needs. Many therefore spend more on petrol for generators or consider solar installations.

The shift to solar, however, remains costly. Panels, inverters and batteries require substantial upfront investment, putting complete systems beyond the immediate reach of many households.

In Ifo, Ogun State, Hameed Bamkefa said he was acquiring solar equipment through instalments.

"I have paid part payment and they would install it tomorrow. I have six months to balance up; at least I won't bother about electricity from the grid and I won't even buy much on the prepaid anymore because we need the light more at night, but we don't get it", he said.

Olanrewaju Hafsat of Osogbo, Osun State, said she had acquired a battery to power basic appliances. In Egan-Igando, Lagos, Chinedu Molokwu said he was also seeking an alternative to unreliable supply, while Abimbola Adekanmi said repeated outages had caused food in her freezer to spoil.

For businesses, unreliable power means generator fuel and maintenance costs, interrupted operations and losses from perishable goods. Some consumers are therefore calling for government-backed financing, bulk procurement and affordable instalment schemes to widen access to solar equipment.

Aggregated industry data from the private sector and the Manufacturers Association of Nigeria (MAN) put Nigeria's yearly spending on generator fuel at about $14 billion, making solar attractive despite its high initial cost. The country is projected to add 1.7GW of solar capacity by the end of 2026—nearly 40 per cent of current grid supply—driven by households, businesses and mini-grid projects.

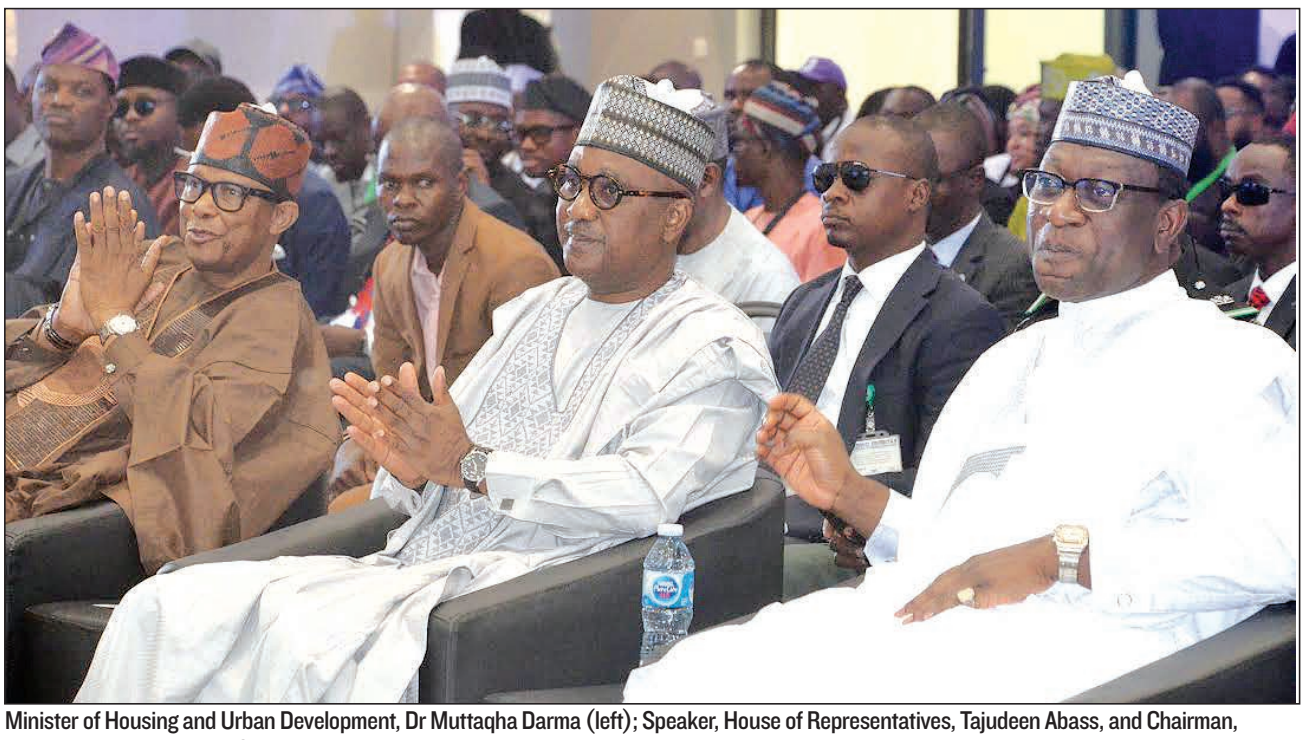
Market indicators also point to rising demand. GOGLA reported that Nigeria's solar-energy-kit sales in the first half of 2025 were 33 per cent higher than in the same period of 2024, while its 2025 investment dataset recorded about $114 million in off-grid solar investment in Nigeria, the largest recipient country in the dataset.

The Rural Electrification Agency (REA) is expanding decentralised projects to communities and businesses underserved by the national grid. In Kano State, it commissioned two solar mini-grids—in Ballagaza, Gabasawa Local Government Area, with 195.2kWp capacity, and Marayar Rogo, Warawa Local Government Area, with 73.2kWp—serving a combined 2,214 connections.

REA's Managing Director Abba Aliyu said reliable electricity would support homes and businesses in milling, welding, tailoring, cold storage and other activities, including a primary healthcare centre that previously had no electricity.

"The cost of unreliable electricity is felt every day by busi-

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Minister of Housing and Urban Development, Dr Muttaqha Darma (left); Speaker, House of Representatives, Tajudeen Abass, and Chairman, House of Representatives Committee on Housing and Habitat, Abdulmumin Jibrin, during a stakeholders' conference on the proposed National Real Estate Regulatory Authority (NRERA), organised by the committee, in Abuja, yesterday.

2027: EU cautions against AI censorship amid concerns over electoral integrity

From Sodiq Omolaoye (Abuja) and Eniola Daniel (Lagos)

- Amupitan flags fabricated results, deepfakes, risk of electoral violence
- Jega urges INEC to deploy AI-powered chatbots for voter information
- HURIWA seeks joint security task force over political attacks
- IPAC demands functional voting equipment, peaceful campaigns
- Media stakeholders seek stronger protection for election reporters

THE European Union (EU) has warned against exploiting concerns over artificial intelligence (AI)-generated misinformation to suppress political dissent, silence journalists or restrict freedom of expression ahead of Nigeria's 2027 general elections, as the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) raised concerns over deepfakes, fabricated election results and digital manipulation capable of triggering violence.

The warnings came amid growing concerns over political attacks, intimidation of campaign teams and the safety of journalists covering the elections.

EU Ambassador to Nigeria and ECOWAS, Gautier Mignot, gave the warning yesterday at the National Summit on Electoral Information Integrity, organised by the International Press Centre (IPC), the Centre for Media and Society (CEMESO) and DAI under the European Union Support to Democratic Governance in Nigeria Programme in Abuja.

The two-day summit was themed *Beyond the Ballot: AI, FIMI and the Integrity of Nigeria's 2027 Elections.*

Mignot said that while AI could support translation, accessibility and communication, it could also make deception easier to produce and more difficult to recognise.

According to him, the challenge went beyond detecting deepfakes to building an electoral information environment where reliable information was available, institutions communicated credibly, independent journalism thrived and manipulation met a prepared response.

He stressed: "The legitimate threat of AI manipulation must never become a pretext for state overreach, digital censorship or suppression of political dissent.

"A citizen questioning an institution is not necessarily spreading misinformation. A journalist reporting a failure is performing a democratic function," he said.

He called on stakeholders to establish clear response mechanisms before the 2027 elections, noting that election day would be too late to determine responsibilities, verification channels and communication procedures.

He identified three priorities for Nigeria ahead of the elections: preparing before electoral pressure intensifies, making stakeholder partnerships operational and protecting democratic rights while safeguarding electoral information.

Speaking at the summit, former INEC chairman, Prof Attahiru Jega, urged the commission to consider deploying AI-powered chatbots to provide voters with accurate electoral information and counter misinformation ahead of the 2027 elections.

Jega, who chaired the summit, said the technology could enable citizens seeking electoral information to obtain official responses quickly and verify the authenticity of information circulating in the public space.

He disclosed that the recommendation followed discussions at the 2024 Cambridge Conference on Electoral Democracy, where participants examined ways election management bodies, particularly in Africa, could deploy chatbots to reduce the impact of misinformation and disinformation.

He urged INEC to consider the proposal if it had yet to adopt such a system, saying the positive applications of AI could complement efforts to protect electoral information integrity.

INEC flags deepfakes, fabricated results, violence

EARLIER, INEC Chairman, Prof Joash Amupitan, warned that AI could be exploited to circulate fake election results, forged operational directives and fabricated information capable of triggering confusion and violence during the 2027 general elections.

He said synthetic audio and manipulated documents could falsely announce election results or claim that polls had been cancelled in key constituencies, potentially undermining public confidence and disrupting the collation process.

Amupitan said the growing accessibility of generative AI tools had made it possible for individuals and organised groups to produce convincing fake audio, videos and other content capable of misleading voters.

He warned that fabricated results could circulate on social media before INEC made official announcements, potentially triggering public unrest and violence.

"Today, elections can be undermined long before the first ballot is cast," he said.

The INEC chairman identified synthetic media, automated misinformation and disinformation, deepfakes, digital micro-targeting and Foreign Information Manipulation and Interference (FIMI) as emerging threats that could compromise the credibility of the elections.

He cited the possibility of AI-generated audio impersonating senior political figures to make false claims about vote-buying or electoral manipulation, as well as fabricated videos of electoral officials announcing decisions they never made.

He also warned that manipulated audio and video could be deliberately released during result collation and announcement to create confusion and provoke reactions before the commission com-

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NANS alleges sabotage, rallies students against tuition hike

Extend NELFUND scheme to private varsities, KolaDaisi VC urges FG

From **Owede Agbajileke** (Abuja) and **Rotimi Agboluaje** (Ibadan)

AMID mounting protests over soaring tuitions across Nigerian institutions and the growing calls for legislative intervention, the National Association of Nigerian Students (NANS) has urged students to organise peaceful protests against arbitrary fee increases and hold their leaders accountable for defending their interests.

It alleged that some Students' Union Government (SUG) presidents had reached agreements with their institutions' management to support tuition increases in exchange for personal benefits.

In a statement yesterday, NANS President, Akinteye Babatunde Afeez, alleged that some union leaders had agreed to back the increments after managements promised to increase their allowances or union dues, while others were allegedly offered personal financial inducements to secure their cooperation and prevent opposition to the hikes.

He, therefore, urged students to mobilise and collectively express their opposition whenever school authorities announce fee increase, insisting that peaceful protests remained a legitimate way of demanding a reconsideration of such decisions.

Akinteye also advised students to place their SUG presidents at the forefront of engagements with management and collectively demand a reversal of proposed increases.

The NANS president stressed that students should not be excluded from decisions affecting their welfare, adding that their representatives had a responsibility to ensure their concerns were communicated to school authorities.

The controversy over rising institutional charges has also attracted the attention of the House of Representatives, which recently called on the Federal Government to halt recent fee increases across public tertiary institutions.

The resolution followed a motion sponsored by Ifeoluwa Ehindero, who warned that an increase of more than 100 per cent in some institutions could undermine the objectives of the Nigeria Education Loan Fund (NELFUND).

MEANWHILE, the Vice-Chancellor of KolaDaisi University, Ibadan, Oyo State, Prof. Olajumoke Morenikeji, yesterday, urged the Federal Government to extend the NELFUND scheme to students in private universities, insisting that they deserve equal access to government-supported educational financing.

Morenikeji said that students attending private universities were also Nigerians and should not be excluded from the scheme simply because of their institutions' ownership status.

She made the appeal while addressing journalists ahead of the university's 10th anniversary and sixth convocation ceremony, scheduled to hold between October 26 and November 5, 2026.

According to her, the Federal Government should look beyond university ownership and consider students' circumstances when designing policies to widen access to higher education.



Mrs Agharese Onaghise (left); Chief Wilbert Lawrence, representing the Olu of Warri, Ogiame Atuwatse III; Managing Director, Polysmart Packaging Limited, Wasiu Balogun; the Ooni of Ife, Oba Adeyeye Enitan Ogunwusi, Ojaja II; Niyi Yusuf, Adesuwa Rhodes, Abiola Poola Smith and Dr Akeem Oyewale, during the commissioning of the Polysmart rPET Facility in Mowe, Ogun State.

Oyo commissioner, special adviser, OYSIEC member resign

From **Seye Olumide** (Lagos) and **Rotimi Agboluaje** (Ibadan)

OYO State Commissioner for Budget and Economic Planning, Ayobami Oluwaseun Ojo, and a member of the Oyo State Independent Electoral Commission (OYSIEC), Sunday Olugbenga Falana, yesterday, resigned their appointments in the administration of Governor Seyi Makinde.

Their exit marks the latest in a series of departures by political appointees and government officials from Makinde's administration in recent weeks, raising fresh questions about the political calculations and alignments taking shape ahead of the 2027 general elections.

Ojo, in a letter dated November 2, 2026, and addressed to the governor through the Secretary to the State Government (SSG), said that his resignation from the cabinet would take immediate effect.

The former commissioner, who hails from Ago-Are in Atisbo Local Council, expressed gratitude to Makinde for the opportunity to serve in his administration.

In a separate development, Falana also tendered his resignation from OYSIEC.

Falana, in his letter, equally dated November 2, 2026, and addressed to the governor through the Chief of Staff, announced his decision to lresign with immediate effect.

Mimiko unveils free surgeries to mark Osemawe's 20th coronation anniversary

From **Adewale Mimoh**, Akure

VICE-CHANCELLOR of Adekunle Ajasin University, Akungba-Akoko, Prof. Femi Mimiko, has announced plans for free medical surgeries and other activities to mark the 20th anniversary of the Osemawe of Ondo Kingdom, Oba Victor Adesimbo Kiladejo, ascending the throne.

Mimiko, who chairs the planning and organising committee for the anniversary celebrations, said the programme was designed to reflect on the kingdom's history, achievements and development aspirations.

In a statement, Mimiko, now High Chief Lisa-elect of Ondo Kingdom, said the celebrations, organised by the Ondo Development Committee (ODC), would provide an opportunity to celebrate the monarch's two decades on the throne and showcase the kingdom's heritage.

Guild seeks domestication, enforcement of national building code to curb collapses

By **Victor Gbonegun**

PROFESSIONALS from the legal sector and the building industry have tasked the federal and state governments with prioritising the effective domestication and enforcement of the National Building Code (NBC) to tackle persistent cases of building collapse.

They also called for greater accountability among architects, engineers, quantity surveyors, estate surveyors, developers and other professionals involved in the construction industry.

Vice Chairman of the Lagos branch of the Nigerian Bar Association (NBA), James Sonde, led the call at a webinar to mark the fifth memorial of the collapse of the tallest building at Gerrard Road, Ikoyi, organised by the Building Collapse Prevention Guild (BCPG) Ikoyi-Obalende Cell, Lagos State.

He said the Federal Government should establish a clear statutory framework for the National Building Code while encouraging state governments and Houses of Assembly to domesticate and effectively implement its provisions.

Sonde said that building safety should be treated as a national priority and an essential component of protecting human life.

Speaking on the theme: 'Making national building code enforceable to enhance safety in Nigerian built environment', he said Nigeria needs uniform minimum building safety standards, although implementation should take into consideration the peculiarities of individual states.

He added that Nigeria must move from having a building code to ensuring compliance, enforcement and accountability, stressing that no building should become a death trap because safety standards are treated as optional.

Also, the Third Vice President of the Nigerian Institute of Architects (NIA), David Majekodunmi, called for the modernisation of Nigeria's building control system through digital technology, stronger legislation, and improved institutional coordination to prevent building collapses.

Read the remaining part of this story on www.guardian.ng

Agbakoba urges next president to restore Nigeria's global influence

By **Seye Olumide**

A FORMER President of the Nigerian Bar Association (NBA), Olisa Agbakoba (SAN), has called on Nigerians to demand leadership that is capable of restoring the country's influence and standing in international affairs.

He, however, lamented Nigeria's failure to translate its population, natural resources and strategic geographical position into global relevance.

Agbakoba said that the country's declining ability to command international respect and influence should concern every Nigerian, particularly as preparations for the 2027 general elections gather momentum.

The legal luminary, while speaking in a video chat posted on his X handle, said that Nigeria's enormous natural and geographical advantages had not translated into meaningful influence in international affairs.

He said the country's population, natural resources, strategic location and access to the Atlantic Ocean should ordinarily give it considerable leverage in global affairs.

According to him, these advantages have yet to produce the international recognition and influence expected of Nigeria's standing.

Agbakoba noted that countries with fewer geographical and economic advantages were finding ways to assert themselves and influence international conversations, raising questions about the factors limiting Nigeria's ability to do the same.

He maintained that population size and natural wealth alone could not guarantee international respect, saying that global influence was built through purposeful leadership and others.

The former NBA President said that individuals must understand the relationship between domestic governance and developments beyond Nigeria's borders.

He, however, identified economic interests, maritime resources, diplomatic relationships and security priorities as areas requiring a broader understanding of international developments.

NASS considers 74 extra seats for women under new constitutional plan

- Senate Leader assures of timely passage of bill on plan
- Seeks comprehensive framework to tackle women, children challenges

From **John Akubo** (Abuja) and **Ayodele Afolabi** (Ado-Ekiti)

THE National Assembly is considering a 16-year affirmative action plan that would create 74 additional seats for women in the Senate and the House of Representatives, as well as three reserved seats in every state Assembly.

The proposal, if approved, would give each state and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) one additional female representative in both chambers of the National Assembly, while expanding women's representation at the state level without removing existing lawmakers.

The Senate Leader, Opeyemi Bamidele, disclosed the plan yesterday during the 2026 Law Week of the International Federation of Women Lawyers, Ekiti State chapter, describing it as a constitutional reform aimed at correcting women's persistent underrepresentation in politics.

The proposal, however, provides for 37 additional seats in the Senate and 37 in the House of Representatives. Each of the 36 states and the FCT would receive one seat in each chamber specifically reserved for women.

Read the remaining part of this story on www.guardian.ng

Agric minister cautions against politicisation of Cadre Harmonisé food security report

Poor harvest may worsen Nigeria's food crisis, AFAN warns

From **Joke Falaju**, Abuja

MINISTER of Agriculture and Food Security, Abubakar Kyari, has cautioned opposition parties against politicising the recently released Cadre Harmonisé report on the assessment of the country's food security situation.

The report, released last Friday by the Ministry of Food and Agriculture (MINFOA), the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) and the World Food Programme (WFP), in collaboration with other organisations, projected that 33.5 million Nigerians would be food insecure by June 2027 if urgent steps were not taken to address food insecurity.

The minister, who stated that the assessment did not say that 33.5 million Nigerians would face food insecurity if President Bola Ahmed Tinubu is re-elected in 2027, said that a wrong interpretation was added to the report for political purposes.

He said that it is disheartening to see food insecurity being used as a political tool, adding that exploiting the struggles of Nigerians is not patriotism, but a great disservice to the nation.

Read the remaining part of this story on www.guardian.ng

Medical experts advocate improved action against maternal deaths

By **Omowunmi Sanni**

'Endocrine-disrupting chemicals could impair reproductive systems'

OBSTETRICIAN and gynaecologist at the Nnamdi Azikiwe University Teaching Hospital, Prof. Okechukwu Ikpeze, has called for stronger collaboration among government, healthcare professionals and development partners to address Nigeria's high maternal mortality rate.

Ikpeze, who delivered the eighth Abimbola Omololu-Mulele Yearly Lecture in Obstetrics and Gynaecology at the College of Medicine, the University of Lagos (UNILAG), spoke against the backdrop of the 2023 maternal mortality ratio of 993 deaths per 100,000 live births.

Speaking on the theme, 'Human Reproduction Through Evolutionary Perils: Moving Nigerian Women from Danger to Safety', he noted that maternal deaths have remained a major public health challenge in the country despite several government interventions and international partnerships.

He noted that the ratio declined marginally from 1,094 deaths per100,000 live births in 2010, adding that the figure remains significantly above the adjusted target of 140 deaths per100,000 live births for high-burden countries, including Nigeria, by 2030.

According to him, maternal mortality is not merely a statistical issue but represents the loss of mothers, wives, sisters, daughters and breadwinners whose deaths affect families and communities.

He identified haemorrhage, pre-eclampsia and eclampsia, sepsis, unsafe abortion and obstructed labour among the leading medical causes of maternal deaths, stating that timely access to skilled healthcare, early detection of complications and prompt medical intervention could prevent many of these deaths.

On his part, the Chairman of the Institute of Reproductive Health, Lagos, Prof. Oladapo Ashiru, raised concerns about the effects of environmental chemicals on human reproductive health.

Ashiru, who was the chairman of the occasion, said endocrine-disrupting chemicals found in pesticides, plastics, cosmetics, food and household products could affect the reproductive systems of both men and women.

He explained that prolonged exposure to such chemicals could contribute to menstrual disorders, polycystic ovary syndrome, endometriosis, miscarriage and declining sperm quality.

Adding that exposure during pregnancy could also affect the reproductive and metabolic health of unborn children, with possible consequences for subsequent generations, Ashiru called for stronger regulation of hazardous substances, increased research into environmental toxins and public education on ways to reduce exposure.

Meanwhile, Ikpeze highlighted the Federal Government's Maternal and Neonatal Mortality Reduction Innovation Initiative (MAMII), which focuses on improving emergency obstetric care, training frontline health workers, strengthening emergency transportation and providing essential medical commodities.



Former Bayelsa State Deputy Governors, Rear Admiral Gboribiogha John-Jonah (rtd) (left) and Peremobowei Ebebi; President, Bayelsa Customary Court of Appeal, Justice Daniel Ayah; Deputy Speaker, Bayelsa House of Assembly, Michael Ogbere; wife of the Deputy Governor, Dr Favour Akpe; Deputy Governor Peter Akpe; Governor Douye Diri; his wives, Dr Gloria and Justice Patience; and Senator representing Bayelsa East, Benson Agadaga, during the 15th Bayelsa thanksgiving at the Ecumenical Centre, Igbogene-Yenagoa, yesterday.

My successor must be God-fearing, says Diri

NDDC, construction firm explains 'collapse' of 600m bridge in Bayelsa

From **Julius Osahon**, Yenagoa

GOVERNOR Douye Diri of Bayelsa State has asked anyone eyeing the office of governor of the state to prayerfully seek the face and approval of God, as only a God-fearing individual can succeed him.

Meanwhile, officials of the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) and the contractor handling the 600-metre Otuogiri bridge project in Ogbia Local Council of Bayelsa have dismissed concerns raised by some individuals in the state over a report that the bridge collapsed during construction.

Speaking during the state's 15th thanksgiving at the Ecumenical Centre, Igbogene-Yenagoa, yesterday, Diri stated that nobody could say no to anyone God has okayed.

He said Bayelsa had been handed over to God, maintaining that the Almighty would always have the final say on the affairs of the state.

The governor stressed the need for people of the state to remain united, tolerant and peaceful, saying it was the only way Bayelsa could witness the much-needed development.

OFFICIALS of NDDC, who took journalists for an on-the-spot inspection of the project, explained that the incident was not caused by structural failure, describing it as an accident that occurred during construction.

NIMC cracks down on illegal NIN enrolment, insists on approved centres

By **Adeyemi Adepetun**

NATIONAL Identity Management Commission (NIMC) has stepped up its crackdown on illegal National Identity Number (NIN) enrolment, unauthorised data modification, and extortion, arresting several suspects and seizing illegal enrolment equipment during a recent enforcement operation in Gwagwalada, Abuja, and other locations.

NIMC said the operation, carried out through its Inspectorate Compliance and Enforcement Unit (ICEU), reflected its commitment to ending unauthorised enrolment activities and unethical practices, thereby protecting the integrity, security and credibility of Nigeria's National Identity Management System.

Insisting that NIN enrolment can only be done at any of its approved centres, while data modification can be done via self-service modification.nimcgov.ng, NIMC noted that many of the problems people face with their NIN stem from bypassing official enrolment procedures.

Meanwhile, the agency's Director-General/Chief Executive Officer, Abisoye Coker-Odusote, has reiterated the commission's zero tolerance for extortion and unethical conduct, assuring NIMC's commitment to providing seamless, hitch-free NIN enrolment for Nigerians and legal residents.

In a statement yesterday by the Head of Corporate Communications, Dr Kayode Adegoke, the agency urged all NIN applicants and holders to use only NIMC-approved channels for enrolment and related services.

CESUF charts path to higher cancer survival rate

By **Adaku Onyenucheya**

Cancer survivor advises patients to seek second medical opinion for early treatment

CANCER Enlightenment and Support Foundation (CESUF) and a medical expert have called for effective referral systems, increased access to funding, treatment facilities, second medical diagnoses opinion, cancer awareness and early screening to boost survival rates among patients in Nigeria.

The call was made during the 2026 yearly public lecture on cancer awareness and enlightenment held in Lagos at the weekend.

In a keynote address, Consultant Radiation and Clinical Oncologist at the Lagos State University Teaching Hospital (LASUTH), Dr Ademola Oyekan, said cancer awareness should go beyond educating people about the disease to ensuring that patients have access to funding and functional healthcare systems that support early diagnosis and treatment.

The oncologist further identified inadequate healthcare infrastructure, shortage of specialists, brain drain and poor referral pathways as some of the major challenges affecting cancer care and survival in Nigeria.

He stressed the need to establish an effective referral system to facilitate the transfer of patients from primary healthcare centres to secondary and tertiary healthcare institutions without unnecessary delays.

Oyekan stressed that Nigeria needs significant systemic and infrastructural improvements to address the gaps in cancer diagnosis and treatment to improve survival rates.

Railway retirees seek Tinubu's intervention to end 21-year housing delay

By **Adaku Onyenucheya**

Urge FG to compensate evicted pensioners, reverse sale of quarters

ASSOCIATION of Nigeria Railway Senior Citizens (ANRSC) has appealed to President Bola Tinubu to intervene in the prolonged dispute over the implementation of the Federal Government's monetisation policy on Nigerian Railway Corporation (NRC) staff quarters.

They alleged that successive managements had denied retired workers their entitlement to the houses they occupied during their years of service.

The association said the failure to implement the policy, introduced in 2004/2005 to transfer ownership of government residential quarters to their legitimate occupants, had left many retired railway workers and their families facing uncertainty, with some allegedly evicted from their homes without alternative accommodation.

Speaking at a press conference in Lagos over the weekend, the National Chairman of ANRSC, Segun Esan, said the association was seeking presidential intervention to resolve what he described as a 21-year struggle over the ownership of railway residential quarters.

Esan argued that the monetisation policy was designed to reduce the Federal Government's financial burden of maintaining government-owned residential properties while providing serving and retired public servants with opportunities to own the homes they occupied.

He said the policy, backed by a Federal Government White Paper and a Secretary to the Government of the Federation (SGF) circular, directed that government quarters be converted to owner-occupier arrangements and sold to their legitimate occupants at discounted and affordable prices.

Dangote Cement Okpella Plant awards scholarship to 80 students

From **Joseph Kanjo**, Benin City

IN further demonstration of its commitment to sustainable community development and inclusive growth, the Okpella Plant of Dangote Cement Plc. has awarded scholarships worth of N32 million to 80 students.

The company also commissioned four 500KVA transformers in Okpella, Edo State, under its Community Development Agreement (CDA) with host communities.

The scholarship award ceremony and transformer commissioning, held on Thursday, October 29, 2026, attracted traditional leaders, community representatives, youth groups, students, parents, government officials and senior officials of Dangote Cement.

The educational intervention worth over N32 million saw a total of 80 students benefiting from the scholarship programme, comprising 60 undergraduate students from various tertiary institutions across Nigeria and 20 secondary school students drawn from the company's host communities.

2027: Shettima begs C'River to renew Tinubu, Otu mandates

From **Tina Agosi Todo** and **Solomon Azu**, Calabar

VICE President Kashim Shettima yesterday led the All Progressives Congress (APC) presidential campaign train to Calabar, urging Cross Riverians to renew the mandate of President Bola Tinubu and Governor Bassey Edet Otu.

Speaking to a crowd at the U.J. Esuene Stadium, Shettima said Cross River had resisted lies and propaganda against the Tinubu administration over the last three years, declaring the ruling party the state's most trustworthy friend.

"We have come to you again. We have come as the most trustworthy friends you can ever have. These are not empty words. Over the past three years, you have shown us support and resisted lies and propaganda intended to misrepresent us. That is why we are here today. We don't take this strong will for granted," Shettima declared while conveying Tinubu's warm greetings.

He said the alliance between APC and Cross River is "an alliance of progress, prosperity, opportunity and dignity" with the people as focus.

WELCOMING HIS EXCELLENCY & HIS AMIABLE WIFE TO

ISOKO LAND



HIS EXCELLENCY, ELDER SHERIFF FRANCIS OROHWEDOR OBOREVWORI
EXECUTIVE GOVERNOR, DELTA STATE

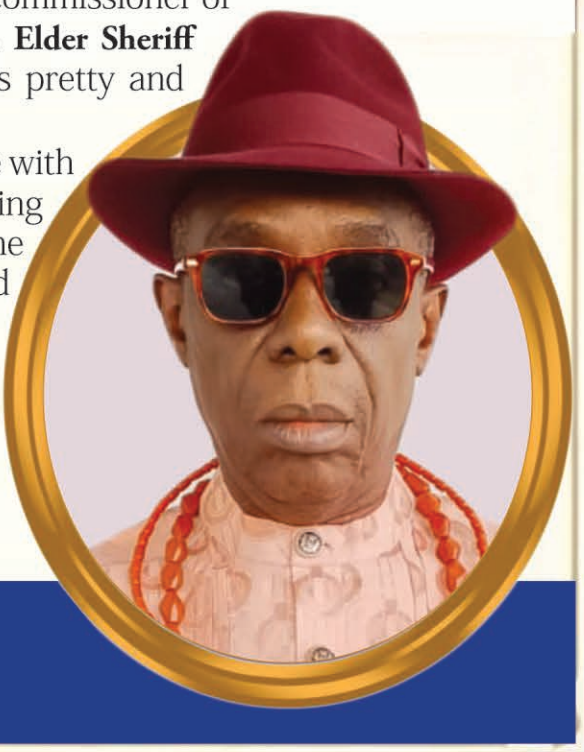
HER EXCELLENCY, DEACONESS (MRS) TOBORE OBOREVWORI
FIRST LADY, DELTA STATE

On behalf of my family, I high priest **(Chief) Okah Micheal Emezanena,** former commissioner of transportation in Delta State, heartily and joyfully welcome **His Excellency, Elder Sheriff Francis Orohwedor Oborevwori,** the ***Executive Governor of Delta State*** and his pretty and elegant wife, **Deaconess (Mrs) Tobor Oborevwori,** to the beautiful land of ISOKO.

As the able Captain of ***"The Big Heart"*** your administration has redefined our landscape with meaningful infrastructural developments, created exciting opportunities for our teeming youths to express themselves, and strategically realigned our dear state to the mainstream national politics for the benefit of all Deltans. Moreover, the much needed peace, security of live and property now reign in Delta State.

All sons and daughters of **ISOKO LAND** welcome you and our first lady with warm embrace and assure you of our total support for your reelection.

May this August visit be peaceful.
Once again, welcome to ISOKO nation, our beloved Governor.



High Priest (Chief) Michael Emezanena Okah.
Iwhiri of Okpolo-Enhwe kingdom
Uzaudu of Igbide Kingdom
Former Commissioner of transportation, Delta State.

HIS EXCELLENCY SIR CHIEF (DR) G.O. IGBINEDION
ESAMA OF BENIN KINGDOM

HOUSE OF IGBINEDION

Happy ANNIVERSARY



HIS EMINENCE, ALHAJI MUHAMMAD SA'AD ABUBAKAR III CFR, mni,
SULTAN OF SOKOTO

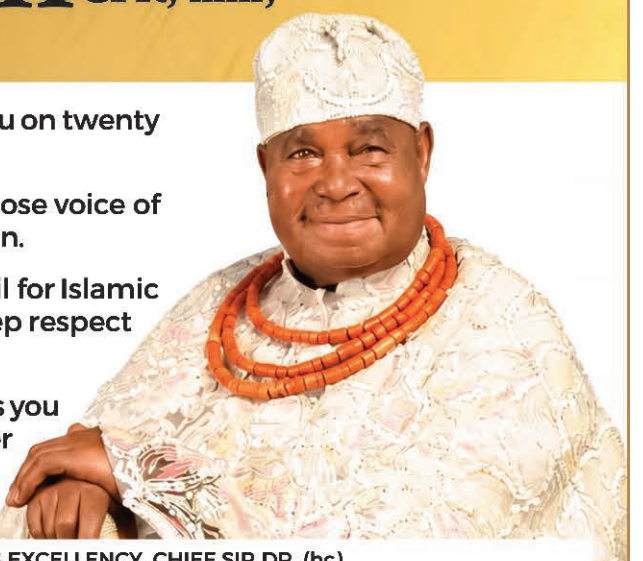
The House of Igbinedion joyfully joins millions across Nigeria and beyond to honour you on twenty remarkable years on the throne of your illustrious forebears.

In these two decades, you have been a foremost bridge-builder and peace-maker whose voice of unity, tolerance and peaceful co-existence resonates across every faith, tribe, and region.

As a first-class traditional ruler and President-General of the Nigerian Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs (NSCIA), your moral authority and humble statesmanship have earned you deep respect throughout the country.

The House of Igbinedion celebrates you today and prays that the Almighty Allah grants you many more years of good health, wisdom, and a continuous peaceful reign, never ceasing in your noble role of building bridges and making peace in our beloved Nigeria.

Happy 20th anniversary, Your Eminence.



HIS EXCELLENCY, CHIEF SIR DR. (hc)
GABRIEL O. IGBINEDION,
CON, CFR, GCKB, LL.D.D.LITT, KSJI
ESAMA OF BENIN
FOUNDER, NIGERIA'S PREMIER PRIVATE UNIVERSITY -
IGBINEDION UNIVERSITY, OKADA

THIRD RUSSIA-AFRICA SUMMIT: FROM DIALOGUE TO COOPERATION



Photo Author: Alexander Kryazhev
Source: Photo hosting agency of the Russia–Africa summit and forum

On October 28-29, Moscow has successfully hosted the Third Russia-Africa Summit and Economic and Humanitarian Forum, bringing together over 3,500 participants from 48 African countries, including representatives of approximately 630 companies. More than 60 agreements were signed. The leaders adopted its Final Declaration, the Declaration on AI Cooperation and the Russia-Africa Partnership Forum Action Plan for 2027-2029.

The agenda focused on multipolarity, African sovereignty and reform of international institutions. Addressing the October 29 plenary session, President V.Putin emphasized the equal dialogue between Russia and Africa and concurrence of opinions on major international issues. Russia reaffirmed its support for greater African representation on the UN Security Council and cooperation in regional security. President V.Putin noted that Russia has signed military and military-technical cooperation agreements with 45 African countries and expanded its diplomatic presence to 48 embassies across the continent.

Economic discussions centred on manufacturing localisation, technology transfer, infrastructure, logistics and payments. Russia–Africa trade exceeded USD 27 billion in 2025, with a future target of USD 50 billion. President Putin also noted that 47 African countries are eligible for EAEU tariff preferences, with relevant customs duties reduced to zero for 32 of them. 85% of payments for commercial transactions with the Continent partners are now made in national currencies, including the Russian ruble. Russia supplied over 18 million tonnes of grain to Africa in 2025 and another 13 million tonnes in the first nine months of 2026. Russian fertiliser exports also increased from approximately 1.5 million tonnes in 2025 to over 2.2 million tonnes in 2026.

Industrial agreements have also been signed at the Forum, with RUSAL and Ghana's state-owned GIADEC concluding MOU on bauxite processing. The proposed joint ventures envisage annual production of 5 million tons of bauxite and 1.2 million tons of alumina. Ghana also announced ongoing negotiations with Rosatom on its first nuclear power plant.

Foreign Minister S.Lavrov signed memoranda with the East African Community, the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa and the African Continental Free Trade Area Secretariat. Action plans were also signed with the African Union Commission and other regional organisations. The Forum also marked the establishment of the Russian–African Youth Union at MGIMO University. Nearly 40,000 young Africans study at Russian universities, while more than 300,000 have graduated from them over the years. Russian universities are also expanding their educational presence across the continent.

Ahead of the Summit, S.Lavrov described Nigeria as one of Russia's key partners in Africa, citing friendly ties dating back to the Soviet era. 2,481 Nigerian students enrolled in Russian universities in 2025/26 and 220 Russian government scholarship are allocated every year.

Nigeria's delegation was headed by the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Amb. S. Enikanolaiye. During the Summit, Russian Federal Customs and Nigeria Customs Service signed the agreement on customs cooperation and mutual assistance, covering information exchange, combating customs violations and professional training. The parties also discussed EAEU tariff preferences for Nigerian exporters.

The Roscongress Foundation signed a separate agreement with Nigeria's Abia State Ministry of Sports and Youth Development on youth exchanges and educational initiatives. Russian organisations Synergy and Innopraktika announced plans to establish ten educational centres across Africa by the end of 2028, identifying Nigeria among the prospective locations.

The Summit highlighted a growing emphasis on industrial partnerships and expanding bilateral trade. As one of Russia's major trading partners in Sub Saharan Africa, Nigeria has considerable potential to participate more actively in joint manufacturing and infrastructure projects.

Author: Russian Embassy in Nigeria

TheMetroSection

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Deputy governor locked out as developer, residents clash over estate project

By **Victor Gbonegun**

TENSION gripped Osborne Foreshore Phase II Estate, Ikoyi, Lagos, when Deputy Governor Kadri Obafemi Hamzat and a delegation of government officials were kept waiting for more than 30 minutes after the gates of a controversial construction site remained locked during an inspection visit.

The incident, involving Kenshad International Limited, a developer accused by residents of alleged planning violations and environmental infractions, has heightened concerns over a disputed construction project and its potential implications for drainage, flooding and residents' safety.

Hamzat, who led a high-powered delegation to the estate following complaints by residents, was unable to gain access to Abba Court, the development located on Mahogany Close, as the entrance remained shut.

The development prompted questions from residents, with one asking: "Why did he refuse to allow the Deputy Governor and his team in if he has nothing to hide?"

However, the Managing Director of Kenshad International Limited, Ken Ukaoha, denied deliberately locking out the deputy governor, explaining that the construction site was closed because workers and other personnel had been directed to stay away following a government circular.

Ukaoha also said he was not in Lagos when the incident occurred and had not received any official notification that the deputy governor or other government officials intended to inspect the property.

"Nobody locked the deputy governor out of the site. The site was locked because nobody was there. They gave a circular that we were meeting. So, everybody was away. It is a construction site, and nobody was there," he said.

The controversy followed complaints by residents, who accused the developer of undertaking construction activities that could undermine the environmental integrity and safety of the estate.



Deputy Governor Kadri Obafemi Hamzat

At a meeting with Hamzat, tagged Osborne Phase II Residents and Public Leaders Dialogue, residents alleged that Kenshad International had constructed beneath high-tension electricity lines, laid concrete slabs over a canal and carried out sand-filling activities that narrowed existing water outlets.

They warned that the alleged obstruction of the canal could disrupt the natural flow of water, worsen drainage problems and expose the estate and neighbouring communities to flooding.

The residents also accused the developer of creating an unauthorised back gate through which suspected thugs were allegedly brought into the estate to intimidate those questioning its activities.

They further alleged that soldiers, police personnel and some officials of the Federal Ministry of Housing and Urban Development had been used to harass and intimidate them.

The residents called on the state government to investigate the allegations against the company and its owner, Ukaoha, particularly the circumstances surrounding a purported joint-venture arrangement with the Federal Ministry of Housing and Urban Development, which they claimed was being used to justify the development.

They urged the government to establish whether the project complied with relevant planning, environmental and safety regulations.

Responding, Hamzat expressed displeasure over the developer's conduct and assured the residents that the state government would investigate their complaints.

Court orders arrest, detention of NURTW Lagos chairman over contempt

By **Eniola Daniel**

THE National Industrial Court of Nigeria (NICN), Lagos Division, has ordered the arrest and committal to prison of the Lagos State Chairman of the National Union of Road Transport Workers (NURTW), Alhaji Mustapha Adekunle, popularly known as Sego, and the union's Secretary, Usman Teslim, over alleged disobedience of its orders.

Justice Isaac Essien issued the order yesterday after the two officials failed to appear before the court to show cause why they should not be committed to prison for contempt.

The judge described their failure to obey the court's directives as a brazen act of disobedience, warning that the authority of the court must not be undermined. Justice Essien also expressed concern over an affidavit of non-service filed by a court bailiff, Ayo Moses, who alleged that the Chief Security Officer of the sixth judgment debtor prevented him from serving the court processes on October 5, 2026.



The judge described the alleged obstruction of the bailiff in the discharge of his official duties as a dangerous development with serious consequences.

Consequently, the court ordered the arrest and detention of the two union officials at the Kirikiri Correctional Centre over their failure to comply with its lawful orders.

It directed the Lagos State Commissioner of Police, the State Commandant of the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC) and other law enforcement agencies to effect the arrest and hand them over to the officer in charge of the correctional facility.

Man machetes neighbour to death over money dispute in Osun

From **Timothy Agbor**, Osogbo

A farmer, Samson Gabriel, has been allegedly hacked to death with a machete by his neighbour, Lekan Oyebamiji, following a disagreement over money in Akinlalu community, Osun State.

The incident, which occurred on Saturday, reportedly sparked tension in the community, forcing some residents living close to the two men to flee their homes for fear of being arrested by the police.

Residents said the disagreement between the neighbours escalated into a violent confrontation when Oyebamiji allegedly picked up a machete and attacked Gabriel, inflicting several injuries on him.

A community source said the suspect inflicted multiple cuts on the deceased, severing his wrist and leaving deep wounds on his head and other parts of his body.

"Oyebamiji macheted Gabriel to death. Gabriel was a farmer. They are neighbours. Many people living close to them have fled their homes to avoid being arrested by the police. During the argument, the suspect reached for his cutlass and inflicted several cuts on the deceased," the source said.

Confirming the incident, the Osun State Police Command said Oyebamiji had been arrested in connection with the killing.

The command's spokesperson, Abiodun Ojelabi, said preliminary information indicated that the incident followed a disagreement over money between the two neighbours.

Ojelabi added that the police had commenced an investigation to establish the circumstances surrounding the killing.

Police probe beheading of teenager in C'River, recover AK-47, ammunition in Ogun

From **Tina Agosi Todo** (Calabar) and **Segun Ayinde** (Abeokuta)

THE police have launched an investigation into the discovery of the beheaded body of an unidentified teenager in Yahe River, Yala Local Council of Cross River State, as their counterparts in Ogun State recovered an AK-47 rifle, ammunition and a Mercedes-Benz GLK in separate operations in Ota.

The Cross River State Police Command said the teenager, estimated to be about 16 years old, was recovered from the river following a report on October 27, 2026.

The command's spokesperson, ASP Sunday Eitokpah, disclosed this in a statement issued in Calabar yesterday, saying the incident was reported at about 5.30 p.m. by the Officer-in-Charge of Yahe Outstation, ASP Ekurbe Abi.

According to the statement, the teenager's body was found with the head severed, while bloodstains at the scene raised concerns about the circumstances surrounding his death.

The police said the corpse had been subjected to medical examination and deposited in a mortuary, while efforts were ongoing to identify the deceased and establish the circumstances of his death.

The Commissioner of Police, Ajo Geoffrey Ordue, has ordered a thorough investigation to unravel the incident and ensure that anyone found responsible is brought to justice.





Recovered car, arms and magazine

Man, 40, arrested for allegedly throwing cannabis into Kano prison

From **Murtala Adewale,** Kano

A 40-year-old man, Nura Mohammed, has been arrested for allegedly attempting to smuggle suspected *Cannabis sativa* into the Kurmawa Medium Security Custodial Centre in Kano.

Mohammed, a resident of Janguza Quarters, Kano, was reportedly caught at about noon while attempting to throw the substance into the correctional facility.

Officers of the Armed Squad Unit of the Nigerian Correctional Service (NCoS), Kano State Command, intercepted him following the detection of the suspicious activity.

The arrest, according to the command, was made possible by the vigilance of the officers under the supervision of the unit's commander, Chief Superintendent of Corrections (CSC) Usman M. Sale.

The command's spokesperson, Mushau Lawan K/Naisa, disclosed this in a statement, adding that the suspect had been handed over to the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) for further investigation and necessary action.

Reacting to the incident, the Controller of Corrections in Kano State, Ahmed Yusuf Lakpene, commended the officers for their alertness and professionalism, saying their prompt intervention prevented the suspected illicit substance from entering the facility.

Lakpene reiterated the command's zero-tolerance policy towards the introduction of illicit drugs and other prohibited items into custodial centres.

'Co-wives' rivalry, financial pressures threaten polygamous homes'

From **Rotimi Agboluaje,** Ibadan

SCHOLARS have warned that behind the structure of some polygamous homes lie tensions that can leave wives emotionally distressed, children caught in family rivalries and household finances stretched by competing responsibilities.

They cautioned that poorly managed polygamous marriages could expose families to jealousy, psychological trauma, sexual health risks and economic hardship, particularly where husbands fail to provide adequate care, fairness and financial support.

The concerns were raised during an international panel discussion organised under The Toyin Falola Interviews, with the theme, "Polygamy: Amplifying African Voices." The discussion was convened by renowned historian, Prof Toyin Falola.

A medical pragmatics scholar, Dr Victoria Faleke Ogunnike, said rivalry among co-wives could create an unhealthy family environment, with damaging consequences for the mental health of spouses and the wellbeing of children.

She identified jealousy, competition, psychological trauma and uncontrolled childbearing as some of the challenges associated with polygyny, particularly when men failed to manage their households responsibly.

Ogunnike also warned that inadequate attention to sexual health could expose partners to sexually transmitted infections, including HIV, gonorrhoea and syphilis.

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The Metro Section

Auto crash kills one, injures 15 passengers on Lagos-Ibadan Expressway

From **Bertram Nwannekanma** (Lagos) and **Rauf Oyewole** (Bauchi)

• Bauchi council chairman dies in accident

A multiple-vehicle crash on the Lagos-Ibadan Expressway yesterday claimed one life and left 15 others injured.

In a separate incident, the Chairman of Zaki Local Council of Bauchi State, Masud Aliyu Umar, has died in an auto accident while returning from a political meeting in Bauchi.

The Lagos crash occurred at about 6.10 a.m. at Punch Bus Stop, inbound Lagos, involving a white Nissan Space Bus with registration number FST 667 XV, a Mercedes-Benz car with registration number SMK 878 KK and an unidentified truck.

According to an eyewitness account contained in an incident report by the OPIC/MFM Unit Command of the Ogun State Traffic Compliance and Enforcement Agency (TRACE), excessive speeding and loss of control reportedly caused the accident after the unidentified truck struck the other vehicles and fled the scene.

The report said 16 people, comprising 15 females and one male, were involved in the crash. Of the victims, 15, including 14 females and one male, sustained injuries, while one person died.

Rescue teams from TRACE, the police, the Ogun State Ambulance and Emergency Services (OGSAES) and the Federal Road Safety Corps (FRSC) responded to the incident.



Scene of the Lagos-Ibadan Expressway incident.

Umar

The injured victims were taken to Sango-Ota General Hospital by OGSAES operatives from OPIC, while the remains of the deceased were deposited at the morgue of the Olabisi Onabanjo University Teaching Hospital (OOUTH), Sagamu, by the FRSC.

The two damaged vehicles were evacuated from the expressway to Warewa Police Station for further investigation.

The crash initially disrupted traffic along the busy highway, but normal movement was restored after the vehicles were cleared from the road.

In Bauchi State, Umar reportedly died on Sunday night when his personal vehicle crashed at Konkiyal Village in Darazo Local Council while he was travelling to Zaki after attending an Allied Peoples Movement (APM) stakeholders' meeting in Bauchi.

The accident scene is about 100 kilometres from Bauchi metropolis.

Umar, who previously served as Director-General of the Bauchi State Emergency Management Agency (SEMA), was elected chairman of Zaki Local Council on August 17, 2026.

Governor Bala Mohammed, in a condolence message issued by his media aide, Mukhtar Gidado, expressed shock over the council chairman's death, describing him as a dedicated public servant, committed grassroots politician and compassionate leader.

The governor said Umar's tenure at SEMA was marked by efforts to alleviate the suffering of vulnerable residents and provide timely assistance to communities affected by emergencies and humanitarian challenges.

He added that, as council chairman, Umar remained committed to grassroots development through initiatives aimed at empowering youths and women, improving livelihoods and promoting inclusive development.

Mohammed said his death was a major loss not only to his family and the people of Zaki but also to the state's public service and local government administration.

He urged the deceased's family, political associates, friends and the people of Zaki to find strength and comfort in Allah during the difficult period.

Umar was buried yesterday at 2:00 p.m., at the palace of the District Head of Mur Mur, Zaki Local Council.

Odii urges calm as Umeorini's killing sparks reprisal attacks in Anambra, Ebonyi

From **Lawrence Njoku,** Enugu

THE governorship candidate of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) in the 2027 Ebonyi State election, Dr Ifeanyi Chukwuma Odii, has appealed to residents of Ebonyi and Anambra states to resist reprisal attacks following the killing of Miss Mmesoma Umeorini.

The arrest of Chima Ofoeke, an indigene of Ebonyi State, over the alleged killing of Mmesoma in Uga, Aguata Local Government Area of Anambra State, has reportedly triggered unrest, with some residents calling for Ebonyi indigenes to leave the area. Two Ebonyi indigenes have also reportedly been killed in subsequent reprisal attacks.

Reacting to the development, Odii, in a statement issued on Monday by his spokesperson, Emma Igwe, condemned the killings, attacks and threats against innocent people, urging residents of both states to exercise restraint.

He said the killing of Mmesoma was condemnable, just as the reported deaths of two Ebonyi indigenes and threats against other residents were unacceptable.

"We are deeply saddened by this unfortunate development and strongly condemn the killings, attacks and threats against innocent persons on both sides.

"There can never be any justification for taking innocent human lives under the guise of revenge. Criminal responsibility must be individual, not collective. No community should be made to suffer for the alleged offence of an individual," he said.

Odii appealed particularly to youths and community leaders in both states not to allow anger over the incident to degenerate into further violence. He warned that the crisis could undermine generations of peaceful coexistence, trade, intermarriage and cultural ties between the neighbouring states.

"Anambra and Ebonyi are sister states whose people have lived, traded, married and conducted businesses together for generations. We cannot afford to allow the unfortunate actions of a few individuals to turn neighbours into enemies," he said.

The PDP candidate called on the Anambra State Governor, Chukwuma Charles Soludo, to urgently intervene by deploying security and administrative measures to halt the violence, protect vulnerable residents and prevent further loss of lives.

He also urged the state government to ensure that those responsible for Mmesoma's murder and the subsequent reprisal attacks were identified, arrested and prosecuted in accordance with the law.

"Security agencies must also intensify surveillance and protect residents irrespective of their state of origin," he added.

As part of efforts to provide relief to victims of the violence, Odii offered to pay the hospital bills of those receiving treatment for injuries sustained during the attacks, irrespective of their state of origin.

He also pledged to donate bags of rice and other essential food items to affected families and communities in both states to cushion the hardship caused by the crisis.

According to him, the intervention is neither an endorsement of violence nor an attempt to interfere with ongoing investigations, but a demonstration that human life and suffering transcend ethnic and state boundaries.

Odii further appealed to traditional rulers, community leaders, religious organisations, youth groups and other stakeholders in both states to promote reconciliation and rebuild confidence.



Umeorini

Foundation feeds 1,500 Lagos residents, urges support for needy

By **Eniola Daniel**

AT a time when rising living costs have left many households struggling to put food on the table, the Bunmi Onakoya Foundation has brought relief to 1,500 residents of Onipanu, Lagos State, through the distribution of food items.

The intervention, held at Majolate Primary School, Awoyoku, Onipanu, was part of activities marking the birthday of the foundation's founder, Bunmi Onakoya, who said the gesture was her way of giving back to society and easing the burden on vulnerable residents.

The food items distributed included rice, beans, noodles, vegetable oil and spaghetti, among others.

Speaking with *The Guardian* at the event, Onakoya said she marked her birthday on Thursday, October 29, 2026, by continuing a tradition of charitable giving she had sustained for years.

According to her, the foundation had previously extended similar interventions to residents of Yaba, Magodo and other parts of Lagos, while this year's edition was designed to reach 1,500 beneficiaries.

"We cannot wait for the government to do everything for us. I decided to support people in my constituency because I believe individuals and organisations also have a responsibility to help those in need."

"My foundation does this every year. Last year, we focused on elderly people, but this year I decided to extend the intervention to 1,500 people. I am happy to see the large turnout," she said.

Onakoya traced her passion for giving to her childhood, recalling how an encounter with a plantain seller while she was in Primary Six inspired her to help people in difficult circumstances.

"I noticed a woman selling plantains who had not sold a single one. I felt sorry for her and decided to buy all the plantains, including those that had gone bad. That experience strengthened my desire to help people," she said.

She urged individuals to cultivate a culture of generosity, stressing that charitable giving should not be left to the government or wealthy individuals alone.

"Everyone should have a heart to give. Giving gives me joy, and I believe others will also find happiness in helping people. I do not joke with humanity, and seeing people smile is my greatest satisfaction," she added.

She explained that the foundation's interventions were focused on young people, women and the elderly, insisting that its activities were humanitarian rather than political.

Traders get free medical, dental, eye care in Lagos outreach

By **Opeyemi Babalola**

WHAT began as a routine visit to Abibat Mogaji Market, popularly known as Sunday Market, Ogba, Lagos, turned into an unexpected health intervention for Yemisi Araoye, who benefited from free medical care and other support provided by Asiwaju-KOH-Faleke Connect.

Araoye, who had gone to the market to purchase essential items, including fish and other goods, expressed excitement and gratitude after encountering the group's medical outreach.

She was among traders who benefited from the free medical, dental and eye care services organised by the group to improve access to healthcare among small-scale business owners.

The outreach, held under the theme, 'Renewed Hope Medical Outreach and Market Storm', offered free medical consultations, blood pressure and blood sugar checks, dental examinations, oral health assessments and vision screening.

Elderly beneficiaries also received prescription glasses, while participants were given health education and professional advice on disease prevention, personal hygiene and healthy living.

Speaking during the exercise, the convener of the group, Tolu Dada, said the initiative was informed by the challenges market traders, particularly women, face in accessing routine healthcare while attending to their businesses.

He said many traders often neglected their health, not necessarily because they could not afford medical services or lacked access to public hospitals, but because of the demands of their daily activities.

He explained that the group decided to take healthcare services directly to the market to enable traders to check their health status without abandoning their businesses.

Dada said the initiative was also aimed at improving grassroots welfare, strengthening community engagement and mobilising support for President Bola Tinubu, House of Representatives member, James Faleke, and other All Progressives Congress (APC) candidates ahead of the 2027 general elections.



Traders receiving medical attention at the event

LAWMA hails Ladipo traders over arrest of three illegal waste dumpers

By **Ayonote Clement**

THE Lagos Waste Management Authority (LAWMA) has commended the Ladipo Market Union for helping to secure the arrest of three persons caught allegedly dumping refuse indiscriminately at Ladipo Junction, inward Airport Road, as it renewed its warning against illegal waste disposal across the state.

Speaking on the development yesterday, LAWMA's Executive Director (Finance), Kunle Adebiyi, said the suspects were apprehended on Thursday, October 29, 2026, following the market union's intervention and were subsequently handed over to the agency's Task Force Office in Oshodi for further action in line with existing environmental laws.

Adebiyi described the union's action as a demonstration of community responsibility and effective stakeholder collaboration, stressing that keeping Lagos clean required the collective efforts of market associations, residents, businesses and community leaders.

He said the arrest sent a strong message that indiscriminate waste disposal would not be tolerated, noting that such practices deface public spaces, obstruct drainage channels, degrade the environment and pose serious public health risks.

The LAWMA official urged traders and other residents to use approved waste collection services and dispose of refuse only through authorised channels rather than on roads, medians and other public spaces.

Honeywell Flour Mills Plc

RC: 55495

Statements To The Nigerian Exchange Limited And Shareholders On The Extract Of Unaudited Financial Results For Second Quarter Ended 30th September, 2026

Income Statements

	Group		Company	
	3 months ended		3 months ended	
	30-Sep-26	30-Sep-25	30-Sep-26	30-Sep-25
	N'm	N'm	N'm	N'm
Revenue	233,785	165,468	214,211	165,468
Cost of sales	(200,123)	(153,641)	(180,560)	(153,641)
Gross profit	33,662	11,827	33,651	11,827
Selling and administration expenses	(7,369)	(9,041)	(7,030)	(8,965)
Net operating gains and (losses)	1,856	909	937	909
Operating profit	28,149	3,695	27,558	3,771
Finance cost	(3,373)	(4,793)	(3,437)	(4,793)
Finance income	5,813	1,465	4,486	1,465
Foreign Exchange Gain/(Loss)	811	2,217	1,094	2,217
Net finance income/(expense)	3,251	(1,111)	2,143	(1,111)
Profit/(Loss) before taxation	31,400	2,584	29,701	2,660
Taxation	(8,792)	(965)	(8,316)	(965)
Profit/(Loss) for the period	22,608	1,619	21,385	1,695
Other Comprehensive Income				
Profit/(Loss) for the period recognised in the income statement	22,608	1,619	21,385	1,695
Total comprehensive income	22,608	1,619	21,385	1,695
Attributable to the owners of the company	22,608	1,619	21,385	1,695
Basic Earnings per share (kobo)	285.09	20.42	269.67	21.37

Statement of Financial Position

	Group		Company	
	30-Sep-26	31-Mar-26	30-Sep-26	31-Mar-26
Assets	N'm	N'm	N'm	N'm
Non-current assets				
Property, plant and equipment	117,158	99,267	21,913	23,929
Right-of -use assets	654	667	654	667
Intangible assets	291	423	9	17
Deferred tax assets			157	157
Investment in subsidiary			57,040	300
	118,103	**100,357**	**79,773**	**25,070**
Current assets				
Inventories	43,845	31,457	28,928	22,484
Trade and other receivables	13,733	28,792	53,956	77,579
Prepayments	2,768	5,737	1,269	1,539
Short term loans receivables	89,735	40,556	82,164	40,660
Cash and cash equivalents	26,244	9,810	17,165	8,330
	176,325	**116,352**	**183,482**	**150,592**
Total assets	**294,428**	**216,709**	**263,255**	**175,662**
Equity and Liabilities				
Equity				
Share capital	10,427	10,427	10,427	10,427
Reserves	19,388	19,388	19,388	19,388
Retained earnings	45,139	24,117	47,713	27,914
	74,954	**53,932**	**77,528**	**57,729**
Liabilities				
Non-current liabilities				
Borrowings	24,021	27,023	15,109	27,023
Deferred tax	2,870	2,870		
Lease liabilities	117	223	117	223
Long service award	264	233	206	187
Deferred income	461	717	461	717
	27,733	**31,066**	**15,893**	**28,150**
Current liabilities				
Trade and other payables	131,617	97,985	110,229	56,117
Borrowings	28,248	5,459	28,248	5,459
Current tax payable	10,357	8,662	9,838	8,603
Contract liability	20,027	18,168	20,027	18,168
Lease liabilities	927	763	927	763
Deferred income	565	674	565	673
	191,741	**131,711**	**169,834**	**89,783**
Total liabilities	**219,474**	**162,777**	**185,727**	**117,933**
Total Equity and Liabilities	**294,428**	**216,709**	**263,255**	**175,662**

The unaudited financial statements and notes were approved by the directors on 29th October, 2026 and signed on its behalf by:

.....
Nassib Raffoul
Managing Director
FRC/2024/PRO/DIR/003/551851

.....
Ganna Ovchynnikova
Chief Financial Officer

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NOVEMBER 2025 CAMBRIDGE IGCSE EXAMINATION RESULT	
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A*- A	GRADES: 96%
A*- B	GRADES: 99%
A*- C	GRADES: 100%

MAY/JUNE 2026 WAEC EXAMINATION RESULT	
A^1 - B^3	GRADES: 94%
A^1 - C^6	GRADES: 100%



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LAGOS

Dates: **Saturday, 30th January and 6th February, 2027**

Location: James Hope College, Twin Lakes Estate, Lekki, **Lagos.**

Time: 10AM

ABUJA & PORT HARCOURT

Date: **Saturday, 6th February, 2027**

Locations: 71 Usuma Street, Opp. Transcorp Hilton, Maitama, **Abuja.**

15 Nnamdi Azikiwe Road, Port Harcourt, **Rivers State.**

Time: 10AM



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DATE: SATURDAY 14TH NOVEMBER, 2026 & SATURDAY 9TH JANUARY, 2027

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Editorial

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Illegal admissions, accreditation fraud: Time for ivory towers to show character

ACROSS the world, tertiary institutions are highly respected for their vital roles in society's advancement. They lead human capital development; research, innovation, and knowledge generation; civic engagement; the advancement of democracy; and social transformation, among other roles. For institutions tasked with driving such high levels of transformation in society, nothing is more unsettling than the odious revelation that some engage in vices as grim as illegally admitting students and borrowing lecturers, equipment, laboratories, and other facilities to deceive accreditation teams in the country.

The recent allegation by the Federal Government that the affected institutions illegally admitted more than 258,000 students points not only to lax regulatory oversight in the Nigerian university system but also to sustained efforts to abuse established statutory channels, especially the Central Admissions Processing System (CAPS) managed by the Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board (JAMB). By creating illegal admission channels outside the official portals meant for the function, tertiary institutions are deliberately circumventing national cut-off marks, merit principles, and government-approved carrying capacities. This is worrisome and unacceptable.

At the inauguration of the Committee on Strengthening the Accreditation and Quality Assurance System for Tertiary Institutions, where these issues came to light, a further reflection of the sheer magnitude of rot in the university system emerged when the Minister of Education, Dr Tunji Alausa, announced that the government had moved to overhaul the accreditation system for universities, polytechnics, and colleges of education to prevent institutions from creating a "temporary picture" of their capacity whenever accreditation teams visit. The Minister warned against tertiary institutions borrowing lecturers, equipment, laboratories, and other facilities to deceive accreditation teams. He said that, henceforth, institutions must be assessed based on the resources they genuinely own and can sustainably provide to students.

From empirical findings, the admission fraud that is going on in tertiary institutions is not a one-off issue, but one that has been carefully nurtured and grown over the years. Alausa specifically said that 58,000 students were illegally admitted into colleges of education, while his estimate put the number of illegal admissions in universities at not less than 200,000. He cited the case of one institution where 8,593 students were legally admitted, while 9,872 were illegally admitted, meaning that the number of illegal students exceeded those admitted through the approved process.

In July 2023, the data for admissions conducted for the 2022/2023 session in universities, polytechnics and sundry tertiary institutions indicated that 88 institutions admitted students outside of CAPS. When it introduced CAPS in 2017 to centralise and automate admission processes between candidates and their tertiary institution of choice, JAMB was quick to warn that admissions conducted outside CAPS are illegal, null and void.

In April 2024, the board declared that it would no longer condone illegal admissions conducted outside of CAPS. But it is difficult to adequately pinpoint sanctions meted out to culprits, given the growing number of culprits. Last year, JAMB again cautioned tertiary institutions against persuading or coercing candidates to change their preferred programmes through internal portals, describing the practice as unethical and manipulative.

In a statement issued by the immediate past registrar, Prof. Is-haq Olanrewaju Oloyede, which was signed by the Head of Media, Dr Fabian Benjamin, the board disclosed that some institutions had been using their internal admission platforms to pressure top-ranking candidates, especially those highly placed on the CAPS, to switch to less competitive courses. According to JAMB, such manoeuvres are intended to create space for preferred candidates, thereby undermining the merit-based admission process.

It is important to point out that when institutions create a "temporary picture" of their capacity whenever accreditation teams visit, they succeed in committing a serious crime because accreditation must depict an institution's genuine, permanent, and sustainable capacity year-round, as against a decoy meant to deceive evaluation teams.

In the same vein, admitting thousands of illegal students way beyond the official quotas not only stretches already inadequate campus infrastructure, including laboratories and lecture halls, but also makes nonsense of the staff-to-student ratios, and consequently erodes the quality of degrees awarded by these institutions. This institutional impunity also willy-nilly affects students, with thousands of them risking spending years studying only to find out that their certificates are unverified, or unaccepted for the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) programme, or rejected by professional bodies and employers.

Beyond the ban on the use of borrowed staff and equipment to obtain accreditation, the Federal Government should heavily sanction regulators like the National Universities Commission (NUC), National Board for Technical Education (NBTE), and the National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE) for turning a blind eye to such brazen illegality, which has been going on for quite a while. Failure to do so compromises the government's posture of no tolerance for shady practices in tertiary institutions.

For tertiary education to be fit for purpose in the country, there must be discipline, decorum and intellectual rigour. Motor park-style Shenanigans or behaviours must never be on display in ivory towers, else they become the butt of jokes.

When school authorities supervise or perpetrate bastardisation of the admission process, borrow staff, equipment and laboratories with the intent to deceive government agencies to earn unmerited accreditation, students who benefitted from the skewed admission cannot be said to be found worthy in "character and learning," which is an age-old mantra of ivory towers.

The era of turning tertiary institutions' admissions into a revenue-generating scheme through illegal acceptance fees, unapproved tuition charges, and personal kickbacks should be ended forthwith. While Alausa rightly vowed, "We cannot continue to deceive our citizens," he should go beyond rhetoric to ensure that the government ceases to tolerate practices that undermine the quality of tertiary education. The minister should also end the ignoble amnesty for beneficiaries of backdoor admission in tertiary institutions.

The NUC must be effective in playing its role because what is happening gives the impression that there is laxity in its operations, especially when little or nothing is heard by the public about schools that have been sanctioned for wrongdoing.

As matters stand, only sanctioning tertiary institutions and their leaders would deter mindless wrongdoings that are proliferating in the tertiary ecosystem. Ivory towers, by themselves, must, by their actions and inaction, show the rest of society that they merit the honour and respect that society confers on them.

LETTER

Why Nigeria cannot ignore lessons of EndSARS

SIR: Six years after the EndSARS protests ended, the young Nigerians who marched across most of the country are still waiting for answers. Their complaints about injustice, state brutality, and the structural violence of the Nigerian state and its elite remain largely unaddressed.

Some things changed on paper. SARS was dissolved within days, and panels of inquiry sat in several states. But protesters distrusted the replacement units from the start, and the panels have given Nigerians little they can point to.

Nigeria goes back to the polls in a few months. EndSARS deserves a place in the national conversation because it was never a mere protest. It was a movement against systemic bad governance and the sustained political injustice citizens have lived under. It asked those in power to take responsibility and to remove the barriers that make justice so hard to reach.

Six years after, the country has moved on; there is no justice for the bereaved, none for society, none for the citizen. The issues that produced EndSARS have not been addressed. The salient questions about state violence remain unanswered. By most accounts, it has grown.

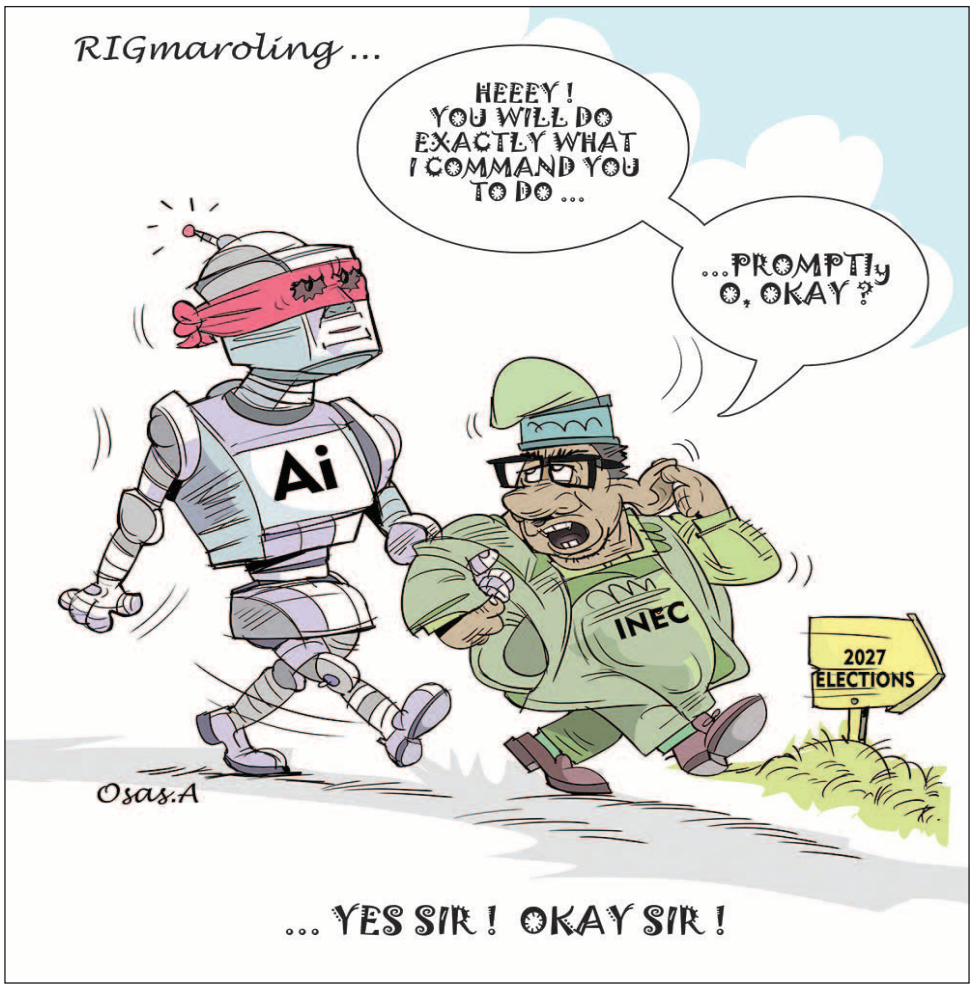
Recently, over 30 artisanal miners died in the custody of the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC) in Niger State. In April 2024, a police officer in Delta State shot a handcuffed suspect in public with live rounds after the man was intercepted with an illegal firearm, a suspect who had admitted wrongdoing and begged to cooperate with the officers in their investigation. Some officers do their work decently. The trouble is a system in which those who abuse power rarely face consequences, and citizens approach the security forces with mistrust and fear.

EndSARS was never only about the police. The death of a young Nigerian was the spark, not the cause. What boiled over was years of frustration with leaders grown comfortable with corruption and deaf to the people; it was a warning that the rights of the masses could not keep being disregarded. Some of that energy went into voter registration and the 2023 campaigns, with mixed results. The rest seems to have gone quiet.

Panels of inquiry did sit, and in Lagos they heard testimony that ought to have changed things. What followed was an argument over what to call Lekki, not over who answers for it. Human rights abuses keep rising. Politicians have grown bolder and defiant. In some states, the police, in cahoots with state power, move to suppress citizens who dare to challenge the excesses of public officials. Lekki Toll Gate is treated as a place where no assembly is allowed, and people have been arrested for marking a defining national moment.

Read the remaining part of this article on www.guardian.ng

Wealth Dickson Ominabo, a media professional and a researcher, can be reached via X: @WealthDickson.



Opinion

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Most courses in Nigeria's universities have expired: A rejoinder

By Olawale Adetokunbo Ajayi

MY dear Adesola Adefemi Ojuolape

I read your piece with a mixture of pain, nostalgia and professional concern. I have been in this system for decades - as a student in the analogue era of cyclostyle notes, as a lecturer when we typed with typewriters, as a Head of Department when internet came, and now as an emeritus watching my former students code from their bedrooms in Yaba and Berlin. So I understand your anger. It is valid. But as an elder in this house, let me offer you a more surgical diagnosis, not just a lamentation.

You are 70 per cent correct and 30 per cent incomplete. And that 30 per cent is where the danger lies if we mislead our youth.

Were you are absolutely right

You have touched the raw nerve of our universities. I cannot defend what is indefensible.

Our curriculum delivery is indeed colonial in structure. We still run a 70 per cent theory, 30 per centpractical model when global standard since Bologna Process and NUC CCMAS is 40 per cent theory, 60 per cent skills.

Employability data supports you. National Bureau of Statistics reported youth underemployment at over 80 per cent for arts and humanities graduates. World Bank Human Capital Review ranked Nigeria among the lowest in graduate skill-match in Africa.

You are right about cheap courses. In many private universities, History, Political Science, Sociology cost almost zero to run - no lab, no studio, no farm - yet students pay huge sums per session. That is rent-seeking, not education.

I taught such a course in my early years. I am ashamed to say the note I used then was still being used by a colleague many years after. We failed that generation.

Where your argument needs nuance - global practice

My son, no course is inherently expired. It is the delivery that has expired.

Let me take you around the world:

In Harvard, Oxford, National University of Singapore - they still teach Philosophy, History, Classics, Sociology, Religious Studies. These are what you call dead courses. Yet their graduates are recruited by Google, McKinsey, UN, because those universities teach Philosophy with data logic, History with digital archiving, Sociology with SPSS, Python and field analytics.

A B.A. History graduate in University of Ibadan memorises dates of Oyo Empire. A B.A. History graduate in University of Cape Town learns the same Oyo Empire but uses GIS mapping, oral digital archiving, and documentary film to preserve it, and earns from Netflix and UNESCO. Same course, different destiny.

In Germany's dual system, even a Literature student must spend months in a publishing house, media lab or translation tech company before graduation. In Nigeria's CCMAS, we wrote the same - mandatory SIWES, entrepreneurship, and skills credits - but we don't implement.

So the course has not expired. The lecturer has expired. The lab has expired. The management has expired.

To say we should scrap them is to throw away our heritage. What we should scrap is the method.

SWOT analysis of your article -as an academic paper

Strengths:

S - Strong emotional resonance with public pain. Bold, courageous voice that many Vice Chancellors fear. Timely intervention as NUC rolls out CCMAS. Connects education to economy - a rare thing. Language is accessible, not jargonised.

Weaknesses:

W - Overgeneralisation. Painting all courses with same brush as expired. No distinction between curriculum content and curriculum delivery. No empirical sampling - you said 60 per cent expired, but no departmental audit cited. Prescribes abandonment rather than reform. Underestimates value of foundational humanities in nation building.

Opportunities:

O - You have opened a national conversation that can push NUC to enforce practical ratio. Can push TETFund to fund skill labs, not just buildings. Can force universities to publish employability rate per course annually - as UK does. Your piece can become a policy brief if backed with data.

Threats:

T - If taken literally by parents, students may despise foundational knowledge and rush to 6-month skills without critical thinking base. A coder without ethics, history and communication becomes a yahoo boy with laptop. An electrician without civic education cannot build a nation. Skills without citizenship breeds skilled criminals. Also, we risk creating a new caste system where children of the poor do POP and shoe making, while children of elite do tech and AI. Both need dignity.

Actionable and workable advice - from one who has seen both eras

I will not tell you what NUC should do. They know. Let me tell you what WE must do:

For Universities - Adopt the Triple-Helix Model:

Every course must have three legs from Year Two - Classroom, Industry Hub, Community Problem. Mass Communication must run a campus radio that makes money. Sociology must run a data centre for local government. Theatre Arts must have a YouTube studio. If a department cannot show its money-making lab, its accreditation should be suspended. CCMAS already says this. Implement.

For lecturers - Mandatory re-tooling:

No lecturer should teach a course for more than three years without one industry immersion. NUC should make it a policy: For every promotion, show one new skill certificate, one industry project, not just one journal paper. A professor who cannot use Turnitin, SPSS, Canva, or Learning Management System has no business teaching Gen Z.

For students – Don't choose between degree and skill, combine:

The global practice now is T-shaped graduate. Deep in one discipline, broad in skills. Study Sociology and add Data Analytics certificate. Study History and add Documentary Filmmaking. Study English and add Copywriting and AI prompting. That is what makes you unstoppable. Four years is not waste if you use it to build both certificate AND capacity.

For parents - Ask the right question:

Not "Can this course feed my child?" Ask, "Does this university teach this course with feeding skills?" Same course in Covenant can feed, same course in a mushroom university cannot.

For government - Fund value, not volume:

Stop funding universities per number of students. Start funding per number of patents, start-ups, and community solutions per department. Rwanda did it. Results came.

My dear Adesola, I commend your fire. We need your voice. But please, don't tell our children that university is scam. Tell them that an unreformed university is scam. There is a difference.

We built this system. We must reform it, not burn it. An uneducated mind with a skill can work. An educated mind with a skill can lead, innovate and transform a nation.

Let us choose the second.

Ajayi, a professor of Human Capital and Comparative Education, wrote from Lagos.

Is compulsory national service still safe for Nigeria's graduates?

By Chukwuemeka Theodore

WHEN the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) was founded in 1973, its purpose was clear: to heal the wounds of a civil war and bind a fractured country together by sending young graduates to live and work far from home. For decades, it served that purpose. But Nigeria today is not the Nigeria of 1973, and a scheme that compels young people to travel must be judged against the dangers of the present.

Kidnapping, terrorism, banditry, communal violence, unsafe roads, unemployment, inflation and decaying infrastructure now shape daily life. For corps members, these are not abstract problems. The risk begins before service does: prospective corps members travel long distances to unfamiliar states, often unsure whether they will arrive safely.

The question is not whether national unity still matters. It does. The question is whether compelling graduates to serve in unsafe conditions is the best way to build it, and whether the state can honestly say it is doing enough to keep them alive.

A record of lives lost

The evidence is troubling. *The Punch* reported that between 2018 and 2022, road accidents involving corps members killed 40 and injured 98. In 2026, four more died in a motor accident on the Yola–Mubi road in Adamawa State. *The Edo Forum* also reported a crash that claimed the lives of 16 corps members travelling to Gombe for service.

Kidnapping is an equally grave threat. The Foundation for Investigative Journalism reported that at least 83 corps members were abducted between 2013 and 2023. Among them was Sampson Worlu, kidnapped and murdered in 2015 even after a ransom was paid. Other reported cases include:

18 corps members abducted in Akwa Ibom State while serving as election personnel (*Punch*)

4 abducted along the Abuja–Kubwa axis in 2020 (investigative journalists)

Corps members abducted along the Onitsha–Owerri road on 1 October 2020 (Punch)

8 abducted while travelling to Zamfara (*The Guardian*)

Abasifreke Joseph, abducted on his way to Kogi in 2025 (Punch), and 15 corps members abducted in Kogi in August 2025 (*Premium Times*)

Violence has also claimed lives directly. NEMA confirmed that three corps members were killed during the 2013 Jos crisis. In 2017, a corps member was shot dead in Yenagoa, Bayelsa State. Bomoi Suleiman Yusuf was killed by armed robbers on the Jere–Abuja highway while travelling with 16 others. Stephanie Terungwa was found dead after being declared missing. Another corps member was among four people killed by suspected bandits on the Jikamshi–Funtua road in Katsina. *The Punch* reported that more than 20 corps members died in violent incidents between 2015 and 2026.

Even these numbers understate the problem. There is no publicly available, comprehensive official NYSC database recording road deaths, abductions and insecurity-related fatalities since 1973. A scheme that cannot say how many of its young people it has lost cannot claim to be protecting them. That gap is itself a failure of accountability.

Behind each statistic is a graduate who answered a national call and a family that waited for news. Many corps members are young people posted far from home, with little knowledge of local dangers and no means of protecting themselves. When they are harmed, the loss is not only personal. It weakens public trust in a scheme that asks every graduate to take part.

Beyond physical danger

Safety is not the only concern. Corps members report poor treatment at their places of primary assignment, exploitation, harassment and inadequate security at some postings. The monthly allowance is widely regarded as insufficient. Deployment often ignores professional skills, placing graduates in roles unrelated to their training and wasting the very talent the scheme claims to develop. A programme meant to build national pride should not leave young people feeling underpaid, unprotected and undervalued.

The policy question

These circumstances raise a question that can no longer be avoided: is a compulsory one-year national service still the safest and most effective way to achieve the objectives for which the scheme was created? The Federal Government appears to recognise its weight. In 2025, it set up a committee to carry out a comprehensive review of the NYSC, with the safety of corps members as a central concern. That review is welcome, but it must produce action, not another report left to gather dust. Parents, graduates and the wider public deserve to know what the committee finds, and what will change as a result.

A way forward

Reform needs not mean abolition. The NYSC can be rebuilt around the principle that no graduate should be asked to risk their life for a year of service. Several measures deserve serious consideration:

Safer deployment. Post corps members only to locations that meet verified security standards, backed by transparent risk assessments.

Safer travel. Provide secure, organised transport to and from orientation camps and postings.

Skills-based placement. Match graduates to roles that reflect their qualifications.

Better welfare. Review allowances and enforce minimum standards for accommodation and treatment by host organisations.

Accountability. Establish a public database of incidents involving corps members, and sanction employers who exploit or harass them.

Voluntary options. Debate whether the scheme should become voluntary, or offer alternatives such as community or remote service in high-risk areas.

None of these steps is simple, and each would cost money and political will. But the cost of inaction is measured in funerals, ransom payments and shattered families. Those are prices no country should ask its young graduates to pay.

Conclusion

National service was designed to build unity, not to put young lives at risk. A programme that compels graduates to travel and serve, yet cannot guarantee their safety, owes them more than good intentions. The government must now choose: reform of the NYSC so that it protects those it conscripts, or accept that its founding promise can no longer be kept. Nigeria owes its young people safety first, and service second.

Theodore Chukwuemeka (Ph.D) writes from School of Post Graduate Studies, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka Anambra State.

Opinion

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2027: Win or lose, Tinubu would triumph

By **Rasheed Ojikutu**

ONE observes with consternation the attitude of some arch enemies of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu on the possible outcome of the 2027 general election in Nigeria. In fact, some of them are so bitter than one wonders whether it is the President that they detest or Nigeria. The sad news to them is that for the man in question, 2027 is a victory that goes beyond election because his place in the history of Nigeria cannot be erased by the outcome of the 2027 votes. Therefore, all those who are of the opinion that his loss would be his downfall should do a rethink.

As Nigeria approaches the 2027 general election, political discussions are increasingly dominated by questions about who will succeed in the contest for the presidency. Will President Bola Ahmed Tinubu secure a second term? Will an opposition candidate defeat him? Will the election produce a political realignment capable of changing the direction of the country?

These are legitimate questions in a democracy. Elections determine who exercises political authority, and Nigerians have every right to scrutinise the records of those seeking their votes. The president's supporters have the right to campaign for his re-election, just as his opponents have the right to present alternative programmes and seek a change of government.

The real question is "What does electoral victory or defeat mean for a man who has already occupied the highest political office in his country?"

President Tinubu as the incumbent has already secured a permanent place in the country's political history as a person who attained the presidency through the constitutional electoral process. Therefore, the outcome of the 2027 election cannot reverse that historical achievement.

If he secures a second term and I pray he does, he will have the opportunity to continue his administration's profound economic realignment and achievements. If he loses, he will leave office at the end of his first term and become a former president of Nigeria. However, none of the outcomes will erase the fact that he was president.

The key focus of this article is that President Tinubu's historical place as a former or serving president goes beyond the 2027 election.

If he wins in 2027, the democratic process will have produced an outcome that allows him to continue in office.

In that sense, the significance of the 2027 election extends beyond the question of who will occupy Aso Rock Villa. It will also provide an opportunity to reflect on political maturity, the meaning of public service and the place of democratic restraint in Nigeria's evolving political history. History is not written only at the end of a person's career. Significant events become part of the historical record as they occur.

On 29 May 2023, Tinubu took the oath of office as Nigeria's president. That inauguration marked the beginning of his administration and established his place among the individuals who have occupied the office since the restoration of democratic government in 1999.

The significance of that event is independent of the next election.

A person who becomes president does not cease to have been president merely because another candidate defeats him in a subsequent election. Electoral defeat can end a political tenure, but it cannot rewrite the historical record.

He has already become president. He has presided over the Federal Executive Council, participated in international engagements as head of state and government, and exercised the constitutional responsibilities of the presidency.

If another candidate defeats him in 2027, those facts will remain. If he wins, they will form part of the record of a presidency extended into a second term.

The important question is, therefore, not whether the election can erase his presidency. It cannot. The question is what the country will learn from his administration and how his conduct will shape the assessment of his political legacy.

A presidential legacy is more complicated than the number of years spent in office. Many world leaders, including Nigeria are remembered for institutional reforms. Others are associated with economic transformation, infrastructure development, national reconciliation, foreign policy or the expansion of democratic freedoms.

Some leave office with considerable public approval, while others face sustained criticism over their policies and decisions. In many cases, a leader's reputation changes over time as new evidences emerge and the long-term consequences of government policies become clearer.

A presidential legacy is, therefore, neither automatically positive nor permanently settled on the day a leader leaves office. Tinubu's legacy will be shaped by the totality of his administration's record, including its achievements, policy choices and their effects on Nigerians.

Supporters may emphasise his economic reforms, efforts to restructure public finances, infrastructure projects and changes in the administration of government. Critics may focus on the cost of living, inflation, insecurity, unemployment, the distribution of economic hardship and the extent to which government policies have improved ordinary citizens' welfare.

We should be able to distinguish between the intended objectives of a policy and its actual consequences. A policy may be introduced with a legitimate objective but produce significant hardship during implementation. Another may be unpopular in the short term but yield benefits over a longer period. The appropriate assessment requires data, context and careful evaluation rather than political slogans. This is where most of us get things wrong.

Bola Tinubu's presidency is an established fact. Whether his administration strengthens democratic institutions, protects political freedoms and reinforces confidence in constitutional government is a separate question that must be evaluated through evidence. A president's record is built through years of governance, not merely through the final result of a single contest.

National issues, well-being and survival goes beyong what comes to us but the derivable benefits to the nation and its people. Even those yet unborn.

The Yoruba says "Olorun ma jeki a je aiye awon omo wa mo aiye" literaly meaning "What is the benefit of our being well fed when our generations yet unborn will be hungry". God forbid.

As a little digression, no participant in the past government in Nigeria has the right to fault the government of President Bola Tinubu, knowing that substantial part of Nigeria's national malaise came from past governments and the indiscretion of their administrations. It is the height of hypocrisy for a man who ruled Nigeria for eleven out of its sixty-six years after independence to complain that the President could not fix Nigeria's problems in four years. Was his administration able to fix it in eleven years?

"O ye eni gbogbo ko yo owo alagbafo, ko ye ato sile" literaly meaning that "it is unbefitting of a bed wetter to haggle over laundry charges.

Ojikutu is a professor of Statistics (rtd), University of Lagos.

Strengthening NAF's operational response to insecurity

By **Ehimen Ejodame**

The Nigerian Air Force (NAF), under the leadership of the Chief of the Air Staff (CAS), Air Marshal Sunday Kelvin Aneke, has continued to strengthen its operational response to Nigeria's evolving security challenges through sustained air operations, enhanced intelligence-driven missions, improved aircraft availability and closer synergy with surface forces. As the CAS marked his first year in office on 30 October 2026, these efforts reflect his commitment to maintaining a professional, motivated and mission-ready force capable of delivering decisive airpower effects in support of national security objectives.

Since assuming office on 30 October 2025, Air Marshal Aneke has pursued a command philosophy that places operational effectiveness, jointness, technological advancement and sustained readiness at the centre of NAF activities. The objective is to ensure that airpower delivers tangible operational value through the disruption of hostile activities, support for ground forces and the protection of lives and critical national interests.

Sustaining operational tempo

The NAF's first-anniversary update highlights the scale of operational activity sustained under the CAS's leadership. Between November 2025 and September 2026, the Service recorded more than 6,100 flying hours and over 2,900 sorties, supported by the consumption of close to 10 million litres of Jet A-1 aviation fuel.

These figures reflect the substantial resources, technical expertise and professional commitment required to sustain air operations across multiple mission profiles. From aircrew and engineers to intelligence specialists, technicians and logistics personnel, the collective efforts of NAF personnel remain essential to generating and sustaining operational airpower.

The missions undertaken during the period included precision air strikes, armed reconnaissance, surveillance, close air support and other tasks in support of national security operations. Through these activities, the NAF continues to contribute to efforts to disrupt hostile operations, support surface forces and strengthen the overall response to security threats.

Beyond the figures, sustained operational activity demonstrates the Service's continuing commitment to maintaining pressure on hostile elements while providing relevant air support to the wider national security effort. The effectiveness of these operations remains closely linked to sound intelligence, disciplined mission planning, appropriate target assessment and coordination with other security forces.

Jointness as a force multiplier

A central pillar of the CAS's command philosophy is synergy with surface forces. The NAF recognises that airpower delivers its greatest value when integrated with the operations of the Nigerian Army, Nigerian Navy and other relevant security agencies. Such integration supports coordinated planning, information sharing and the timely application of capabilities against evolving threats.

Nigeria's complex security environment demands a flexible and coordinated response. Air operations can provide surveillance, mobility, rapid response and close air support, while surface forces contribute ground presence, manoeuvre and the ability to consolidate operational gains. Effective coordination among these elements is, therefore, critical to achieving mission objectives.

In this regard, the CAS's emphasis on intelligence-driven smart operations underscores the importance of timely and credible information in operational decision-making. The planned Open-Source Intelligence Centre within the Air Intelligence Branch, as outlined in the CAS's early leadership memorandum, was intended to strengthen the exploitation of publicly available information in support of situational awareness and operational planning.

The NAF continues to recognise that operational success depends on more than the employment of aircraft. It requires effective intelligence integration, clear command and control arrangements, professional coordination and the ability to align air operations with the broader objectives of joint **missions.**

Sustaining air power through maintenance and logistics

The generation of effective airpower depends on the availability, reliability and safety of aircraft. Behind every sortie are the inspections, servicing, technical assessments, logistics arrangements and safety procedures required to ensure that aircraft are ready for their assigned missions.

Consistent with the CAS's emphasis on predictive maintenance and timely logistics support, the NAF has reported the reactivation of a Super Puma helicopter, completion of a 600-hour inspection on a Dornier-228 aircraft and the commencement of overhaul work on C-130H aircraft NAF 913 at facilities in Portugal.

These maintenance activities underscore the importance of sustaining existing platforms alongside the introduction of new aircraft. They also highlight the critical contribution of engineers, technicians and logisticians to operational readiness.

The NAF remains focused on strengthening maintenance quality assurance, improving logistics planning and ensuring strict compliance with approved technical and airworthiness standards. These measures are essential to reducing avoidable downtime, preserving aircraft serviceability and sustaining the safe generation of airpower in support of national security operations.

Modernisation for evolving operational demands

As security threats evolve, the NAF continues to pursue platform modernisation and technological advancement to strengthen its operational flexibility. The Service's September 2026 anniversary update recorded the delivery of five additional helicopters, comprising three AW-109 Trekker Type B helicopters and two H125 helicopters.

The NAF has also pursued programmes involving 12 AH-1Z attack helicopters and six M-346 aircraft. The AH-1Z programme is intended to strengthen combat capability and close air support for surface forces, while the M-346 programme is expected to enhance advanced pilot training and light-attack capability.

These programmes form part of the broader effort to build a balanced and capable Air Force responsive to Nigeria's operational requirements. However, the NAF recognises that the full value of modernisation depends on effective induction, personnel training, technical support, maintenance infrastructure and sustainable logistics arrangements.

Accordingly, platform acquisition must be accompanied by investments in the systems and personnel required to operate and sustain aircraft safely and effectively. This integrated approach is essential to ensuring that modernisation translates into dependable operational capability.

Airpower in service of national security

As Air Marshal Aneke marks his first year as CAS, the NAF remains focused on sustaining operational readiness, strengthening joint operations, improving aircraft availability and developing the capabilities required to respond to emerging security challenges.

While operational activity provides an important measure of the Service's effort, the NAF recognises that the broader objective is to contribute meaningfully to national security outcomes. This requires continuous professional development, effective inter-agency cooperation, responsible employment of airpower and sustained attention to the protection of civilians.

The Service's operational commitments are therefore guided by the need to employ its capabilities purposefully in support of national objectives. Through intelligence-driven missions, close coordination with surface forces and continuous improvement in operational and technical standards, the NAF continues to contribute to the collective effort to protect Nigeria and its citizens.

One year into Air Marshal Aneke's leadership, the direction remains clear: sustain a highly motivated, professional and mission-ready Air Force capable of delivering effective airpower in support of joint operations. By combining operational resolve with disciplined execution, technological advancement and institutional collaboration, the NAF remains committed to fulfilling its constitutional responsibilities and contributing to a safer and more secure Nigeria.

Ejodame is the director of Public Relations and Information, Nigerian Air Force.

The Guardian Business

www.guardian.ng Tuesday, November 3, 2026 Guardian Nigeria GuardianNigeria 08136370421 Guardiannigeria

CRUDE OIL PRICE UPDATE Brent crude: $110.2| WTI crude: $103.5 **FOREX MARKET UPDATE** I&E window: N1,330.47

Manpower shortage threatens Nigeria's $500b energy transition plan

From **Collins Olayinka**, Abuja

NIGERIA's ambition to attract about $500 billion in additional energy investment, reach 277 gigawatts of installed power capacity by 2060, and create 840,000 jobs by 2050 faces a critical workforce-planning challenge.

A new research report warned that the country has not yet shown whether its skills base and institutions can deliver the targets.

The report, titled 'Can Nigeria Deliver Its Energy Transition Plan? Nigeria Energy Transition Capability Baseline 2026', published by Energy Transition Africa (ETA), identified gaps in publicly available evidence linking projected energy investments to the number, distribution and capabilities of workers and institutions required to implement them.

The findings raised concerns about Nigeria's preparedness to translate its energy transition ambitions into sustainable employment, reliable electricity supply and new industrial opportunities.

Although the country has engineers, technicians, financiers, training institutions, and electricity regulators performing critical functions, the report said no consolidated national assessment shows how many professionals the transition will require, which occupations will be needed, where they must be deployed, and whether existing systems can meet the demand.

The Executive Director of ETA and research lead, Vincent Egoro, said: "Nigeria has a plan for the megawatts and a projection for the jobs. But where is the workforce plan connecting the two?"

He said the central issue was not whether Nigeria had skilled professionals, but whether the country knew it had enough people with the right competencies, in the right locations and at the right time to deliver its energy plans.

The investment, electricity capacity and employment figures are projections contained in Nigeria's updated Energy Transition and Investment Plan, published in November 2024.

One of the report's key findings concerns the workforce needed to operate and maintain mini-grids as Nigeria expands decentralised electricity systems to underserved communities.

ETA found that publicly available employment figures could not provide a reliable estimate of the personnel required to sustain mini-grid operations over time because existing measures combine construction, operational and central support jobs.

This makes it difficult to determine how many technicians are needed to maintain installations, where they would be sourced, and whether workforce planning is keeping pace with infrastructure deployment.

The report cautioned that the evidence gap does not establish that mini-grid operators lack maintenance personnel. Instead, it highlights the lack of sufficiently detailed public workforce information to assess long-term operational needs.

The issue affected the sustainability of investments in decentralised electricity, particularly in communities where reliable maintenance services are essential to keeping power infrastructure functional.

The report noted that without credible estimates of future technical staffing requirements, policymakers and project developers may struggle to align training, recruitment and deployment with the expansion of electricity infrastructure.

The report also examined the institutional demands created by the decentralisation of electricity regulation following the Electricity Act 2023.



Co-founder and Managing Partner Alitheia Capital, Mrs Olajumoke Akinwunmi (left); Group Chief Commercial Officer, Mixta Africa, Adetola Akinsulire; Chief Executive Officer, UPDC Plc, Odunayo Ojo and Founder and Chief Executive Officer, Fortren and Company, Martin Uche at the Africa Protech Priority Summit in Lagos. PHOTO: SUNDAY AKINLOLU

European supermarkets hit by cyberattacks as freezers overheat to 55°C

By **Adeyemi Adepetun**

SUPERMARKETS across Europe are reeling from a wave of cyberattacks that sabotaged refrigeration systems, forcing retailers to discard massive amounts of food.

In Sweden, grocery giants ICA and Coop, which together control 67.3 per cent of the market, reported freezers overheating to +55°C overnight on Monday. "Everything is ruined," said an ICA store manager in Sjöbo, where frozen goods worth hundreds of thousands of kronor were destroyed.

In Belgium, around 40 Delhaize and 15 Carrefour stores saw freezers rise to 15°C, with losses estimated at over €100,000.

The attacks mirror similar incidents last month in France, where hackers crippled refrigeration at hundreds of supermarkets, causing millions in losses and even reported fires. In August, freezer failures also hit six US military grocery stores.

As of this moment, seven EU countries have now reported cyberattacks targeting refrigeration systems. For instance, in the Netherlands, 17 businesses, including butcher shops and cold storage facilities. In Finland, K Group stores reported overnight irregularities. In Belgium, Delhaize, Carrefour, and Spar stores reported losses of over €100K.

Further, in Sweden, ICA and Coop reported freezers set to +50°C; stores closed. In Luxembourg, 65 stores, including Delhaize, have been affected. In Ireland, 13 SuperValu stores have been affected, with goods withdrawn, losses in the thousands.

In Estonia, major chains reported freezers set to hit +50°C, damage narrowly avoided.

The incidents highlighted growing vulnerabilities as cyberattacks spread beyond banks, websites, and crypto platforms into critical infrastructure like food supply chains.

No direct link between the attacks has yet been established, but seven EU countries have now reported freezer sabotage, raising alarms about the scale and coordination of these strikes.

Conglomerates' revenue up 123% to N714b as acquisitions, sales boost earnings

By **Helen Oji**

BUSINESS expansion, stronger sales, in addition to improved operating margins have lifted the combined revenues of UAC of Nigeria Plc (UACN), SCOA Nigeria Plc and Unilever Nigeria Plc to N714.5 billion in their nine months of operations, representing an increase of 123.4 per cent over N319.85 billion achieved in the corresponding period of 2025.

The three firms also recorded a combined profit before tax (PBT) of N84.02 billion, representing a 74.60 per cent increase over N48.12 billion achieved in the same period last year.

A breakdown of their nine-month performance indicated that the unprecedented rise was largely driven by UACN's expanded business following its acquisition of C.H.I. Limited, alongside stronger sales and improved profitability across key business segments.

UACN accounted for the largest contribution to the growth, recording revenue of N522.9 billion in the nine months ended September 30, 2026, up from N159.6 billion posted in the corresponding period of 2025. This represented an increase of 227.7 per cent.

The company's PBT also rose by 262.5 per cent to N37.7 billion from N10.4 billion, while profit after tax increased by 307.1 per cent to N21.9 billion from N5.4 billion.

Operators attribute the firm's improved performance to the impact of its acquisition of C.H.I. Limited, the producer of Chivita and Hollandia brands, which was completed in October 2025.

According to them, the 2026 results represent the first full nine-month reporting period in which the acquired business was consolidated into the group's financial statements.

The Group Managing Director, Fola Aiyesimoju, said the performance reflected progress in the company's business objectives, with the Packaged Food and Beverages and Paints businesses driving growth.

Similarly, Unilever Nigeria recorded revenue of N184 billion, representing an 18.4 per cent rise when compared with N155.4 billion posted in the corresponding period of 2025.

Its PBT also increased by 21.8 per cent to N45.6 billion from N37.4 billion recorded in the previous year.

The company's performance was supported by growth in its Foods business, which generated revenue of N123 billion, compared to N94.8 billion in the corresponding period of 2025.

Nigeria, France explore opportunities in energy, industrial devt

By **Benjamin Alade**

NIGERIA and France are seeking to deepen bilateral trade and investment in the energy sector, with industry leaders identifying gas development, infrastructure financing, technology transfer and local manufacturing as major opportunities for expanding economic cooperation.

The call was made at an energy roundtable organised by the Franco-Nigerian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FNCCI) as part of activities marking French Week 2026 in Lagos.

The engagement brought together energy executives, government representatives and diplomatic officials to explore investment opportunities and strengthen commercial partnerships between both countries, particularly in the oil and gas value chain.

The Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of TotalEnergies Nigeria, Matthieu Bouyer, said Nigeria remained an important investment destination for French businesses, noting that the company had operated in the country for 70 years.

He said more than 100 French companies were operating across different sectors of the Nigerian economy, including energy, infrastructure, logistics, technology, agriculture and consumer goods, while bilateral trade reached approximately $4.7bn in 2025.

Bouyer said the changing dynamics of the global energy industry required Nigeria and its international partners to focus on investments that would increase production, improve operational efficiency, strengthen energy security and reduce emissions.

He identified energy transition and decarbonisation, gas infrastructure and domestic utilisation, as well as technology transfer and local content as three major areas for expanding cooperation.

According to him, Nigeria's substantial gas resources offer opportunities to attract investment in electricity generation, industrial production, exports and domestic energy supply.

He, however, stressed that unlocking the opportunities would require adequate infrastructure, improved investment conditions and stronger collaboration between international investors and local businesses.

The TotalEnergies chief said partnerships should extend beyond the importation of technology to include skills development, training, knowledge sharing and the creation of competitive Nigerian suppliers.

Rail cargo plunges 24.7% in September as Q3 freight hits 169,060

By **Adaku Onyenucheya**

PORT users reduced their patronage of the railway to move cargo as the Nigerian Railway Corporation (NRC) recorded a 24.7 per cent decline in cargo movement in September despite transporting a total freight volume of 169,060 in the third quarter of 2026.

According to the NRC operational data between July and September made available by the Deputy Director of Marketing and Commercial, Yemi Odunowo, freight activity rose from 60,440 in July to 61,980 in August.

Freight movement suffered a sharp setback in September, with 46,640 recorded, representing a decline of 15,340 in cargo volume within one month.

The September freight figure represented a 24.7 per cent decline from August and was approximately 22.8 per cent below the quarter's monthly peak of 61,980 recorded in August.

It was also the lowest monthly freight volume recorded during the three months.

A further breakdown of the figures showed that standard-gauge freight services accounted for 166,180, or approximately 98.3 per cent, of the total 169,060 freight volume recorded during the quarter, while narrow-gauge freight services contributed the remaining 2,880, all of which was recorded in July.

No narrow-gauge freight movement was recorded in August and September, according to the data.

Standard-gauge freight volume stood at 57,560 in July, increased to 61,980 in August and subsequently dropped to 46,640 in September.

Further analysis of the figures showed that performance varied across the different freight categories, with some services recording improvements in September while others suffered considerable declines.

Containers recorded the highest quarterly freight volume among the listed standard-gauge freight categories, with 41,840 over the three months.

Nembe
Exploration & Production Company Limited

PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT

DIEAMA–OKPOAMA INCIDENT: NEMBE REJECTS UNFOUNDED IMPLICATION, DEMANDS RETRACTION

Nembe Exploration & Production Company Limited ("Nembe") first became aware of the said confrontation involving members of the Dieama and Okpoama communities in Brass Local Government Area on 19 October 2026 through a public announcement by the Bayelsa State Government, which in the haste to implicate us, referred to us by our previous identity, "Aiteo", and extra-judicially/prejudicially directed us to suspend all land acquisition activities and processes. This has portrayed our organisation as a dramatis personae in the unfortunate incident and occasioned reputational damage of indescribable proportion. This is, to say the least, not only ultra vires but also in brazen conflict with the simplest rules of fair hearing and societal/governmental rules of equitable engagement. This is unacceptable and totally rejected.

For the avoidance of doubt, Nembe views this as an orchestration, designed/crafted to back up a malicious, unspoken agenda.

All said, however, we extend our sincere condolences to the bereaved family and our sympathy to those injured. This tragedy demands a thorough investigation and an accurate account of the circumstances that occasioned it. Neither the family nor the affected communities are served by diverting attention towards a company that did not cause, instigate or participate in the confrontation.

Whereas the State Government has identified no act or omission by Nembe that may have even remotely contributed to or engendered the confrontation, Nembe hereby states unequivocally that our only involvement with the site visit/negotiation aimed at a possible land acquisition was through a proposal presented to us by a third party, with which we have some other ongoing transactions, and that, indeed, we had no representation on the team. Furthermore, we can confirm that the visit was incident-free!

Our subsequent inquiries indicate that the dispute concerned opposition to black sand mining activities attributed to a company known as Starant Mining Limited, compounded by unresolved disagreements over community leadership and control of resources. Those inquiries also revealed that indeed, the said disagreements marked the polarisation lines between the feuding parties.

The reported chronology is material. According to community accounts, a senior official of the Bayelsa State Government convened a meeting of representatives of Dieama and Okpoama on 8 October 2026, at which it was resolved that black sand mining should be suspended pending further government directives. Those accounts state that mining nevertheless continued in Dieama, prompting members of Okpoama to visit the location on 11 October and stop operations. The confrontation of 19 October followed against this background of unresolved tensions.

These accounts require independent verification but raise questions the State Government ought to address directly. What steps followed its intervention on 8 October? If mining continued, under whose authority did it do so? What measures were taken to address the grievances already brought to the Government's attention? Most fundamentally, on what evidence did it consider it appropriate to direct action against Nembe?

The Government cannot reasonably disregard its own prior intervention in the reported mining dispute while leaving unexplained its decision to associate our company with the resulting crisis. Its announcement identifies neither the conduct complained of against Nembe nor the connection between that conduct and the suspension. This substantive omission leaves the public with an implication of culpability that the Government has failed to establish. This is not the first occasion on which the State Government has associated our company with an incident disconnected from its operations. An earlier allegation concerned an incident more than 200 kilometres from our acreage. The recurrence requires an explanation. The Government should disclose the evidence underlying these associations and explain why Nembe continues to be drawn into incidents for which no connection to its operations has been established. We cannot be expected to accept repeated public statements that prejudice our reputation while leaving their factual foundation undisclosed.

We firmly challenge the purported, blanket and indefinite suspension of our land acquisition activities and processes as ultra-vires especially as the announcement identifies no breach by Nembe, specifies no duration or review mechanism and sets out no statutory basis for the exercise of such powers. The seriousness of a community crisis does not relieve the Government of the obligation to justify singling out a company for adverse action even if it has such general powers. An unsupported official association with fatal violence, amplified through national and international reporting, can undermine confidence, disrupt commercial relationships and prejudice substantial public and private interests. The Government should recognise the gravity of those consequences.

Accordingly, we hereby demand that the Bayelsa State Government unequivocally retract its announcement immediately, while we continue to reserve all our legal rights to protect our hard-earned reputation and pecuniary interests.

The retraction and withdrawal must be communicated publicly with prominence and circulation commensurate with the said injurious publication.

Finally, we call on the media to reflect our position accurately, distinguish verified facts from unsupported allegations and give this correction prominence commensurate with their reporting of the Government's announcement. We expressly reserve all rights and remedies, including the right to challenge the Government's actions and seek appropriate relief to protect our reputation, operations and commercial interests.

Management
Nembe Exploration & Production Company Limited



NNPC Limited/ TotalEnergies International Scholarship Scheme | 2027 2028

Call for Applications

Every year, NNPC Limited/TotalEnergies and its corporate partners identify and sponsor young Nigerian scholars who want to pursue master's degree programmes in Management Science, Engineering and Geosciences at universities in France.

Applying to a public university is an added advantage. The award is full board.

NNPC Limited/TotalEnergies welcomes applications from suitably qualified young Nigerians for the 2027/2028 session of the Scheme.

Applicants must have obtained a university degree (minimum second class upper) not earlier than five (5) years ago and must have completed the mandatory NYSC scheme.

Follow the link below for more information about Masters programmes in France - **https://www.nigeria.campusfrance.org**

Eligibility

Interested applicants should visit the scholarship website, **csr-ngscholarship.totalenergies.com** for detailed information.

Only applications submitted through the scholarship website will be considered.

NNPC Limited/TotalEnergies is a partnership between NNPC Limited, Nigeria's national energy company, and TotalEnergies, a broad energy company that produces and markets fuels, natural gas and electricity in more than 130 countries. Together, we are committed to energy that is ever more affordable, cleaner, more reliable and accessible to as many people as possible.

Application closes on January 31, 2027.

Only short-listed candidates will be contacted.

NNPC | TotalEnergies

Partners: NOOC | SAPETRO | Meren

FG tightens payroll controls, blocks recruitments without verified records

From **Joseph Chibueze**, Abuja

THE Federal Government has tightened controls over its payroll system, making the enrolment of newly recruited workers conditional on rigorous verification of recruitment approvals, personnel records and financial entitlements. This is in a move to strengthen accountability and curb payroll irregularities.

Under the new directive, the Office of the Accountant-General of the Federation (OAGF) has made it mandatory for all Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) to capture newly recruited employees on their respective nominal rolls and complete prescribed validation procedures before they can be admitted into the Integrated Personnel and Payroll Information System (IPPIS).

The measure placed greater responsibility on MDAs, as budget owners, to account for their personnel budgets and authenticate the employment records of workers whose salaries are charged to public funds.

The new requirements could strengthen the Federal Government's safeguards against unauthorised payroll entries, inaccurate personnel records and questionable salary claims, although the directive does not quantify potential savings or identify specific payroll irregularities the exercise is intended to address.

Under the revised procedure, MDAs must formally apply to the OAGF for payroll admission, submitting recruitment approvals, appointment letters, applicable waivers and other supporting documents for scrutiny.

The OAGF will verify employees' records, salary structures, grade levels, steps, allowances and other financial entitlements before their applications can proceed to the next stage.

The checks will also cover statutory information, including Pension Fund Administrator details, pension identification numbers, National Housing Fund registration and tax records, to ensure accurate deductions and timely remittance of statutory contributions.

Following the initial screening, the records will be returned to the relevant MDAs for confirmation and endorsement by the Accounting Officer, Director of Human Resources, Director of Finance and Accounts, and designated Payroll Validating Officer.

A statement from the OAGF said final admission into the federal payroll will be granted only after the prescribed checks have been completed satisfactorily and the Accountant-General of the Federation has approved the application.

In a further push for accountability, the OAGF has directed Permanent Secretaries, heads of agencies and other relevant officials to ensure strict compliance with the new procedures.

Eterna's profit soars 71.7%, hits N7.34b in nine months

By **Waliat Musa**

ETERNA Plc has reported a sharp increase in profit after tax to N7.34 billion for the nine months ended September 30, 2026, from N325.88 million recorded in the corresponding period of 2025, driven by stronger revenue and operating performance.

The company's unaudited consolidated financial results showed that revenue rose by 71.7 per cent to N365.56 billion from N212.84 billion in the preceding year.

Gross profit increased to N23.33 billion from N9.94 billion, while operating profit climbed to N11.19 billion, compared with N3.19 billion recorded in the corresponding period of 2025.

Similarly, profit before tax rose to N10.28 billion from N1.40 billion, while basic earnings per share increased to N3.36 from N0.25 in the prior-year period.

The company's balance sheet also strengthened, with consolidated total assets rising to N114.19 billion as at September 30, 2026, from N92.19 billion at the end of December 2025.

Total equity increased to N32.99 billion from N7.77 billion over the same period.

Commenting on the performance, Eterna's Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer, Dr Jude Nwaulune, said the company remained focused on improving operational efficiency, maintaining financial discipline and delivering sustainable value.

"Our Q3 YTD results reflect the progress we are making in building a stronger and more resilient Eterna. We remain committed to driving efficiency across our operations, pursuing opportunities for growth and creating long-term value for our shareholders and stakeholders," he said.

The company said its strategic priorities remained focused on its fuels, lubricants and gas businesses, with initiatives aimed at strengthening distribution, improving customer experience and sustaining growth.

Fidelity Bank repays $400 million Eurobond, earns Onyema's praise

By **Olusegun Koiki**

THE Chairman of Air Peace Limited, Dr Allen Onyema, has commended Fidelity Bank Plc for the repayment of the $400 million Eurobond at maturity.

Onyema said that the feat indicated financial resilience, institutional discipline and effective leadership.

Onyema said the bank's ability to meet its debt obligation at the end of the five-year tenure, using funds generated entirely from its internal liquidity, showcased its financial strength and sound management practices.

In a congratulatory message issued yesterday on behalf of Air Peace's board, management and staff of the airline, Onyema attributed the achievement largely to the strategic leadership of Fidelity Bank's Managing Director, Dr Nneka Onyeali-Ikpe.

According to him, Onyeali-Ikpe had continued to strengthen the bank's financial standing and reputation within Nigeria's banking industry through strategic decisions and prudent financial management.

Onyema also applauded Fidelity Bank for completing its recapitalisation exercise ahead of the Central Bank of Nigeria's (CBN) stipulated deadline, describing the development, alongside the Eurobond repayment, as evidence of sound corporate governance and sustainable financial management.

He noted that the bank's achievement was particularly huge given the importance of strong financial institutions to the growth and sustainability of critical sectors of the Nigerian economy.

According to him, the banking and aviation industries shared a strategic relationship, saying that aviation required substantial capital investment to support fleet expansion, operational sustainability, infrastructure development and long-term growth.

Andela, OpenAI, Miva rally 200 engineers to build AI learning tools

ANDELA, the enterprise AI adoption and delivery partner helping organizations realize measurable value from AI, partnered with OpenAI and Miva Open University to bring together 200 developers and engineers for Codex in Action: Engineering the Future of Learning with AI, powered by OpenAI Academy.

Held in Lagos on the sidelines of TechCabal's Moonshot 2026, the event showcased AI-powered solutions designed to address real challenges in education and lifelong learning. The initiative brought together 100 Miva developers and 100 senior Andela engineers, connecting applied learning with hands-on engineering to move from AI proficiency to practical problem-solving.

The showcase concluded a three-week agentic development journey. Selected from more than 1,000 applicants, 100 Miva developers trained in OpenAI Codex before collaborating with senior Andela engineers to build solutions addressing specific learning needs.

The broader Codex learning initiative also demonstrated measurable progress in agentic engineering proficiency. Following two weeks of applied learning, 200 senior developers improved their assessed proficiency by 36 percentage points over their baseline.

The projects presented in Lagos demonstrated what becomes possible when developers move beyond learning AI tools to applying them to real challenges.

Taking first place was "Coteacher," a working prototype developed by Miva student Esih Egwurube, putting his OpenAI Codex learning into practice. The platform gives students a second chance at classroom lessons by turning a single teacher recording into personalised versions based on each learner's needs and learning history.



It is possible to occupy a prestigious office without leading effectively, to run a profitable organisation without building an enduring institution, and to receive recognition without creating meaningful value.

Leadership is measured not by the visibility of the leader, but by the quality of the outcomes produced under that leadership.We may have become better at celebrating leadership than evaluating it.

We celebrate leadership, but what evidence do we have of performance?

THE REPUTATION-PERFORMANCE GAP

REPUTATION is built through visibility, networks, communication and status. However, Performance demands something harder; evidence.

A chief executive may be celebrated for growing revenue, but what happened to profitability, productivity, employee capability, customer confidence and long-term competitiveness?

A public official may be praised for announcing ambitious programmes, but have citizens' lives improved?

A founder may be admired for building a recognisable brand, but can the organisation succeed beyond the founder's personal influence?

These distinctions determine whether we are evaluating leadership or simply admiring its appearance.

Confusing reputation with performance makes recognition self-reinforcing.

Leaders are celebrated because they are prominent, and their prominence becomes further evidence of their effectiveness, while harder questions about institutional outcomes go unanswered.

In an economy where organisations must become more productive, competitive and resilient, Nigeria needs leaders who translate ambition into results, not merely communicate it convincingly.

WHAT SHOULD WE ACTUALLY MEASURE?

Credible assessment must look beyond isolated achievements to the institutional conditions that make performance possible.

First, strategic coherence. Are priorities clear, and do investments and decisions support a consistent direction? An organisation can be busy, ambitious and well-funded yet strategically misaligned.

Second, execution discipline. Strategies matter only when translated into decisions, responsibilities, timelines and measurable outcomes.

Third, ownership and accountability. Targets without ownership are aspirations; responsibilities without consequences are administrative arrangements. Effective leaders ensure people know what is expected and are held accountable for delivery.

Fourth, leadership capability and readiness. An organisation's future cannot depend entirely on its current chief executive. It must develop managers and prepare successors.

Fifth, governance and integrity. Results achieved through weak controls, questionable decisions or poor treatment of stakeholders are not complete success.

Finally, enduring performance. Can the organisation sustain results through economic shocks, leadership transitions and technological disruption?

No single financial indicator, celebrated project or public reputation can capture these dimensions.

THE INSTITUTION MUST BE THE UNIT OF ANALYSIS

Leadership conversations too often attribute institutional success or failure to the person at the top. When an organisation performs well, the chief executive receives the applause; when it performs poorly, the blame falls on market conditions, inherited problems or subordinates.

However, institutions are systems, reflecting the interaction of strategy, people, processes, governance, culture, technology and resources. A leader should be judged not only by personal accomplishments but by the institution's increased capacity to perform.

Is the organisation less dependent on individual intervention? Are its processes more reliable, its management team stronger, its decisions better informed? Are customers receiving greater value? Is it more resilient?

These questions shift the conversation from heroic leadership to institutional leadership. They also demand more disciplined recognition. An award is not a substitute for assessment. A title is not proof. An impressive corporate profile is not evidence of enduring effectiveness.

RECOGNITION MUST HAVE A STANDARD

Recognition celebrates achievement, reinforces desirable behaviour and provides examples to emulate. But it is meaningful only when its standards are credible. Without clear standards, popularity, influence, sponsorship and relationships overshadow evidence, diminishing the value of recognition to the very people it honours.

The question is not whether we should celebrate leaders; of course we should.

The question is whether our celebrations are rigorous enough to distinguish demonstrated performance from perceived success.

This is one motivation behind the Performance Leadership Index (PLI), which provides a structured basis for examining institutional leadership across ten dimensions i.e.strategic coherence, execution discipline, accountability, leadership capability, succession, governance, organisational alignment, innovation, stakeholder confidence and enduring performance.

It requires evidence, not assertions; consistent standards, not subjective impressions; and an appreciation that institutional performance is multidimensional.

A DIFFERENT QUESTION FOR LEADERS

The implications extend beyond award organisers. Boards should reconsider how they evaluate chief executives. Investors should look beyond headline results. Employees should ask whether their organisations enable meaningful contribution. Citizens should demand measurable outcomes from public leaders.

Leaders themselves must become comfortable being evaluated against evidence. Accountability is not the enemy of leadership credibility; it is one of its foundations.

Not every outcome can be attributed to a leader. Economic conditions, regulation, competition and external shocks matter, so credible evaluation must weigh context, resources, time horizon and attribution.

Visit www.tppafrica.com for the full article

Dr. Abiola Salami is a World-Class Performance Strategist, leadership authority and founder of CHAMP Global Leadership Consulting. He is the originator of Performance Leadership™ and the driving force behind No More Shrinking®, platforms dedicated to advancing leadership excellence, human potential and transformative impact. Through his work, he equips leaders and organisations to bridge the gap between investment, capability, execution and measurable outcomes, building the leadership capacity required to achieve extraordinary and sustainable performance. Reach him on hello@abiolachamp.com

Labour & Appointments

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Rising informal employment deepens domestic workers' struggles

Millions of people across the world rely on domestic work to survive, yet most remain trapped in informal arrangements that expose them to low pay, excessive hours, and little or no social protection. Fifteen years after a landmark international convention promised change, fresh ILO estimates reveal just how far the journey to decent work still is, writes ***COLLINS OLAYINKA.***



A prototype of domestic workers.

FOR many domestic workers, the day begins before sunrise, cleaning homes, preparing meals, caring for children, and managing countless household tasks. Yet when the workday ends, the worry does not. The wages earned must stretch to feed families, cover school fees, pay transport costs, and support relatives. Still, paid employment offers no guarantee of stability: income remains uncertain, hours are often excessive, and protection against illness, injury, or sudden job loss is largely absent.

This precarious reality underscores the wider challenges of informal employment, where millions of workers operate outside formal contracts and legal protections. For domestic workers, the absence of enforceable standards means vulnerability is woven into their daily lives, whether through unpredictable pay, lack of benefits, or exposure to exploitation.

The International Labour Organisation has repeatedly warned that without stronger policies and enforcement, these workers will remain invisible in labour statistics and excluded from the promise of decent work.

Their services remain essential to households, particularly those in which adults must balance paid employment with childcare, eldercare and other domestic responsibilities. But the workers themselves often have limited bargaining power and few reliable safeguards against unfavourable working conditions.

This contradiction has become a central issue in the global debate about decent work, following new estimates by the ILO showing that more than four in five domestic workers worldwide remain informally employed.

The figures raised important questions for Nigeria, where policymakers face the broader challenge of expanding access to productive employment while improving the quality of jobs available to millions of workers.

The ILO's statistical brief, 'The State of Domestic Work in 2025: 15 Years After Convention No. 189', estimated that 80 million people aged 15 and above are employed as domestic workers worldwide, up from 75.6 million in 2019.

Of this number, 66.5 million, representing 83.1 per cent, remain in informal employment, often without effective labour and social protection.

The figures exposed a fundamental weakness in the labour market: employment does not necessarily translate into decent working conditions.

Domestic workers perform a wide range of services, including cleaning, cooking, childcare and care for older persons and people with disabilities. Their work helps households function and enables other family members to participate in paid employment.

Yet, despite this contribution, domestic employment frequently falls outside the arrangements through which workers in more formal sectors access social security, enforce employment agreements and seek redress for workplace grievances.

The problem is particularly significant because domestic work takes place in private households, where employment relationships can be difficult to monitor and regulate.

When employers and workers operate without clear written agreements, disputes over wages, working hours, duties, and termination of employment can be difficult to resolve.

The absence of formal arrangements can also make it harder for workers to establish their employment history or demonstrate eligibility for benefits linked to their work.

These challenges are not unique to Nigeria. The ILO's findings showed that informality remains a global problem, although its prevalence varies considerably across regions and countries.

Between 2019 and 2025, informality declined or remained stable in 91 of the 140 countries with comparable data. These countries account for nearly 70 per cent of domestic workers worldwide.

However, informality increased in the remaining 49 countries, which represented about 30 per cent of the global domestic workforce.

The global picture therefore combines progress in some countries with persistent or worsening difficulties elsewhere.

For Nigeria, the findings provided a useful framework for examining the relationship between domestic employment, informality and the protection of vulnerable workers.

The ILO estimates presented in the report do not establish Nigeria's specific domestic-workforce size or informality rate. Nevertheless, labour authorities, trade unions, and social protection institutions should pay closer attention to the wider challenge of extending labour protection to workers outside conventional formal employment.

The central question is whether domestic workers can obtain the practical benefits of labour rights when their employment arrangements are informal, their workplaces are private residences, and their bargaining power may be limited.

This is not a one-way reality, as this has implications for workers and employers alike.

For workers, formal employment arrangements can provide greater clarity about wages, responsibilities, working hours, rest periods and the conditions under which employment may be terminated.

For employers, clear agreements can prevent misunderstandings, set reasonable expectations, and provide a basis for resolving disputes.

For government, better formalisation can improve the visibility of domestic employment and create opportunities to extend social protection to workers who might otherwise remain outside established systems.

However, formalisation must be designed to work in practice. Registration procedures that are expensive, complicated or difficult for individual households to navigate may discourage compliance rather than encourage it.

An effective approach would require accessible information, practical registration mechanisms, appropriate enforcement, and social protection arrangements that recognise domestic workers' circumstances.

It would also require greater awareness among employers and workers of their respective rights and responsibilities.

The objective should not simply be to classify domestic work as employment, but to ensure that the people performing it can enjoy meaningful protection.

The vulnerability of domestic workers is also reflected in their earnings. According to the ILO, domestic workers worldwide earn an average of 53.3 per cent of other employees' monthly wages. For domestic workers in informal employment, the figure falls to 48.7 per cent.

The overall wage ratio has declined from 56.4 per cent in 2019, indicating that domestic workers' earnings have fallen further behind those of other employees.

The ILO cautions, however, that the widening gap does not necessarily mean domestic workers' wages have declined in absolute terms. In many countries, their earnings increased but at a slower pace than those of other employees. Changes in the geographical distribution of domestic work also influenced the global results.

Even with this qualification, the disparity highlights how little many labour markets value domestic work.

In Nigeria, where households and workers face competing demands on limited incomes, the relationship between wages and the cost of living is an important area for further investigation.

A domestic worker's earnings must often cover transport, food, housing and family responsibilities. The adequacy of those earnings depends not only on the amount received but also on the number of hours worked, the regularity of payment and the worker's access to other forms of support.

This makes it important to distinguish between having a job and having a job capable of providing a reasonably secure livelihood.

In Nigeria, where wages are low and employment is unstable, workers must take on additional informal work to meet basic needs.

The ILO's findings illustrate both sides of this problem. Some domestic workers work excessive hours, while others face very short working hours that may reflect underemployment or irregular work across several households.

As a result, the workforce faces different forms of insecurity, whether through excessive workloads or insufficient opportunities to earn.

The challenges facing domestic workers also have a significant gender dimension.

Women account for 77.2 per cent of the global domestic workforce and are disproportionately concentrated in cleaning and direct-care occupations.

The ILO estimated that female domestic workers earn an average of 48 per cent of the monthly wages of other employees, compared with 65.8 per cent for male domestic workers.

Households depend on domestic workers to provide services that support paid employment and family life. Yet the people performing these services may have limited access to the protections that help make employment sustainable.

Improving their conditions is therefore not simply a matter of raising wages in one occupational category. It is also part of the wider effort to improve women's economic opportunities and ensure that care systems do not depend on the vulnerability of the workers who sustain them.

Adopting the ILO Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189), marked an important international effort to recognise domestic workers' rights and promote decent working conditions.

However, 15 years later, the latest estimates show that formalisation remains incomplete.

The ILO calls for stronger implementation of Convention No. 189 and Recommendation No. 201, including targeted formalisation strategies, accessible registration and social protection systems, effective minimum wages and progress towards living wages.

For Nigeria, these recommendations point to the need to ensure accessible complaint mechanisms, the practical reach of labour inspection, and the availability of appropriate social protection arrangements.

ITUC-Africa warns care burden is excluding women from jobs

From Collins Olayinka, Abuja

THE African Regional Organisation of the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC-Africa) has warned that the disproportionate burden of unpaid care work on women and girls is restricting their access to employment, education and vocational training across the continent.

In a statement marking the 2026 International Day of Care and Support, celebrated under the theme: 'Building Sustainable Care and Support Systems Through Decent Work,' the General Secretary of the labour body, Joel Odigie, said more than one-third of African women outside the labour force were excluded from employment because of care responsibilities, compared with fewer than one in 20 men.

ITUC-Africa also disclosed that women in Africa spend more than three times as many hours as men on unpaid care work, a disparity, it said, reinforced gender inequality and limited women's economic opportunities.

The organisation said the persistent undervaluation of paid and unpaid care work, despite its contribution to economic productivity and social wellbeing, reflected governments' failure to adequately prioritise care services in public policies and national budgets.

It warned that young women were particularly disadvantaged, noting that in rural West Africa, they spend four times as many hours on unpaid care work as young men.

According to the organisation, the burden limits young women's ability to pursue education, acquire vocational skills, secure decent employment and participate in trade union activities.

The statement also drew attention to the poor working conditions of domestic workers, community health workers, early childhood educators, nurses and home-based carers, many of whom are women and migrant workers.

It said many care workers remained trapped in informal employment, earning poverty wages and working without social protection, while facing violence and harassment.

It lamented that poor working conditions for care workers lead to poor-quality care for everyone, while stressing the need to improve employment standards across the care economy.

PENGASSAN urges labour unity, warns AI could displace workers

From **Collins Olayinka**, Abuja

THE Petroleum and Natural Gas Senior Staff Association of Nigeria (PENGASSAN) has urged organised labour to close ranks in its engagement with the Federal Government on minimum wage and workers' welfare, warning against attempts to exploit differences between the Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC) and the Trade Union Congress (TUC).

The President of PENGASSAN, Bosun Olabiyi-Agoro, said this while speaking at the Labour conference organised by the Labour Correspondents Association of Nigeria (LACAN) in Abuja, and also called on workers to prepare for workplace disruptions arising from Artificial Intelligence (AI).

He argued that technological changes could make some existing jobs redundant and require workers to acquire new skills to remain employable.

PENGASSAN President said workers could no longer depend solely on collective training programmes by employers or unions to prepare for changes in the world of work.

He said several companies had invited him to discuss the future of work and the implications of AI for their employees barely two months after he assumed office.

According to him, some employers were already questioning the need to retain workers for tasks Artificial Intelligence could perform.

He urged workers to take personal responsibility for continuous learning, retraining and skills development to remain relevant in an increasingly technology-driven economy.

"Things are changing. And as workers, we must begin to adapt ourselves. We must begin to train and retrain ourselves to be suitable, because it is going to be survival of the fittest as we go along this journey," he said.

On the minimum wage controversy, the PENGASSAN president maintained that the NLC and TUC needed to harmonise their positions before engaging the government, warning that attempts to divide the two labour centres could undermine workers' collective bargaining strength.

He said the government should not assume that an agreement reached with one labour centre would automatically bind the other.

He likened the relationship between the two unions to a polygamous marriage, saying the government must treat both fairly rather than encourage divisions.

The labour leader, however, said the disagreement between the NLC and TUC was largely about the strategy for securing improved remuneration rather than whether Nigerian workers deserved better wages.

He recalled that the 2023 wage award failed to benefit many workers, particularly in several states where it was not implemented.

He noted that even at the federal level, the implementation did not fully reflect the agreement reached with organised labour.

He explained that the TUC's position on the current wage negotiations was shaped by the need to avoid repeating the previous arrangement's shortcomings by ensuring any new relief was incorporated into workers' salaries.

He said the 2023 wage award failed many workers, making it necessary for organised labour to pursue a more sustainable arrangement.

He questioned whether workers who did not benefit from the previous wage award could be expected to celebrate another minimum wage agreement without addressing the earlier arrangement's shortcomings.

Africa's CIOs unite in Lagos to shape digital future

By **Tunde Bodunrin**

THE convener of CIO & C-Suite Projects Africa, Abiola Laseinde, has said that 13 African countries were represented at this year's conference held in Lagos, with Nigeria as the host.

Laseinde, who made this known in her opening address, said the initiative began in 2020 and has transformed into a continental platform for recognising technology leaders whose contributions to business and economic development often receive limited attention.

This year's conference, held under the theme: 'Leading the Next Africa,' attracted about 160 nominations from 14 African countries.

Acknowledging the contributions of sponsors and partners since the event's inception in 2020, Laseinde thanked the jurors, sponsors, technical partners and volunteers for sustaining the initiative.

Speaking on the award selection process, a partner at Deloitte, Olawal Noiki, said it involved multiple stages of assessment, including reviews of business cases, evidence of impact and the value delivered by nominees to their organisations and the wider economy.

He said submissions were evaluated by experts and two panels of jurors before finalists and eventual winners were selected.

He added that the assessment considered the business challenges addressed by each initiative, its beneficiaries and the results achieved.

Startups seek AI, agriculture, circular economy solutions

By **Victoria Nwachukwu**

NIGERIAN startups have called for increased investment in technology, infrastructure, and sustainable business models to address food insecurity, reduce construction-related emissions, and improve resource management nationwide

The entrepreneurs made the call during the innovation pitch competition at the 10th anniversary of the Sustainability Table Discourse Series (STS@10), held in Lagos.

The event explored opportunities for financing innovative businesses addressing environmental and economic challenges.

Among the startups competing were QiQi Farms, an agricultural technology and food distribution enterprise, and CutStruct Technology, a construction technology company providing digital building material procurement and financing solutions.

The competition was part of a broader initiative to connect sustainable businesses with potential investors and accelerate the commercialisation of solutions that can contribute to Nigeria's progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Speaking at the event, QiQi Farms founder, Favour Okikijesu Adeleke, said Nigeria cannot effectively address its food security challenges without developing sustainable agricultural systems that support consistent production year-round.

Adeleke explained that seasonal farming, inadequate infrastructure, insecurity, and inconsistent government policies continue to limit agricultural productivity and local producers' ability to meet domestic demand.

"Food security is the basis of security," he said. "We need to create a model that ensures that food production is sustainable."

He said Nigeria must move away from agricultural systems that depend heavily on seasonal production toward commercially viable models that guarantee continuous food availability.

On the role of technology, Adeleke said artificial intelligence could help farmers improve productivity by providing information on market demand, harvest projections and potential production challenges.

In another development, CutStruct Technology CEO and co-founder John Oamen said digital procurement platforms could significantly reduce the environmental impact of Nigeria's construction industry while improving transparency in project financing.

'How insecurity cripples job creation, pushes women deeper into poverty'

From **Collins Olayinka**, Abuja

THE Director-General of the Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution (IPCR), Dr Joseph Ochogwu, has said Nigeria's worsening insecurity is undermining job creation, disrupting businesses and pushing women in conflict-affected communities deeper into poverty.

He explained that attacks on farms, markets and rural settlements destroy livelihoods and discourage economic investment.

He added that from farmers abandoning their fields to traders shutting down their businesses and displaced families struggling to survive, the economic consequences of insurgency, banditry, kidnapping and communal violence are threatening efforts to expand employment and reduce poverty.

Speaking at a conference on peace and conflict resolution organised by the Rosa Luxemburg Foundation-West Africa in Abuja, Ochogwu noted that women, particularly those who depend on agriculture, food processing and petty trading, are among the hardest hit, losing income while shouldering increased responsibilities for feeding their families and caring for dependants.

The IPCR boss identified poverty, unemployment, economic inequality, weak public institutions and unresolved communal grievances as structural factors that can intensify insecurity when combined with exclusion and impunity.

Ochogwu argued that Nigeria's security challenges could not be resolved through military operations alone, insisting that sustainable peace required addressing the underlying conditions that perpetuate violence.

The impact on employment is particularly evident in agriculture, where attacks and threats force farmers to abandon their land or restrict cultivation to safer areas. Reduced production affects not only farmers but also agricultural labourers, food processors, transport operators, and traders whose livelihoods depend on moving produce.

NSITF seeks stronger enforcement of workers' compensation law

From **Collins Olayinka**, Abuja

THE Nigeria Social Insurance Trust Fund (NSITF) has warned that legal protections do not guarantee justice for workers unless they are properly compensated under the law.

It therefore called for stronger judicial interpretation, adjudication, and enforcement of the Employees' Compensation Act (ECA) 2010.

The Managing Director and Chief Executive of NSITF, Oluwaseun Faleye, said workers must experience the protection the law promises, particularly when workplace accidents, occupational diseases, disability, or death expose them and their families to financial hardship.

Faleye said this at the opening of the Fund's 2026 Legal Stakeholders' Engagement in Abuja, themed: 'Enhancing Judicial Interpretation, Adjudication and Enforcement under the Employees' Compensation Act (ECA), 2010.'

He said the effectiveness of the compensation scheme depends not only on the law's provisions but also on how courts interpret them, resolve disputes, and ensure compliance with lawful judgments and orders.

According to him, weaknesses at any of these stages could undermine workers' confidence in the scheme and weaken employers' understanding of their legal obligations.

"Does the law provide a framework for protection? Yes. Does the Employees' Compensation Act establish a system for compensation for work-related injury, disease, disability or death? Yes. But the existence of a law does not by itself guarantee that its promise will be fulfilled," Faleye said.

He explained that workplace accidents often carried consequences beyond physical injuries, exposing workers and their families to emotional distress, loss of income and other social and economic difficulties.

The NSITF chief executive said the National Industrial Court of Nigeria played a critical role in determining the Act's practical impact, noting that judicial decisions clarified workers' rights, guided employers' conduct, and set precedents for resolving subsequent disputes.

He added that workers needed confidence that legitimate compensation claims would be addressed, while employers required a predictable legal environment in which their obligations could be determined fairly.

Faleye reaffirmed the Fund's commitment to improving claims processing, strengthening administrative procedures, raising awareness and encouraging employers to comply with the Act.

However, he stressed that the NSITF could not achieve these objectives without effective collaboration with the judiciary, employers, organised labour and other stakeholders.

He urged participants to use the engagement to identify legal uncertainties, reduce avoidable disputes, improve cooperation, and develop practical recommendations to strengthen the scheme's administration.

In his goodwill message, the Minister of Labour and Employment, Muhammadu Maigari Dingyadi, said public confidence in the justice system depended on the fair and impartial application of the law and the integrity of institutions responsible for its administration.

According to the minister, public institutions must demonstrate credibility through the quality and integrity of their actions, not official pronouncements alone.

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AIICO INSURANCE

SUMMARY CONSOLIDATED AND SEPARATE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE PERIOD ENDED 30 SEPTEMBER 2026

UNAUDITED CONSOLIDATED & SEPARATE STATEMENTS OF FINANCIAL POSITION AS AT 30 SEPTEMBER 2026

	Group		Parent	
In thousands of naira	30-Sep-26	31-Dec-25	30-Sep-26	31-Dec-25
Assets				
Cash and cash equivalents	54,202,078	74,377,507	40,861,340	37,320,190
Financial assets:				
- Debt instruments at amortised cost	214,774,548	157,888,181	99,786,313	99,059,748
- Fair value through other comprehesive income	35,531,969	30,423,691	23,353,079	25,639,423
- Fair value through profit or loss	319,694,047	259,987,583	319,694,047	259,987,583
Loans and advances	4,154,924	1,343,111	-	-
Trade receivables	7,626,926	1,472,627	7,299,235	961,793
Reinsurance contract assets	34,238,743	27,992,833	34,238,743	27,992,833
Other receivables and prepayments	10,266,685	6,052,606	6,366,535	4,089,529
Deferred tax assets	77,287	77,287	-	-
Investment in subsidiaries	-	-	1,087,317	1,087,317
Property and equipment	21,547,452	20,082,052	21,030,659	19,878,911
Statutory deposits	2,500,000	500,000	2,500,000	500,000
Right of use assets	67,656	92,275	44,701	60,794
Goodwill and other intangible assets	3,707,847	3,770,552	3,647,920	3,718,560
Total assets	**708,390,160**	**584,060,304**	**559,909,889**	**480,296,681**
Liabilities				
Insurance contract liabilities	412,086,390	345,119,985	411,447,777	344,575,297
Investment contract liabilities	6,614,714	5,623,326	6,614,714	5,623,326
Reinsurance contract liabilities	1,685,712	971,474	1,685,712	971,474
Other technical liabilities	1,832,928	7,264,752	1,832,928	7,264,752
Trade payables	2,664,653	1,978,167	2,664,653	1,978,167
Other payables and accruals	25,065,710	21,525,521	22,713,944	20,190,269
Fixed income liabilities	140,222,349	97,454,037	-	-
Current income tax payable	2,243,667	1,775,435	1,982,294	1,551,225
Deferred tax liabilities	2,647,344	3,681,978	2,647,344	3,681,978
Total liabilities	**595,063,467**	**485,394,676**	**451,589,365**	**385,836,489**
Equity				
Share capital	18,302,638	18,302,638	18,302,638	18,302,638
Share premium	64,745	64,745	64,745	64,745
Revaluation reserve	9,840,942	9,840,942	9,840,942	9,840,942
Fair value reserve	6,355,210	5,154,733	6,377,708	5,268,125
Contingency reserve	21,377,274	18,170,209	21,377,274	18,170,209
Retained earnings	56,610,616	46,467,902	52,357,217	42,813,533
Shareholders' funds	**112,551,425**	**98,001,169**	**108,320,524**	**94,460,192**
Non-controlling interests	775,268	664,458	-	-
Total equity	**113,326,693**	**98,665,627**	**108,320,524**	**94,460,192**
Total liabilities and equity	**708,390,160**	**584,060,304**	**559,909,889**	**480,296,681**

These consolidated and separate financial statements were approved by the Board of Directors on 29th October 2026 and signed on its behalf by:

Mr. Olalekan Akinyanmi
Chairman
FRC/2014/PRO/00000007150

Mr. Babatunde Fajemirokun
Managing Director/Chief Executive Officer
FRC /2015/PRO/CIIN/010/00000019973

Mrs. Bisola Elias
Chief Financial Officer
FRC/2018/PRO/ICAN/001/00000018839

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Kindly visit: www.aiicoplc.com/index.php/about-us/investor-relations

UNAUDITED CONSOLIDATED & SEPARATE STATEMENTS OF PROFIT OR LOSS AND OTHER COMPREHENSIVE INCOME FOR THE PERIOD ENDED 30 SEPTEMBER 2026

	Group		Parent	
In thousands of naira	30-Sept-26	30-Sept-25	30-Sept-26	30-Sept-25
Insurance Revenue	114,568,963	99,848,005	112,918,712	98,295,551
Insurance Service Expense	(81,174,833)	(66,386,738)	(80,142,290)	(65,537,403)
Net Expenses from Reinsurance Contracts	(23,941,819)	(24,898,318)	(23,941,819)	(24,898,318)
Insurance service result	**9,452,311**	**8,562,949**	**8,834,604**	**7,859,829**
Investment income from effective interest	60,736,653	42,912,953	42,571,195	33,465,105
Other investment income	1,288,395	635,597	1,116,979	483,163
Net loss on investment contracts	(506,624)	(275,382)	(506,624)	(275,382)
Net realised (loss)/gain	(3,125,775)	729,124	(3,113,269)	338,891
Net fair value gain on assets at fair value	14,223,845	17,844,522	14,223,845	17,844,522
Net foreign exchange loss	(2,019,969)	(1,378,098)	(2,000,052)	(1,317,513)
Net impairment loss	(96,694)	-	(16)	-
Net investment income	**70,499,831**	**60,468,716**	**52,292,059**	**50,538,786**
Net Finance Expense from Insurance Contracts	(44,549,922)	(45,454,294)	(44,549,922)	(45,454,294)
Net Finance Income from Reinsurance Contracts	1,468,158	1,439,619	1,468,158	1,439,619
Net insurance finance result	**(43,081,764)**	**(44,014,674)**	**(43,081,764)**	**(44,014,674)**
Net insurance and investment result	**36,870,377**	**25,016,991**	**18,044,898**	**14,383,941**
Other Income	2,824,038	1,952,015	1,531,154	1,330,389
Other Expenses	(20,276,659)	(11,716,189)	(1,347,033)	(1,171,541)
Profit before income tax	**19,417,756**	**15,252,817**	**18,229,019**	**14,542,789**
Income tax expense	(2,141,571)	(1,500,573)	(1,980,164)	(1,454,279)
Profit for the period	**17,276,185**	**13,752,244**	**16,248,855**	**13,088,510**
Attributable to owners of the parent	17,157,788	13,669,711	16,248,855	13,088,510
Attributable to non-controlling interest holders	118,397	82,533	-	-
	17,276,185	**13,752,244**	**16,248,855**	**13,088,510**
Other comprehensive income, net of tax				
Items within OCI that may be reclassified to profit or loss in subsequent periods:				
Fair value gain on debt instruments	415,250	898,438	359,484	906,724
Realised loss on sale of debt instruments	-	21,933	-	-
Deferred tax credit on net fair value loss on debt instruments	91,481	-	91,481	-
Items within OCI that will not be reclassified to profit or loss in subsequent periods:				
Fair value gain on equity securities	327,629	366,138	609,991	393,595
Deferred tax credit on fair value loss on equity instruments	943,153	-	943,153	-
Total other comprehensive income	**1,777,513**	**1,286,509**	**2,004,109**	**1,300,319**
Total comprehensive income for the period	**19,053,698**	**15,038,753**	**18,252,964**	**14,388,829**
Attributable to owners of the parent	18,926,971	14,959,794	18,252,964	14,388,829
Attributable to non-controlling interests	126,728	78,959	-	-
	19,053,698	**15,038,753**	**18,252,964**	**14,388,829**
Basic and diluted earnings per share (kobo)	47	37		

UNAUDITED CONSOLIDATED & SEPARATE STATEMENTS OF CASH FLOWS FOR THE PERIOD ENDED 30 SEPTEMBER 2026

	Group		Parent	
In thousands of naira	30-Sep-26	30-Sep-25	30-Sep-26	30-Sep-25
Operating activities:				
Premiums received for insurance contracts	156,277,398	144,649,936	154,627,147	143,097,481
Reinsurance premium paid during the period	(39,360,564)	(39,633,049)	(39,360,564)	(39,633,049)
Acquisition cashflows received	5,026,731	4,562,426	5,026,731	4,562,426
Acquisition cashflows paid	(23,099,313)	(22,814,155)	(23,099,313)	(22,814,155)
Claims and other insurance service expenses paid	(84,439,103)	(66,296,822)	(83,406,560)	(65,447,487)
Claims and other benefits received	7,161,629	4,015,063	7,161,629	4,015,063
Cash flows on premium paid in advance and unallocated premium	1,566,658	742,800	1,566,658	742,800
Receipt from deposit administration	40,841	59,614	40,841	59,614
Receipt from other investment contract	273,905	308,293	273,905	308,293
Withdrawal from deposit administration	(2,554)	(2,193)	(2,554)	(2,193)
Withdrawal from other investment contract	(48,251)	(84,888)	(48,251)	(84,888)
Cash flows on non-attributable expenses	(1,296,560)	(465,914)	(198,831)	(374,283)
Other cashflow receipts/(payments)	(6,948,720)	(3,780,693)	(5,644,370)	(8,793,332)
Additions into fixed income liabilities	81,836,500	39,748,251	-	-
Liquidations/maturities from fixed income liabilities	(54,364,133)	(24,828,200)	-	-
Interest paid	(168,003)	(8,606,292)	-	-
Income tax paid	(1,658,376)	(623,398)	(1,534,132)	(571,799)
Net cash flows from operating activities	**40,798,083**	**26,950,780**	**15,402,336**	**15,064,491**
Investing activities:				
Interest income received	41,461,117	36,688,461	25,817,393	30,566,896
Interest income received on deposit administration	205,877	159,501	205,877	159,501
Dividend income received	1,288,395	635,597	1,116,979	483,163
Rental income	128,439	115,691	128,439	115,691
Purchase of property and equipment	(2,459,664)	(1,680,461)	(2,045,591)	(1,603,528)
Prepaid lease payments	100,603	89,291	89,003	89,291
Purchase of intangible asset	(250,636)	(1,309,816)	(219,820)	(1,295,705)
Proceeds from sale of property and equipment	48,383	46,127	47,260	46,127
Proceeds from sale of investment property	-	1,200,000	-	1,200,000
Loans and advances	(2,908,491)	-	-	-
Placement in Statutory Deposit	(2,000,000)	-	(2,000,000)	-
Purchase of financial assets at amortized cost	(220,300,615)	(104,112,525)	(22,064,719)	(22,435,176)
Purchase of financial assets at FVTOCI	(26,165,973)	(16,755,328)	(2,781,241)	(6,901,190)
Purchase of financial assets at FVTPL	(64,289,627)	(41,949,488)	(64,289,627)	(41,949,488)
Proceed on disposal/redemption of financial assets	200,834,255	36,398,843	40,782,726	35,949,041
Proceeds from maturities	19,154,886	59,853,317	19,154,886	2,173,566
Net cash flows used in investing activities	**(55,153,051)**	**(30,620,790)**	**(6,058,436)**	**(3,401,811)**
Financing activities:				
Dividend paid to equity holders	(4,392,633)	(2,562,370)	(4,392,633)	(2,562,370)
Net cash flows used in financing activities	**(4,392,633)**	**(2,562,370)**	**(4,392,633)**	**(2,562,370)**
Net increase in cash and cash equivalents	(18,747,600)	(6,232,380)	4,951,267	9,100,311
Cash and cash equivalents at 1 January	74,435,912	35,195,357	37,371,535	19,639,248
Net foreign exchange difference	(1,427,829)	(548,306)	(1,410,117)	(516,227)
Cash and cash equivalents as at 30 September	**54,260,483**	**28,414,671**	**40,912,685**	**28,223,332**

Nigerian Breweries Plc

RC: 613

UNAUDITED AND PROVISIONAL RESULTS FOR THE NINE MONTHS ENDED 30TH SEPTEMBER 2026*

The Board of Directors **("the Board")** of Nigerian Breweries Plc **("the Company")** hereby announces the following Unaudited and Provisional Results for nine months ended **30th September 2026**:

Income Statement	Group** 30/09/2026 ₦'million	Company 30/09/2026 ₦'million	Group** 30/09/2025 ₦'million	Company 30/09/2025 ₦'million	Group Change %	Company Change %
Revenue	**1,102,659**	**1,102,659**	**1,046,382**	**1,041,431**	5.4	5.9
Cost of Sales	(624,759)	(624,759)	(631,230)	(626,725)	1.0	0.3
Gross Profit	**477,900**	**477,900**	**415,152**	**414,707**	15.1	15.2
Marketing, Distribution & Admin. Expenses	(301,609)	(301,609)	(255,523)	(254,196)	(18.0)	(18.7)
Other Income	2,891	2,891	3,500	3,500	(17.4)	(17.4)
Results from Operating Activities	**179,181**	**179,181**	**163,129**	**164,010**	9.8	9.3
Net Finance Expense	(7,500)	(7,500)	(33,656)	(37,195)	77.7	79.8
Profit Before Tax	**171,682**	**171,682**	**129,473**	**126,815**	32.6	35.4
Income Tax	(57,583)	(57,583)	(43,965)	(42,918)	(31.0)	(34.2)
Profit After Tax	**114,099**	**114,099**	**85,507**	**83,897**	33.4	36.0
Profit for the period attributable to:						
Equity Owners	**114,099**	**114,099**	**85,507**	**83,897**	33.4	36.0
Profit/(loss) for the Period	**114,099**	**114,099**	**85,507**	**83,897**	33.4	36.0
Basic Earnings Per Share (kobo)	368	368	275	271	33.8	35.8
Fully Diluted Earning P/Share (kobo)	368	368	275	271	33.8	35.8

***The detailed Financial Statements for the period are available on the company's website, www.nbplc/investor-relations.**

***Group results include the figures of 234 Stores Limited, a subsidiary of the Company.*

Comments:

While the macroeconomic climate witnessed some level of stability, consumer disposable income remained constrained. Nevertheless, the Company recorded a strong performance in the first nine months of the year.

Group revenue in the period rose by 5% despite a decline in volume and net revenue in the stand alone third quarter of July to September. The Company increased its market share on the back of strong performances in the premium segment led by Heineken® and Desperados. Gross profit rose by 15%, with gross margin expanding by four percentage points, and results from operating activities increasing by 10%. A one-off impact from the increase in the deposit value for returnable packaging materials moderated the growth in operating profit. The increase in profit before tax was supported by a 78% reduction in net finance expenses, which equally translated to the 33% growth in profit after tax in the nine-month period. The Company returned to net profit in the stand alone third quarter after a consecutive third quarter losses since 2022. Net profit in the quarter was ₦21 billion compared to a net loss of ₦4 billion in 2025.

The Company strengthened its financial position through robust cash generation and improved working-capital management. The Company strengthened its net cash position at the end of the period, providing a stronger foundation to fund business priorities and support sustainable growth.

The outlook for the full-year 2026 performance remains positive.

Dated the 28th day of October 2026

By Order of the Board

Uaboi G. AGBEBAKU, *Esq.*
Company Secretary
FRC/2013/NBA/00000001003

Iganmu House, Abebe Village Road
Iganmu, Lagos, Nigeria

Winning with Nigeria

Specific Procurement Notice

Request for Bids
Goods

(One-Envelope Bidding Process Without Pre-qualification)

Employer: Gombe State **Ministry of Livestock Development**

Project: Livestock Productivity and Resilience Support Project (L-PRES)

Contract title: Procurement of Ultra-Modern Abattoir Equipment

Country: Nigeria

Credit No. IDA-70570

RFB No.: NG-GOMBE L-PRES-520898-GO-RFB

1. The Federal Government of Nigeria (FGN) has received financing from the World Bank toward the cost of the Livestock Productivity and Resilience Support Project (L-PRES) Gombe State Coordination Office (SCO) and intends to apply part of the proceeds toward payments under the contract for procurement of ultra-modern abattoir equipment.

2. The Gombe L-PRES now invites sealed Bids from eligible Bidders for the procurement of ultra-modern abattoir equipment at Gombe Agro-Livestock development zone with a completion period of 6months

3. Bidding will be conducted through national competitive procurement using Request for Bids (RFB) as specified in the World Bank's Procurement Regulations for IPF Borrowers- Procurement in Investment Projects Financing, 2020 Procurement Regulations, and is open to all eligible Bidders as defined in the Procurement Regulations.

4. Interested eligible Bidders may obtain further information from Professor UB. Abubakar, State Project Coordinator, Livestock Productivity and Resilience Support Project (L-PRES), and inspect the Bidding document during office hours 0900-1600 at the address given below.

5. The Bidding document in English may be purchased by interested eligible Bidders upon the submission of a written application to the address below and upon payment of a nonrefundable fee of **One Hundred and Fifty Thousand Naira (NGN150,000.00)** only. The method of payment will be by bank draft or direct transfer in favour of the following account: **1012685184 Keystone Bank, Account Name: Gombe State L-PRES**. Proof of payment be presented at the address below. At the bidder's request, the documents could also be sent by courier after paying an additional fee to cover the delivery cost.

6. Bids must be delivered to the address below on or before 12 noon on 15th December, 2026. Electronic bidding **will not** be permitted. Late Bids will be rejected. Bids will be publicly opened in the presence of the Bidders' designated representatives and anyone who chooses to attend at the address below by 12 noon on the 15th December, 2026.

7. All Bids must be accompanied by a **"Bid Security"** of **NGN103,083,246.00**

8. Attention is drawn to the Procurement Regulations requiring the Borrower to disclose information on the successful bidder's beneficial ownership, as part of the Contract Award Notice, using the Beneficial Ownership Disclosure Form.

9. The address referred to above is:

State Coordination Office (L-PRES) Gombe

Attention: Professor UB. Abubakar,
State Project Coordinator
Livestock Productivity and resilience Support Project
Address: No.11 Talban Gombe Street, ADP Quarters Gombe, Gombe State Nigeria
Telephone: +234 803 533 6243, +234 802 407 2752
E-mail: gombe@lpresnigeria.gov.ng

ME CURE INDUSTRIES PLC

MECURE INDUSTRIES PLC
UNAUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE NINE MONTHS ENDED 30 SEPTEMBER 2026

The directors have pleasure in announcing the unaudited financial results for the nine months ended 30 September 2026, with comparative figures for the corresponding period in 2025.

	Q3 2026 Jul–Sep N'000	9M 2026 Jan–Sep N'000	Q3 2025 Jul–Sep N'000	9M 2025 Jan–Sep N'000
Revenue	25,392,860	70,237,937	22,746,684	60,008,738
Cost of sales	(16,633,976)	(46,109,855)	(14,957,912)	(39,599,895)
Gross profit	**8,758,884**	**24,128,082**	**7,788,772**	**20,408,844**
Other income/loss	204,632	441,138	39,207	141,853
Marketing expenses	(317,296)	(1,299,457)	(1,100,620)	(2,644,770)
Administrative expenses	(2,063,094)	(5,784,148)	(1,439,940)	(4,888,051)
Operating profit	**6,583,126**	**17,485,615**	**5,287,420**	**13,017,876**
Profit before interest and tax	**6,583,126**	**17,485,615**	**5,287,420**	**13,017,876**
Finance cost	(2,913,190)	(8,840,779)	(2,822,051)	(6,647,655)
Profit before taxation	**3,669,936**	**8,644,836**	**2,465,369**	**6,370,221**
Taxation	(1,100,981)	(2,593,451)	(739,611)	(1,911,066)
Profit for the period / total comprehensive income	**2,568,955**	**6,051,385**	**1,725,758**	**4,459,155**
Profit attributable to equity holders	**2,568,955**	**6,051,385**	**1,725,758**	**4,459,155**
Basic and diluted earnings per share (₦)	**0.64**	**1.51**	**0.43**	**1.11**

BY ORDER OF THE BOARD

Mrs. Dukor Anderline Ndidi
Chief Executive Officer
FRC/2024/PRO/DIR/003/664278

Ifedamola Oluwasegun
Chief Financial Officer
FRC/2024/PRO/ANAN/001/357258

Registered office: Debo Industrial Compound, Plot 6, Block H, Oshodi Apapa Expressway, Oshodi, Lagos, Nigeria.

Dated 28 October 2026

EMR MINING

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WE ARE HIRING

EMR Mining is a leading player in the mining and quarrying industry, committed to delivering high-quality materials, operational excellence and sustainable growth. We are currently seeking qualified and motivated professionals to join our team.

PRODUCTION ENGINEER – QUARRY OPERATIONS

Location: Ibadan, Oyo State
Reports to: Operations Manager / Quarry Manager

Job Summary:
We seek a competent and results-driven Production Engineer to oversee quarry crushing and processing operations, optimize plant performance, minimize downtime, ensure product quality, and achieve production targets in compliance with HSE standards.

Key Responsibilities:
- Supervise daily crushing, screening, and material handling operations.
- Monitor production output, plant efficiency, and equipment performance.
- Identify process improvements to reduce downtime, waste, and operational costs.
- Coordinate with mining, maintenance, and quality control teams.
- Ensure product quality, HSE compliance, and accurate production reporting.
- Supervise production personnel and support staff development.

Requirements:
- Bachelor's degree in Mechanical, Mining, Production Engineering, or a related discipline.
- 5–7 years' relevant experience in quarry operations, crushing plants, or mineral processing.
- Strong knowledge of production optimization, equipment performance, and HSE standards.
- Excellent leadership, analytical, problem-solving, and communication skills.

Application: Interested and qualified candidates should send their CVs to **recruitments@emrng.com**, using **Production Engineer – Quarry Operations** as the subject of the email.

Application Deadline: 17th November 2026

MINING ENGINEER

Location: Ibadan, Oyo State
Reports to: Lead Mining Engineer

Job Summary:
We seek a competent and results-driven Mining Engineer to plan, supervise, and optimize quarry operations, ensuring safe, efficient, and cost-effective extraction while meeting production targets and regulatory requirements.

Key Responsibilities:
- Supervise daily quarry operations, including drilling, blasting, excavation, loading, and haulage.
- Develop and implement mine production plans and schedules.
- Monitor production performance, equipment utilization, and material recovery.
- Ensure compliance with mining regulations, environmental requirements, and HSE standards.
- Coordinate equipment maintenance and supervise operational teams and contractors.
- Prepare accurate production, operational, and safety reports.

Requirements:
- Bachelor's degree in Mining Engineering or a related discipline.
- 3–5years' relevant experience in mining or quarry operations, with open-pit quarry experience required.
- Knowledge of drilling and blasting operations, mine planning, and HSE compliance.
- Proficiency in mining software and AutoCAD is an advantage.
- COREN certification or NSE membership is an added advantage.
- Strong leadership, analytical, planning, and problem-solving skills.

Application: Interested and qualified candidates should send their CVs to **recruitments@emrng.com**, using **Mining Engineer** as the subject of the email.

Application Deadline: 17th November 2026

ASSISTANT MAINTENANCE ENGINEER

Location: Ibadan, Oyo State
Department: Maintenance
Reports to: Lead Maintenance Engineer

Job Summary:
We seek a competent and proactive Assistant Maintenance Engineer to support the maintenance, reliability, and efficient operation of quarry equipment and machinery. The successful candidate will assist in preventive and corrective maintenance, minimize equipment downtime, ensure spare parts availability, and promote safe maintenance practices.

Key Responsibilities:
- Support preventive, predictive, and corrective maintenance of quarry equipment.
- Conduct routine equipment inspections, diagnose faults, and support breakdown repairs.
- Monitor equipment performance, availability, and downtime.
- Coordinate spare parts requirements and maintain accurate maintenance records.
- Support maintenance planning, scheduling, and technical supervision of maintenance personnel.
- Ensure compliance with company HSE policies and safe maintenance procedures.
- Identify recurring equipment faults and recommend improvements to enhance reliability and reduce costs.

Requirements:
- B.Sc./B.Eng. in Mechanical Engineering, Electrical Engineering, or a related discipline.
- Minimum of 3 years' post-NYSC relevant maintenance experience.
- Practical experience in equipment maintenance, fault diagnosis, and preventive maintenance.
- Experience in quarrying, mining, manufacturing, construction, or other equipment-intensive industries is an advantage.
- Knowledge of HSE principles and relevant regulations.
- Strong problem-solving, communication, and teamwork skills.

Application: Interested and qualified candidates should send their CVs to **recruitments@emrng.com**, using **Assistant Maintenance Engineer** as the subject of the email.

Application Deadline: 17th November 2026

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT OFFICER

Location: Ibadan, Oyo State
Reports to: Head of Business Development

Job Summary:
We seek a proactive and results-driven Business Development Officer to drive business growth, identify new opportunities, build strategic partnerships, and contribute to the company's expansion in the quarry and mining sector.

Key Responsibilities:
- Identify and pursue new business opportunities in the quarry and mining sector.
- Build and maintain strong relationships with clients and key stakeholders.
- Prepare and present proposals, tenders, and business reports.
- Support the development and implementation of business strategies.
- Monitor market trends and competitor activities.
- Collaborate with internal teams to ensure client satisfaction and project delivery.
- Maintain accurate records of sales and business activities.

Requirements:
- Bachelor's degree in Business Administration, Marketing, Geology, Engineering, or a related discipline.
- 3–5 years' relevant experience in business development, sales, or a similar role (mining/quarry industry is an added advantage).
- Strong communication, negotiation, and interpersonal skills.
- Proficiency in MS Office and CRM tools.
- Valid driver's license is an advantage.

Application: Interested and qualified candidates should send their CVs to **recruitments@emrng.com**, using **Business Development Officer** as the subject of the email.

Application Deadline: 17th November 2026

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NIGERIA EXPORT PROCESSING ZONES AUTHORITY

Inside Kano Free Trade Zone: How 87 Enterprises Are Rewriting the Export Story

By **Martins Odeh, Ph.D.**

ON the morning of Thursday, 12th August, 2026, long before the sun had burned off the haze over the savannah, the access road into the Kano Free Trade Zone was already a slow-moving column of trucks. Some were hauling containers into the customs territory, bound for the border post leading to the Maghreb region.

Others arrived with raw shea nuts, soya, cotton lint, cashews, and hides collected from farms and aggregation centers across the northern belt.

Inside the perimeter fence, the sounds are industrial and constant: the hiss of pneumatic presses in a garment plant, the rumble of a cashew de-shelling line, and the beeping of forklifts stacking pallets in a bonded warehouse. This landscape was largely scrubland decades ago.

Today, the zone is home to 87 operating enterprises, including wholly foreign-owned manufacturers, joint ventures, and indigenous firms. It has quietly become one of the country's most consequential pieces of economic infrastructure, thanks to President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's insistence on maximum funding for this Federal Government-owned industrial estate.

The Zone's Director, Mr. Solomon Topa, and his Assistant, Deputy Director Mr. Richard Bassey, who served as Head of the Zone and guided business reporters from the Commerce and Industry Correspondents Association (CICAN), were clear about the zone's operations and financial figures.

The figures indicated that enterprises operating within the zone accounted for an appreciable share of national non-traditional exports in the last fiscal year, with customs collections surpassing N36 billion by August 2026, up from N24 billion the previous year.

The zone's activity has created 3,000 to 5,000 direct jobs for local workers, with dozens of active enterprises focused on manufacturing, processing, and trading. This has undoubtedly boosted local small businesses through supply chains and technology transfer, facilitated by collaboration with expatriates.

"When you look at the movement in the national export index over the past years, a significant share of that momentum comes from these 87 companies."

``The composition of what leaves the gates matters as much as the volume. Where the country once shipped raw commodities, the zone's factories now assemble and export cars, electrical cables, specialized food for malnourished children, processed shea butter, refined vegetable oil, cashew kernels, ginned cotton and yams, leather goods, agrochemicals, pharmaceuticals, and light electronics assemblies, products that carry substantially higher unit value," Topa said.

Topa also said: ``The zone covers 262 hectares and hosts enterprises that consistently engage in meaningful export-oriented production."

According to him, the zone creates jobs through 87 operational enterprises and supports technology transfer and local manufacturing while attracting local and foreign investment.

"It is important to note that a total of 113 enterprises were granted licenses to operate in the zone, but at this time, 87 of them are operational while the remaining 46 are at various stages of development," he stated.

Topa again identified technology transfer as another major benefit of the free trade zone, particularly through expatriates transferring high-tech skills to local employees.

"These foreign companies come in here, establish their enterprises and factories, and employ Nigerians, who work with them and thereby gain knowledge. At the end of the day, skills and technology are being transferred," he said.

The Director also highlighted foreign direct investment as a major contribution of the zone, noting that investors bring capital into the country to establish and operate businesses, and that their contributions are sustaining the Northern economy much more.

He added that the Kano Free Trade Zone has also become a busy economic gateway to the Maghreb countries through exports, noting that products from the zone reach as far as Egypt, Algeria, Morocco, and Libya.



Dr. OLUFEMI OGUNYEMI
MANAGING DIRECTOR/CEO
NIGERIA EXPORT PROCESSING ZONES AUTHORITY (NEPZA)

Bassey, the Deputy Director of the Zone, said the revenue gains followed closer collaboration between the zone's management and the Nigeria Customs Service, with both agencies working to collect revenue without undermining incentives available to investors.

He explained that manufacturers importing raw materials into the zone operated under suspended duty arrangements, under which duties applied only when finished products entered Nigeria's domestic customs territory.

Bassey said the collaboration with Customs also introduced an inventory procedure to ensure manufacturers pay duty only on imported raw materials actually used in production.

``The inventory procedure allows you to pay duty for only the raw materials you have used and waste is excluded," Bassey said.

He explained that goods brought into the zone for warehousing and then released into Nigeria were subject to full duty, whereas goods exported to other countries were not taxed.

``It is important to note the strategic contribution of the zone to global efforts to combat child malnutrition across Nigeria and Africa through Nutri-K Limited, a manufacturer of ready-to-use therapeutic food for malnourished children. This has significantly increased the zone's export index," he said.

Relatedly, the tour included a detailed discussion with the Nigeria Customs Service (NCS) in the zone. The discussion revealed that the NCS generated 40 billion naira from the zone as of August 2026, reflecting a steady increase in collected duties.

The Deputy Comptroller of Customs for the zone, Mr. Isah Bala, said the revenue figure was monitored via a live dashboard that refreshed every 15 minutes and that the technology has eliminated human discretion.

Interestingly, the revenue figure rose from N39 billion to N40 billion on this fateful day, as journalists witnessed, thereby proving the reliability of the technology customs uses to track and collect duties in the zone.

"Congratulations. We have now seen the automated tax collection board increase to N40 billion."

"It was reading N39.6 billion when you came in. You could see it update as additional duties were collected. That was a display of rigid transparency and accountability," Bala said.

Bala noted that the customs operation within the free trade zone was guided by three major principles, namely trade facilitation, monitoring and compliance, and accountability.

He attributed the current improvement not only to customs-reform operations but also to the close working relationship between the service and the Nigeria Export Processing Zones Authority (NEPZA).

Aminu Mohammed, the Assistant Comptroller of the Nigeria Immigration Service in the zone, credited the zone's success to cooperation and collaboration among the key government agencies operating there.

He also linked ongoing reforms by the Nigerian Government, particularly the digitization of immigration services by the Ministry of Interior and the Nigeria Immigration Service, to the improved process.

``We are implementing a simplified process for expatriates employed by companies operating in the zone, allowing only qualified expatriates to obtain residence permits before entering the free trade zone. The measure is intended to facilitate investment and accelerate industrial development," Mohammed said.

This tour revealed a widening trade footprint, with the zone's enterprises currently exporting to about 12 countries across the African Continental Free Trade Area corridor, Europe, the Middle East, and Asia.

In conclusion, these achievements were made possible by the intervention of the administration of President Bola Tinubu, GCFR, which provided NEPZA with a new, workable policy direction to accelerate the free trade zone scheme's impact on the national economy. The Managing Director/CEO, Dr. Olufemi Ogunyemi, has executed this duty quite well over the past three years.

Dr. Martins Odeh is Head, Corporate Communications, NEPZA



FG plans law on fire rescue service, eyes December for academy completion

From **Tina Abeku,** Abuja

THE Federal Government has announced plans to enact the Federal Fire and Rescue Service Act to overhaul Nigeria's emergency architecture and transition the Federal Fire Service (FFS) from a fire-fighting unit into a comprehensive rescue service.

Minister of Interior, Dr Olubunmi Tunji-Ojo, disclosed this yesterday in Abuja during the 2026 National Fire Safety Week themed "Building a Fire-Resilient Nigeria: One Community at a Time."

He noted that the legislative reform was the first major overhaul of Nigeria's fire legislation in 63 years, lamenting that the extant 1963 Federal Fire Service Act is obsolete and incapable of meeting modern emergency demands.

He explained that the new legislation would legally empower the service to handle diverse crises beyond fire suppression. According to him, "the number one issue we had was the law, because there is no right way of doing what is legally wrong.

"If the law does not give you the power to do something, no matter how good that action is, once you do it, it becomes illegal."

Detailing the scope of the incoming agency, the minister said the renewed service would mirror international standards by embedding emergency medical services (EMS), hazardous materials (hazmat) response, urban search and rescue for natural disasters like floods, and rigorous building code enforcement through trained fire marshals.

He further stressed the need to integrate basic rescue training and safety education into school curricula nationwide, transforming public preparedness into a civic culture.

Meanwhile, to reinforce operational readiness, Tunji-Ojo set a December deadline to complete the national fire academy, insisting that robust infrastructure and private-sector collaboration were vital to safeguarding lives and property across Nigeria.

Earlier, the Controller-General of the FFS, Olumode Adeyemi, stressed that building a fire-resilient nation required a shared, community-driven approach, adding that the week-long celebration would feature intensive public enlightenment campaigns on fire safety.



Secretary to the Civil Defence, Correctional, Fire and Immigration Services Board (CDCFIB), Maj.-Gen. Abdulmalik Jibrin (rtd) (left); Minister of Interior, Dr Olubunmi Tunji-Ojo; Controller-General, Federal Fire Service, Samuel Olumode, and his wife, Olufunke, during the 2026 National Fire Safety Week in Abuja yesterday. PHOTO: NAN

NRC records 1.07m passenger journeys in three months

By **Benjamin Alade**

IN a development that reflected sustained demand for rail transportation, the Nigerian Railway Corporation (NRC) recorded 1,075,023 passenger journeys between July and September 2026, despite a significant decline in freight movement towards the end of the quarter.

Data from the corporation showed a steady increase in passenger traffic during the three months, rising from 345,942 journeys in July to 363,261 in August, and 365,820 in September.

Passenger traffic increased by approximately five per cent between July and August, followed by a marginal 0.7 per cent growth in September.

A breakdown of the figures showed that standard-gauge services accounted for 473,935 passenger journeys, while narrow-gauge operations recorded 601,088 during the period.

The Lagos–Ibadan Train Service led passenger movement among the standard-gauge routes at 357,410 journeys within the quarter, its monthly passenger figures standing at 106,494 in July, 133,652 in August and 117,264 in September.

Olawepo-Hashim extends campaign to North-West rural communities

• Accord Party seeks dismissal of suit on candidates' disqualification

By **Seye Olumide** (Lagos) and **Ameh Ochojila** (Abuja)

PRESIDENTIAL candidate of the Accord Party (AP), Gbenga Olawepo-Hashim, has extended his 2027 election campaign to rural and underserved communities in Kano, Kaduna, Katsina and Jigawa states, towards achieving the Hashim Progressive Movement's target of six million votes across the North-West.

The campaign, according to him, was moving beyond major towns and established political centres to reach rural populations often overlooked during conventional electioneering activities.

This comes as the movement hopes to engage residents who frequently experience limited government presence and inadequate access to public services.

Meanwhile, the Accord Party (AP) has urged the Federal High Court in Abuja to dismiss a suit seeking the disqualification of all its candidates for the 2027 general elections over its status.

CCDI lauds Taraba's education agenda, urges W'Bank support

By **Felix Kuye**

THE Centre for Convention on Democratic Integrity (CCDI) has commended Governor Agbu Kefas of Taraba State for his administration's investments in the education sector, saying it will aid the state's long-term prosperity and the competitiveness of its youth among their peers.

In a statement yesterday, CCDI President, Olufemi Aduwo, disclosed that the commendation followed the September visit of the body's assessment team monitoring the progress of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Aduwo, who is also the CCDI's Permanent Representative to the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), said the team took particular note of the effective implementation of free and compulsory primary and secondary education in the state, citing the payment of WAEC, NECO and NABTEB examination fees among the essential interventions.

Others, which it noted should serve as a wake-up call for other states across the country, included the reduction in tuition fees at Taraba State University and nursing schools, and the establishment of model schools where pupils are provided with uniforms, textbooks and footwear.

The monitoring team also noted the sponsorship of indigenes for postgraduate studies abroad, increased support for medical students, and bursaries for law students as expanding educational opportunities.

Urging sustainability and matching the improvement with higher teaching standards and measurable learning outcomes,

Aduwo, who was recently elected the Vice-President of the World Bank Civil Society Policy Forum (CSPF), said these initiatives constitute a significant milestone in Taraba's development since its creation in 1991.

He observed that Kefas' educational priorities aligned with the late Obafemi Awolowo's free universal primary education in the Western Region in 1955 as the premier, which "widened educational access, promoted social mobility and produced generations of educated Nigerians who subsequently made legendary contributions to national development."

Consequently, Aduwo called on the World Bank and United Nations agencies, particularly UNICEF and UNESCO, to deepen their engagement with Taraba State under SDG 4, which promotes inclusive and equitable quality education.

Among others, he cited the World Bank's $500 million Strengthening Teaching-Learning and Results for States (STARS) programme in India, which supports education reforms across six states, as demonstrating the value of such partnerships.

Wike mocks coalition critics, says APC, PDP leaders united

From **Azimazi Momoh Jimoh** (Abuja), **Isa Abdulsalami Ahovi** (Jos)

• Mutfwang rejects rainbow coalition as crisis rocks Nasarawa

MINISTER of the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Nyesom Wike, has criticised politicians opposing the Rainbow Coalition, saying those questioning the alliance lack the capacity to unite even their families and immediate communities.

He said the political initiative, which brings together stakeholders from the All Progressives Congress (APC) and the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), was driven by the need to promote unity, cooperation and development in the FCT, rather than narrow partisan interests.

This comes as controversy has erupted within the Nasarawa State chapter of the APC over the inclusion of the Zenith Labour Party (ZLP) candidate for the Lafia/Obi Federal Constituency, Kabiru Dallah, in the council.

It was alleged that Dallah's inclusion followed a secret political arrangement between the Nasarawa APC leadership and Wike's Rainbow Coalition, with some party members questioning his inclusion as a member of the campaign council's Youth Mobilisation Committee.

Though the APC State Secretary, Yarus Daguza, who signed the list, has denied any alliance with the Rainbow Coalition, saying that Dallah's name has since been removed, some aggrieved members have called on Governor Abdullahi Sule to constitute a fresh council that reflects the interests of all stakeholders.

In Plateau State, Governor Caleb Mutfwang and the APC State Chairman, Rufus Bature, have charged party leaders, stakeholders and members of the newly inaugurated Tinubu/Shettima and Mutfwang/Piyo 2027 Campaign Council to close ranks, intensify grassroots mobilisation and work towards securing victory for the party in the forthcoming general elections.

The two leaders spoke yesterday in Jos during the inauguration of the campaign council, which Mutfwang chairs, with the governor insisting that the state would sustain the political journey under the APC.

SPEAKING yesterday during the commissioning of the Gwagwalada Civic Centre and an interactive session with APC and PDP stakeholders in the Gwagwalada Area Council of Abuja, Wike commended political leaders in the area for putting aside their differences to work together.

Gambari to headline inaugural diplomacy forum

By **Isaac Chibuife**

FORMER United Nations Under-Secretary-General, Prof. Ibrahim Gambari, will deliver the keynote address at the inaugural Annual Diplomacy Day scheduled for November 20 in Abuja.

The event, organised by Media Diplomacy Studies (MDS), a think tank focused on media diplomacy and soft power, will be held under the theme, "Diplomacy in a Changing World: Building Trust, Partnerships and Influence for Nigeria and Africa."

The former Minister of External Affairs and Nigeria's Permanent Representative to the United Nations will speak on "Narrative Power and the Diplomacy of Influence: Nigeria, Africa and the Contest for Global Influence."

A former Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and President of the Association of Retired Career Ambassadors of Nigeria (ARCAN), Amb. Joe Keshi, will chair the event, while Nigeria's former Ambassador to Russia, Prof. Abdullahi Shehu, will review the book.

Group postpones maiden lecture, awards to May 2027

By **Opeyemi Babalola**

AFIA Media, a South-East-focused media organisation, has rescheduled the inaugural Afia Annual Lecture and Awards from November 26, 2026, to May 25, 2027, following a review of the event's planning and coordination process.

The organisation explained that the new date would allow more time for planning, stakeholder engagement and coordination to deliver an event befitting the vision and significance of the initiative.

Themed "Uwa Bu Ahia: Trading Ideas for Development," the inaugural edition was conceived as a platform for intellectual exchange, policy dialogue and strategic conversations on the opportunities, challenges and development priorities of Eastern Nigeria.

It is expected to attract policymakers, business leaders, academics, entrepreneurs, investors, cultural stakeholders and other influential voices for discussions on regional development, partnership opportunities and practical pathways to sustainable growth.

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The Offer comprised 4,053,000 units of ₦1,000 each, amounting to ₦4,053,000,000 (Four Billion, Fifty-Three Million Naira). A total of 29 Application Forms for 4,053,000 units, amounting to ₦4,053,000,000 (Four Billion, Fifty-Three Million Naira), were received in connection with the Offer.

No Application Forms were received above the clearing rate determined through the Book Building exercise. Accordingly, no Application Forms were rejected.

All 29 Application Forms, representing 4,053,000 units, were valid under the terms of the Offer and were allotted in full.

100% of the valid applications (4,053,000 units) were allotted.

The Offer was therefore 100.00% subscribed.
The Securities & Exchange Commission has cleared the basis of allotment as well as this announcement.

Range ('000)	No. of Applicants	Units Applied for ('000)	Cumulative Units ('000)	Value of Units Applied for (₦)	% Allotted	Units Allotted ('000)	Comment
0 -100,000	18	898.00	898.00	898,000,000	100%	898.00	Full
100,001-1,000,000	11	3,155.00	4,053.00	3,155,000,000	100%	3,155.00	Full
1,000,001 - 5,000,000	0	0.00	0	0	0%	0.00	-
>5,000,000	0	0.00	0	0	0%	0.00	-
Total	**29**	**4,053.00**		**4,053,000,000**		**4,053.00**	
Allotment						**4,053.00**	

The allotment of the Bonds will be effected by way of e-allotment and, consequently, the Registrar, CardinalStone Registrars Limited, will credit the Central Securities Clearing System ("CSCS") accounts of the successful allottees with the allotted Bonds in accordance with the timetable for the Offer.

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Bail Information System targets prison congestion in five states, FCT

By Yetunde Ayobami Ojo

To improve access to justice and reduce overcrowding in correctional facilities, a biometric-enabled Bail Information Management System (BIMS) is being piloted in five states of the federation and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Abuja.

The system, developed and deployed by Nigerian LegalTech company, Global T&T New Solutions Limited, connects to the National Identity Management System (NIMC) to help courts verify identities of sureties, track bail records and identify individuals who repeatedly stand surety for different defendants.

The initiative is being implemented with support from the Rule of Law and Anti-Corruption (RoLAC) Programme, implemented by International IDEA and funded by the European Union in partnership with participating state judiciaries.

The pilot stage covers Abia, Anambra, Delta and Edo States and FCT, with installations in Umuahia, Onitsha, Asaba and Benin City and Wuse, Abuja, respectively.

The Executive Director, Global T&T, Mr Musbau Famuyiwa, disclosed that the initiative came amid concerns over the number of suspects awaiting trial in correctional facilities, including those facing bailable offences but remain in detention due to difficulties associated with bail administration and verification of sureties.



Alogba, CJ Lagos



Famuyiwa

He explained that BIMS is expected to provide magistrates with reliable information to support decisions on bail applications, including the verification of personal details and the identification of individuals who may have previously stood surety for other defendants.

Famuyiwa explained that some professional sureties allegedly present false names, addresses and bank statements to facilitate the release of defendants on bail. "The system is expected to help courts identify such cases and assess the credibility of proposed sureties before deciding whether bail conditions have been satisfied. However, repeatedly standing surety for different defendants is not an offence.

"Rather, the information generated by the system is intended to assist judicial officers evaluate applications and make informed decisions."

The Global T &T boss stressed that BIMS would not determine whether a defendant should be granted bail, as the responsibility remains with the court, but will provide information to strengthen the judicial process and improve the reliability of records used in bail administration.

"The system is also expected to encourage defendants to rely on genuine family members as sureties rather than pay professional sureties, who may charge substantial fees and subsequently fail to appear in court when required", he said.

According to him, over 100 personnel were trained across the participating jurisdictions as part of the pilot programme.

BIMS was first piloted and launched in Lagos State in November 2022 under the state judiciary and the platform has so far recorded over 41,000 surety records and expanded to multiple magisterial districts.

Lawyer blames ignorance for tenants' vulnerability, unlawful eviction

By Silver Nwokoro

A LAWYER and public affairs analyst, Oluwatodimu Ige, has blamed tenants' vulnerability on ignorance of the law, and charged Nigerians to understand their tenancy rights to avoid exploitation and unlawful eviction by landlords.

Ige, who recently published a book titled 'Know Your Tenancy Rights in Nigeria', said the publication was inspired by recurring complaints from citizens seeking assistance over disputes involving abusive landlords and fraudulent agents.

According to him, the complaints revealed a widespread lack of information about the legal protections available to tenants.

"It wasn't one case but the same problem repeated in different words, ranging from landlords locking tenants out to removing roofs over unpaid rents.

"After a while, I realised that I was answering the same questions every week. Nigerians were not short of courage but information. So, when the same issue keeps resonating, you don't keep responding to them individually; you write a book", he said.

The lawyer described the practice of landlords evicting tenants at the expiration of rents or over unpaid rents as one of the most misunderstood aspects of tenancy law.

He explained that under the applicable legal framework in Lagos State, landlords cannot resort to self-help measures such as changing locks, removing doors, disconnecting electricity or throwing tenants' belongings outside to recover possession of their properties.

According to him, prescribed legal procedure, including serving the appropriate notices and approaching a court to recover possession, must be followed.

"Owing rent is a debt to be recovered, not a licence to harass tenants", he said.

Ige also addressed the controversy surrounding agency and legal fees, particularly the widespread belief that agents and lawyers are automatically entitled to 10 per cent of a property's rent, stressing that there is no universal legal rule prescribing a mandatory 10 per cent fee in every tenancy transaction but often based on prevailing practice and remained negotiable, subject to applicable laws and regulations.

He explained that the book was designed to help tenants understand the charges they are expected to pay and avoid spending money on unjustified fees.

"I wrote the book the way I talk on my page - like an elder brother who is a lawyer, with short chapters, plain English and everyday scenarios involving landlords and tenants."

While the book centres primarily on Lagos State Tenancy Law, the lawyer said its broader principles could help tenants in other parts of the country understand their rights.

Ige further advised tenants to insist on written tenancy agreements, obtain receipts for all payments and verify landlords and agents' identities before paying for accommodation.

He also urged tenants facing unlawful eviction threats to seek legal advice rather than resorting to physical confrontation.

Ige said he remained committed to explaining the law accurately, even when his position is unpopular. "My job is to say what the law is, not what is popular. Sometimes, the law is not what people want to hear, and I will still say it", he said.

Looking ahead, Ige promised additional publications on employment rights, police-citizen relations and property purchases, to address issues such as wrongful termination, unpaid salaries, employment contracts, citizens' rights during police encounters and the risks associated with buying land from unauthorised persons.

Don charges N/Assembly to expedite passage, execution of National Policing bill

DEPUTY Vice-Chancellor, Igbinedion University, Okada (IUO), Prof. Osaretin Izevbuwa, has charged the National Assembly to expedite action on the passage and implementation of the National Policing Bill.

Delivering his inaugural lecture titled 'Institutional pathologies and Systemic Reforms: The Gatekeepers' Role in the Administration of Criminal Justice in Nigeria', Izevbuwa proposed a decentralised, three-tier law enforcement framework.

He stated that the proposed structure will consist of a Federal Police Service, 36 State Police Services and Local Government Police Services. According to him, creating the distinct tiers is essential for improving operational efficiency and addressing the security challenges currently facing the nation's justice system.

To guarantee the operational autonomy of the lower tiers, he emphasised that the legislation must include constitutional guarantees for direct funding. The lecturer also recommended amending Section 121 of the Constitution to ensure that allocations for State and Local GovernmentPolice Services are disbursed directly to them, effectively insulating state law enforcement from political interference.

He said: "The bill should incorporate the constitutional guarantees of direct funding for states and local government police services by amending Section 121 of the Constitution to ensure that funds standing to the credit of a state police service and local government police service are paid directly to the concerned service, thereby insulating state police from political manipulation through funding control.

"The legislation should also set national minimum standards for recruitment, training, oversight and human rights compliance, and provide for an orderly transition with clear certification requirements for states and local governments seeking to establish their own policing services", he said.

Izevbuwa also urged Federal High Court judges to conclude part-heard criminal matters, noting that such will reduce delays and prevent cases from being restarted when the presiding judge is promoted or transferred.

"Other proposed reforms, including mandatory pre-trial case management and reform of the trial-within-trial procedure, should be enacted and implemented", he added.

Emphasising the need to accelerate digital transformation of the judiciary, the legal expert said that the Supreme Court's E-Filing System and the Nigeria Case Management System (NCMS) should be extended to all courts nationwide.

"Judges should adopt proactive case management strategies, including electronic filing, virtual hearings, digital case-tracking systems, and automated scheduling tools. The Supreme Court Practice Directions 2026, which mandate electronic filing, should be strictly enforced.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) should be deployed for legal research, Case management andcourt administration as piloted in Akwa Ibom State", he said.

CJN, Osinbajo, others to attend annual NBA-SPIDEL confab

By Silver Nwokoro

NIGERIA'S former Vice President, Prof. Yemi Osinbajo (SAN), will deliver the Keynote address at the 2026 Nigerian Bar Association (NBA) section on Public Interest and Development Law (NBA-SPIDEL) yearly conference.

Osinbajo's address is the highlight of the event, billed to take place on Tuesday, November 10, 2026, at the International Conference Centre (ICC), Umuahia, Abia State. The conference is themed, 'In Public Interest: Advancing Justice, Democracy & Development.'

The keynote session would be chaired by former Supreme Court jurist, Justice Suleiman Galadima, while responses would be given by Prof. Pat Utomi. Others include the Secretary General, International Rehabilitation Council for Torture Victims (IRCT), Lisa Henry and Director, Abuja School of Social and Political Thought, Sam Amadi.

The Chief Justice of Nigeria, Justice Kudirat Kekere-Ekun, will deliver a Special Address at the conference, while the Distinguished NBA-SPIDEL yearly conference Speech would be delivered by the Minister for Justice and Attorney General of the Federation, Prince Lateef Fagbemi (SAN).

Aside from the welcome remarks by the Chairman of the NBA-SPIDEL 2026 Conference Planning Committee, Sir Ejike Ezenwa (SAN), the opening ceremony will also feature a welcome address by NBA-SPIDEL Chair, Prof Uju Agomoh and an address by the President, Mrs. Oyinkansola Badejo-Okunsaya (SAN).

Goodwill messages would be delivered by past NBA Presidents, including Dr Olisa Agbakoba (SAN), Mr Augustine Alegeh (SAN), Mr Paul Usoro (SAN), Mr Olumide Akpata and Mazi Afam Osigwe (SAN).

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AU, FAJ, others seek govt protection for journalists, free speech

By **Sunday Aikulola**

IN commemoration of this year's International Day to End Impunity for Crimes Against Journalists, Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace and Security of the African Union Commission, Bankole Adeoye, President of the Federation of African Journalists (FAJ), Omar Faruk Osman, and others have called for mechanisms for the safety of journalists.

In a joint statement, the organisations, noted, "we stand in full solidarity with journalists and other media workers across Africa. We honour those who have been killed, injured, detained, threatened or forced into exile for their commitment to informing the public by upholding the principles of journalism."

Saying the victims' families and colleagues are remembered today, they added, "we reaffirm that attacks on journalists are attacks on the fundamental human rights of all peoples of Africa, especially, the right to freedom of expression and access to information."

Themed, 'Threats evolve. Impunity endures,' they said attention to how new technologies and evolving weapons are changing the risks journalists face, particularly, in conflict zones, while those responsible for crimes against them too often continue to evade accountability and justice.

Across Africa and year in year out, they observed journalists face persistent threats, including killings, physical attacks, arbitrary arrest and detention, enforced disappearance, intimidation, legal harassment and digital abuse.

To the organisations, "female journalists are particularly exposed to gender-based threats, harassment and online violence. Journalists reporting from conflict zones, covering elections or investigating corruption and human rights violations often work under severe pressure. When these crimes go unpunished, the perpetrators are emboldened, public-interest reporting is silenced, and communities are denied information they need to participate in public life and exercise their democratic rights."

The African Union Commission and the Federation of African Journalists (FAJ) recognise the essential contribution of independent media to peace, democracy, accountability and the people-centred development enshrined in Agenda 2063.

Speaking further, Adeoye and Osman said the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights protects freedom of expression and access to information.

The African Union Commission's Department of Political Affairs, Peace and Security and the AU Peace and Security Council have consistently underscored the importance of media freedom, the safety of journalists and information integrity. They have called for stronger protection of journalists' rights and for Member States to ensure journalists' safety, investigate attacks, bring those responsible to justice, punish perpetrators and provide effective remedies to victims.

"This day, we call on African Union Member States to meet, or continue to meet, their obligations under African and international human rights law and to take concrete steps to prevent attacks and bring an end to impunity.



(FILES) Journalists on duty

Ezekwesili links democratic sustenance to information integrity

By **Sunday Aikulola**

FORMER Minister of Education, Oby Ezekwesili, has expressed serious concern over effects of Artificial Intelligent (AI), saying true democratic sustenance can be linked to information integrity.

Speaking at the 26th Edition of NECCI PR Roundtable held in Lagos recently, she observed AI has made crossing the lines cheaper, faster and harder to catch.

To her,"AI has made anyone be able to manufacture the truth at no cost. The carrier of truth is a machine and the maker of lies is also a machine and the citizen sits between both."

Speaking further, she quoted the World Economic Forum global risks report that ranked misinformation and disinformation among the five global risks.

To her, "nobody jokes with the ranking. We are in an age of plausible denial."

Ezekwesili further highlighted some parties to democratic covenant, that is, those who hold power—the government and institutions must not punish the truth; those who carry the truth–the broadcasters and platforms must deliver the truth faithfully and the citizens must promise to question and must hold the others to account.

In her welcome remarks, convener NECCI PR Roundtable Nkechi Ali-Balogun agreed that AI is no longer a mere idea.

Osoba, Amuka to chair *Daily Times* conversation

By **Sunday Aikulola**

FORMER Governor of Ogun State, Olusegun Osoba; Publisher *Vanguard Newspapers*, Sam Amuka, are among distinguished personalities expected to grace the *Daily Times* @100 national conversation.

The Townhall and national conversation is meant to deepen discussion on th country's attainments , honour the change-makers and change the nation's global perception.

Some of the personalities that will interrogate the discussion include, Chief Growth and AI officer for Africa and Middle East at Microsoft, Olatomiwa Williams; Co-founder Fluterwave, Andela and Chief Executive Officer of Future Africa, Iyin Aboyeji; media and strategic communication expertand Co-founder of RED Media, Chude Jideonwo Founder SBM Research company, Cheta Nwanze, will anchor the discussion.

Programme for the day is, 'Honouring The Past Exibition', which is meant to honour the counytry's greats who helped shape the past; and also celebrate those shaping the future through quality leadership patrotism and service to humanity, via the DTN@100 Times Heroes Awards.

The exhibition is as recorded by *The Daily Times* over the 100 years of its service to the counrty.

Recall in September 3, 2026, Abuja had hosted the inaugural of the DTN@100 Times Heroes Awards with the central theme. 'Honouring the past, Shaping the Future.'

Folio Group, owners of *Daily Times,* has dedicated the use of *Daily Times* archives to develop a flagship product that tells the story of Nigeria to the world—The Nigerian Grand Book(Magnum Opus), a 700-paged authentic national souvenir, which is viewed as a critical tool to change Nigeria's global perception.

It was based on the desire to positively communicate the Nigerian story that in the cause of the Centenary Year June 1 2026-2027, that it set out to honour 100 most impactful Nigerians, past and present through the Times Heroes Awards.

NGE donates books to LASUSTECH, seeks stronger newsroom-academia pact

By **Opeyemi Babalola**

THE Nigerian Guild of Editors (NGE) has reaffirmed its commitment to bridging the gap between the newsroom and the classroom through stronger collaboration between media professionals and academic institutions.

Speaking yesterday during the presentation of a book, titled, *'Truth, Trust, and the Future of Journalism* in Nigeria' published by the Guild to The Lagos State University of Science and Technology (LASUSTECH), the Vice President (West) of the Guild, Dr. Kabir Alabi Garba, said the book was part of the priorities of the Guild's current leadership, led by Eze Anaba, when it assumed office in 2023.

"One of his priorities is to bridge the gap between the industry and the classroom, the newsroom and the classroom," he said.

He explained that the president subsequently established a committee to oversee the publication, with Professor Chinyere Okunna, Nigeria's first female Professor of Mass Communication and Deputy Vice-Chancellor of Paul University, Awka, Anambra State, as its chairman including other members of the guild.

Garba, who doubles as the Editor of the Weekend Guardian, stated that the book, with contributions from both academics and practising journalists, was part of the Guild's objective of promoting the exchange of knowledge and experience between the two sectors.

"The idea is to bridge the gap and connect the newsroom with the classroom. That is why we have a combination of contributors from the academia as well as from the newsroom," he stated.

Responding, the Dean, College of Applied Social Sciences, Prof. Olumuyiwa Olamade, thanked the Guild for the donation, calling for a stronger relationship between both institutions.

"On behalf of the university, I say thank you. Please, be our ambassador to the Guild of Editors. We so much appreciate it, and we want to continue our relationship with them and deepen the relationship," he said.

He expressed optimism that sustained collaboration between the university and the Guild would create opportunities for students to become influential journalists and media professionals just like authors who contributed to the book.



Pioneer Director, Advancement and Internationalisation, Dr Steven Adesemoye (left); Dean, College of Applied Social Sciences, LASUSTECH, Prof. Olumuyiwa Olamade; Vice President (West), Nigeria Guild of Editors, Dr. Kabir Alabi Garba and the Head of Department, Mass Communication, LASUSTECH, Dr Prosper Zannu, at the book presentation of Truth, Trust, and the Future of Journalism in Nigeria to the department recently.

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Statement to the Nigerian Stock Exchange and the Shareholders on the extract of the unaudited results for the period ended 30 September 2026

Unaudited Statement of financial position as at 30 September 2026

	30 September 2026 N'000	31 Decemeber 2025 N'000
Assets		
Cash and cash equivalents	2,972,978	4,433,568
Investment securities	62,299,188	60,374,394
Loans and receivable	619,490	558,245
Premium receivables	1,676,463	251,333
Reinsurance contract assets	8,149,247	4,143,338
Other receivables and prepayments	2,298,462	2,803,876
Right-of-use assets	35,269	22,800
Investment properties	356,000	340,000
Intangible assets	337,890	25,066
Property and equipment	4,546,668	3,176,474
Intercompany - Life Company	201,926	-
Statutory deposit	1,500,000	770,000
Recapitalisation escrow account	15,832,356	-
Total assets	**100,825,936**	**76,899,095**
Liabilities		
Insurance contract liabilities	22,681,883	18,277,740
Other technical liabilities	887,563	1,467,869
Other payables & provisions	1,120,315	1,076,736
Defined benefit obligations	136,095	91,414
Current tax liabilities	401,191	295,847
Deferred tax liabilities	9,003,239	9,003,239
Total liabilities	**34,230,285**	**30,212,843**
Net Assets	**66,595,651**	**46,686,252**
Equity		
Share capital	15,400,000	9,240,000
Share premium	9,940,393	497,464
Contingency reserve	5,562,642	5,562,642
Retained earnings	10,230,470	6,144,404
Fair value reserve	23,660,716	23,440,308
Re-measurement reserve	80,143	80,143
Assets revaluation reserve	1,721,291	1,721,291
Total equity	**66,595,651**	**46,686,252**

The financial statements were approved on 29 October 2026 and signed on behalf of the Board of Directors by:

Chief Joshua B. Fumudoh	**Mr. Daniel Braie**	**Emmanuel Otitolaiye**
Chairman	**Managing Director/CEO**	**Chief Financial Officer**
FRC/2018/IODN/00000017911	**FRC/2018/CHN/00000018082**	**FRC/2014/ICAN/00000008524**

Unaudited Statement of profit or loss and other comprehensive income for the period ended 30 September 2026

	30 September 2026 N'000	30 September 2025 N'000
Insurance service revenue	20,551,972	19,299,412
Insurance service expenses	(17,076,554)	(12,637,990)
Net expense from reinsurance contracts held	(2,658,254)	(5,744,832)
Insurance service result	**817,165**	**916,590**
Investment income:		
Interest revenue calculated using the effective interest method	3,343,248	3,589,232
Other investment income	4,616,843	2,504,626
Net fair value losses on financial assets at fair value through profit or loss	751,825	331,828
Other income	(105,606)	(314,689)
Credit loss write back / (expense)	(412,912)	-
	8,193,398	**6,110,997**
Insurance finance expenses for insurance contracts issued	(868,764)	(126,732)
Reinsurance finance income for reinsurance contracts held	388,707	70,484
Net insurance financial result	**(480,057)**	**(56,248)**
Net Insurance and investment result	**8,530,506**	**6,971,339**
Other operating expense	(4,214,978)	(3,627,273)
Profit before taxation	**4,315,528**	**3,344,066**
Income tax expense	(229,462)	(226,584)
Profit for the year	**4,086,066**	**3,117,482**
Other comprehensive income net of tax:		
Items that will be reclassified subsequently to profit or loss:		
Fair value gain on bonds at fair value through other comprehensive income	220,408	52,896
	220,408	52,896
Items that will not be reclassified subsequently to profit or loss:		
Other comprehensive loss, net of taxes	**220,408**	**52,896**
Total comprehensive income for the year	**4,306,474**	**3,170,378**
Basic and diluted earnings per share (in kobo)	**13.3**	**20.2**

Unaudited Statement of cash flows for the quarter ended 30 September 2026

	30 September 2026 N'000	31 Decemeber 2025 N'000
Cash flows from operating activities		
Premiums received from policy holders	22,995,082	27,873,378
Premiums received in advance	26,334	75,425
Deposit without details	-	801,361
Reinsurance payments	(10,696,757)	(11,140,532)
Claims paid	(5,588,991)	(5,946,533)
Reinsurance claim recoveries	1,821,967	2,237,272
Salvage recovery	174,517	174,073
Commission paid	(10,373,025)	(9,333,080)
Maintenance expenses paid	(1,217,489)	(2,199,857)
Commission received	2,424,816	2,533,397
Cash payment to and on behalf of employees	(971,267)	(1,268,115)
Other operating cash payments	(5,377,210)	(6,185,758)
Corporate tax paid	(229,462)	(162,752)
Net cash used in operating activities	**(7,011,483)**	**(2,541,719)**
Cash flows from Investing activities:		
Purchase of properties and equipment	(1,855,063)	(225,724)
Purchase of intangible assets	(347,537)	-
Proceeds from sale of property and equipment	2,557	16,087
Purchase of investment securities	(1,791,910)	(12,862,096)
Proceeds from sale of investment securities - FVTPL	2,526,704	228,415
Proceeds from sale of investment securities - FVOCI	-	3,014,903
Proceeds from sale of debt instrument at amortised cost	1,365,732	4,833,951
Loan disbursed	(306,164)	(307,147)
Loan repayments	244,919	156,353
Dividend received	2,778,584	2,555,284
Rental income received	3,800	8,800
Interest received	3,343,248	4,755,424
Net cash from investing activities	**5,964,871**	**2,174,250**
Financing activities:		
Proceeds from issue of shares	(15,832,356)	-
Issue of shares	6,160,000	-
Regulatory costs of bonus share issuance	9,442,929	(49,969)
Net cash used in financing activities	**(229,427)**	**(49,969)**
Net decrease in cash and cash equivalents	(1,276,039)	(417,438)
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the year	4,447,787	5,487,626
Impact of exchange difference on cash held	(198,769)	(622,401)
Cash and cash equivalents	**2,972,978**	**4,447,787**

A copy of this publication can be found on the company's website: **www.linkageassurance.com**

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ROYAL EXCHANGE

Consolidated Statements of Financial Position as at 30 September 2026

	Group 30-Sep-26 N'000	Group 30-Sep-25 N'000	Company 30-Sep-26 N'000	Company 30-Sep-25 N'000
ASSETS				
Cash and cash equivalents	970,565	1,172,009	25,639	318,621
Loans and advances to customers	553,233	1,085,134	-	-
Advances under finance lease	14,814	26,456	-	-
Investment securities:				
Measured at Fair Value Through Profit or Loss (FVPL)	69,296	91,535	8,156	-
Measured at Fair Value Through Profit or	-	-	-	-
Amortized Cost	1,267,963	-	1,267,963	-
Investment in subsidiaries	-	-	551,501	551,048
Other receivables and prepayments	656,027	294,703	607,056	210,777
Investment in associates	7,995,698	8,184,932	7,995,698	8,184,932
Investment properties	-	-	-	-
Property and equipment	154,679	37,905	127,092	25,023
Trustee Assets	121,364	203,826	121,364	203,826
Deposit for shares	38,000	38,000	38,000	38,000
Total assets	**11,842,661**	**11,132,162**	**10,763,481**	**9,529,229**
LIABILITIES				
Borrowings	1,318,175	1,763,400	-	-
Other liabilities	1,056,227	1,187,102	902,987	1,095,874
Finance Lease Obligation	-	-	-	-
Trustee Liabilities	2,226,486	545,999	2,226,486	545,999
Current income tax liabilities	34,160	14,983	26,972	14,983
Total liabilities	**4,637,047**	**3,507,451**	**3,156,444**	**1,652,823**
EQUITY				
Share capital				
Share premium				
Share capital	4,133,349	4,133,349	4,133,349	4,133,349
Share premium	2,690,936	2,690,936	2,690,936	2,690,936
Contingency reserve	-	-	-	-
Regulatory risk reserve	416,481	416,481	-	-
Treasury shares	-	-	-	-
Retained earnings	10,372	429,469	848,275	1,097,645
Other component of equity	(45,524)	(45,524)	(45,524)	(45,524)
Other reserve	-	-	-	-
Capital and reserves attributable to owners	7,205,614	7,624,711	7,627,037	7,876,406
Non-controlling interests	-	-	-	-
Total Equity	**11,842,661**	**11,132,162**	**10,783,481**	**9,529,229**
Total equity & liabilities	**11,842,661**	**11,132,162**	**10,783,481**	**9,529,229**

Royal Exchange Plc
Consolidated Statement of Profit or Loss and Other Comprehensive Incor

	Group N'000	Group N'000	Company N'000	Company N'000
Interest Income	224,956	400,369	3,921	73,691
Net Interest Income	(2,754)	233,623	3,921	73,691
Investment and other income	159,923	53,405	102,901	490
Share of profit/loss on investment in associate	455,246	1,567,994	455,246	1,567,994
Net fair value gain or loss on financial assets	28,878	-	-	-
(Charge)/write-back of impairment allowance	1,832	-	-	-
ECL Impairment Allowance	-	-	-	-
Operating income (Revenue)	-	-	-	-
Other operating income	-	-	-	-
Foreign exchange gains/(losses)	-	-	-	-
Net income	**643,125**	**1,855,022**	**562,068**	**1,642,175**
Management expenses	**(544,884)**	**(369,091)**	**(387,458)**	**(167,700)**
Total expenses	**(544,884)**	**(369,091)**	**(387,458)**	**(167,700)**
(Loss)/Profit before tax	**98,241**	**1,485,931**	**174,610**	**1,474,474**
Minimum tax	-	-	-	-
Income taxes	-	-	-	-
(Loss)/Profit after taxation from continuing operations	**98,241**	**1,485,931**	**174,610**	**1,474,474**
Discontinued operations:				
Loss for the year from discontinued operations	-	-	-	-
Loss for the year from discontinued operations	-	-	-	-
Gain/(Loss) on disposal of Subsidiary	-	-	-	-
(Loss)/Profit after taxation from discontinued operations	-	-	-	-
(Loss)/Profit after taxation for the year	**98,241**	**1,485,931**	**174,610**	**1,474,474**
Profit/(Loss) is attributable to:				
Owners of Royal Exchange Plc	**98,241**	**1,485,931**	**174,610**	**1,474,474**
Non-controlling interest	-	-	-	-
	98,241	**1,485,931**	**174,610**	**1,474,474**
Other comprehensive income, net of tax				
Items that will never be reclassified subsequently to profit or loss:				
Net actuarial gains/(losses) of defined benefit obligations	-	-	-	-
Share of returns in associates	-	-	-	-
Items that are or may be reclassified subsequently to profit or loss:				
Changes in fair value of FVOCI investments	-	-	-	-
Total other comprehensive income, net of tax	-	-	-	-
Total comprehensive income for the period	**98,241**	**1,485,931**	**174,610**	**1,474,474**
Total comprehensive income attributable to:				
Owners of Royal Exchange Plc	**98,241**	**1,485,931**	**174,610**	**1,474,474**
Non-controlling interest	-	-	-	-
	98,241	**1,485,931**	**174,610**	**1,474,474**
Total comprehensive income for the period attributable to owners of Royal Exchange Plc arising from:				
Continued operations	**98,241**	**1,485,931**	**174,610**	**1,474,474**
Loss for the year from Discontinued operations	-	-	-	-
Gains/(Loss) on disposal of Subsidiary	-	-	-	-
	98,241	**1,485,931**	**174,610**	**1,474,474**
Profit/(Loss) per share - Basic and diluted (kobo)	**1.91**	**28.88**	**3.39**	**28.66**
Weighted average number of ordinary shares ('000)	**5,145,370**	**5,145,370**	**5,145,370**	**5,145,370**

The Financial Statements were approved by the board of directors on 22 October 2026 and signed on its behalf by:

Ikeme Osakwe	Idu Okeahialam	Olusanya Idowu
Mr Ikeme Osakwe	**Mrs Idu Okeahialam**	**Mr Olusanya Idowu**
Chairman	Managing Director/CEO	Chief Financial Officer
(FRC/2017/ICAN/00000016455)	FRC/2021/003/00000022487	FRC/2026/PRO/ICAN/001/337949

Directors:
Mr. Ikeme Osakwe (Chairman), Mrs. Idu Okeahialam (Managing Director/CEO), Chief (Dr.) Anthony Ikemefuna Idigbe (SAN), Senator Mohammed Sanusi Daggash, Mr. Onilude Ezekiel Ayangbemisola, Ms. Yough Pamela Mimi, Mr. Olanrewaju Afolabi Caxton-Martins.

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Billed electricity drops 9.9% as 370 solar firms spring up in six years, signalling booming demand

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municated verified information.

Amupitan said the increasing sophistication of AI tools had lowered the cost of carrying out such operations. He, however, disclosed that INEC had established an AI unit to anticipate risks associated with emerging technologies and develop measures to protect its electoral processes.

He acknowledged that AI could assist election management bodies with voter register analysis, logistics planning, data processing and administrative efficiency, stressing that the danger depended on how the technology was deployed.

He further disclosed that the commission had signed a memorandum of understanding with TikTok and was seeking improved cooperation with Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, YouTube, Telegram and X.

According to him, INEC had also introduced ChatGPT to support its efforts and was working with development partners, including the EU, to establish a strategic communication crisis network.

He said the commission was strengthening its technological capacity and communication systems to detect deepfakes, verify suspicious media and issue authoritative clarifications.

Amupitan cautioned against relying solely on fact-checking after false information had gone viral, noting that manipulated content could spread widely within 30 minutes.

He called for coordinated responses involving the commission, security agencies, media organisations, technology companies and fact-checking groups.

HURIWA seeks task force over political attacks

MEANWHILE, the Human Rights Writers Association of Nigeria (HURIWA) has condemned reported attacks on political supporters and campaign teams across the country, warning that growing political violence and alleged sponsorship of armed thugs threaten democratic participation and electoral stability.

The association condemned the reported attack on Nigeria Democratic Congress (NDC) members during a ward meeting in Obuofia, Nkanu West Local Government Area of Enugu State, which reportedly left several members injured.

It also condemned the reported assault on APC supporters travelling to Funtua for the flag-off of Governor Dikko Radda's re-election campaign in Katsina State. Suspected hoodlums allegedly hurled stones and other objects at vehicles conveying the supporters in Malumfashi Local Government Area, shattering windscreens and windows and leaving some people with minor injuries.

HURIWA equally condemned the disruption of Abia State Governor Alex Otti's re-election campaign inauguration at Umuahia Township Stadium, where competing political groups reportedly caused disorder during the proceedings, including a church service.

The association also condemned the reported assault on human rights activist and African Action Congress presidential aspirant, Omoyele Sowore, and members of his team in Ado-Ekiti, Ekiti State.

Sowore alleged that a mobile phone stolen during the attack had been traced to the Ekiti State Governor's Lodge.

HURIWA maintained that political meetings and peaceful association were fundamental rights that security agencies must protect, irrespective of party affiliation.

It called on the National Security Adviser to establish a joint security task force comprising professional, patriotic and non-partisan personnel to protect political parties, candidates, campaign officials, supporters and other participants in the electoral process.

The association also urged the police, Department of State Services and other relevant security agencies to establish a coordinated security framework for campaign rallies, ward meetings, campaign tours and other political engagements.

It warned political parties and their supporters against turning campaign grounds into arenas of violence, intimidation and disorder, insisting that every Nigerian must be able to participate in politics without fear of assault or death.

IPAC demands functional voting equipment

IN a related development, the Inter-Party Advisory Council (IPAC), Lagos State, has urged INEC to upgrade its voting equipment and ensure that all electoral machines and technological facilities are fully functional ahead of the 2027 elections.

The Lagos State chairman of IPAC, Temilola Akinade, appealed in an interview yesterday, expressing concern that technical challenges could undermine the credibility of the forthcoming polls.

"We do not want any disappointment from INEC, particularly in the area of the voting system, during the 2027 general elections.

"All electoral equipment must be properly tested, upgraded where necessary and maintained to guarantee a smooth and seamless voting process," she said.

Akinade commended INEC for its efforts so far but urged the commission to intensify preparations to strengthen public confidence in the electoral process.

She also called on federal and state governments to provide a level playing field for all political parties to campaign freely and promote their candidates without intimidation or unnecessary restrictions.

The IPAC chairman urged political parties to educate their supporters on peaceful campaigns, mutual respect and tolerance of opposing political views.

She stressed the need for candidates and their supporters to prioritise issue-based engagements rather than resort to violence or personal attacks.

Media stakeholders seek stronger protection for journalists

ALSO, media professionals and the police have called for stronger measures to protect journalists covering the 2027 elections, amid concerns over attacks and impunity against media practitioners.

The call was made at a symposium organised by the Media Centre for Promotion of Safety Awareness in Lagos, themed *Election Safety: Reporting Without Being a Casualty*, to mark the International Day to End Impunity for Crimes Against Journalists.

Guest speaker, Ugo Onuoha, said impunity persisted because some individuals benefited from attacks on journalists targeted for reporting the truth about government and private sector activities.

He urged media organisations to train reporters, provide safety equipment, maintain contact with security agencies to identify flashpoints and ensure that journalists were adequately prepared before deployment.

Onuoha stressed the importance of self-preservation, advising journalists to avoid travelling alone to volatile events, wear comfortable clothing and adopt digital safety measures, including backing up files, removing sensitive data, using encrypted communication channels and PIN locks.

He also urged media practitioners to monitor their physical and psychological well-being.

At a panel session, a police representative, ASP Muhammed, described security agencies as partners in progress, urging journalists to familiarise themselves with their operational environments, maintain neutrality and move closer to security personnel when tension arose.

Deputy Police Public Relations Officer, Lagos Command, Adeola Olufemi, said the police had maintained partnerships with the media and urged journalists to remain observant and heed operational advice.

A former chairperson of the Nigeria Association of Women Journalists, Adeola Ekhine, also advised journalists to remain alert, saying: "Listen up, look around and be sure of your safety."

Amupitan flags fabricated results, deepfakes, risk of electoral violence

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

nesses that depend on generators to keep working. For me, expanding energy access means placing generation capacity where it can support livelihoods and make the greatest economic difference," Aliyu said.

The projects involve investment by Alfuttaim Nigeria Limited, which will own and operate the systems, with part of the cost subsidised by the REA through the World Bank-backed Distributed Access through Renewable Energy Scale-up (DARES) programme.

Aliyu said the REA had signed about 380 grant agreements under the Nigeria Electrification Project, commissioned more than 150 hybrid solar mini-grids and deployed approximately 1.45 million solar home systems. He added that the $750 million DARES programme is expected to support 1,350 mini-grids, including 250 interconnected mini-grids, and provide new electricity access to about 17.5 million Nigerians.

By April 2026, more than 830,000 solar home systems had been deployed under DARES across the six geopolitical zones, providing electricity access to about 3.9 million Nigerians, according to the REA.

The expansion of solar is already creating friction with DisCos where customers install systems but retain grid connections for backup. A complaint by Lekki resident Raphael Awoseyin has brought the issue into public focus.

In posts on X dated October 19 and updated on October 21, Awoseyin said he installed an 18kW solar system at Lekki Phase 1, Lagos, while retaining Ikeja Electric as backup supply. According to his account, Ikeja Electric field staff inspected his prepaid meter after observing low or no consumption and suspected a bypass or meter fault.

He said the company issued a disconnection notice and charged him N112,606 for loss of revenue. Awoseyin said he demonstrated that the meter recorded consumption when his inverter was bypassed and the property drew power from the grid. He further claimed that, after the complaint gained attention and NERC reportedly referred the matter to Ikeja Electric, three managers contacted him, apologised and promised to replace his meter with a smart meter.

The allegation raises questions about how DisCos assess low consumption by solar-equipped customers who remain connected to the grid. It remains an individual complaint, however, and does not establish a wider practice by Ikeja Electric or other DisCos.

Industry figures cited in the report suggest Nigeria has more than 11,000 rural telecom base stations, with more than 40 million litres of diesel estimated to be consumed monthly to power a large proportion of them. Aliyu said plans were underway to integrate electricity and telecommunications infrastructure to expand digital access and improve service reliability, especially in rural areas.

For DisCos, the challenge is no longer only to supply electricity, but to remain relevant to customers who can increasingly generate part or all of their own power. Their response may determine whether solar complements the grid or progressively replaces it.

Speaking on recent grid collapse and persistent poor supply, Chief Executive Officer of the Centre for the Promotion of Private Enterprise (CPPE), Muda Yusuf, warned that prolonged disruption would raise operating costs, erode profit margins and undermine job creation.

"The implication is obvious. The implication is that you will spend more energy because when you don't have the public power supply, you have to fall back on the use of diesel, on the use of petrol or the use of gas and this is a damn very expensive business." He said the duration of the disruption would determine the severity of the economic consequences.

"So, when your cost of energy is very high, it affects your margin; it affects your ability to keep the business afloat. It affects profitability and ability to create jobs. But it depends on how long it takes to fix this problem. If they're able to fix it within a day or two, the pressure on business may be less, but if it is longer, the pressure will be very, very significant. So that is what it is," he added.

BOBO

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- Good Interpersonal Relationship.

Age: Not more than 40yrs

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Qualification: B. Sc in Social/Management/Physical science.
Requirements: 0-1 year experience (fresh graduate).

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METHOD OF APPLICATION:

Interested candidate should forward their detailed resume to: bobofood_hr@yahoo.com. All application must be sent within two 2 weeks of this publication using the position title as the subject of your email.

Note: Only shortlisted candidates would be called for an interview.

World Report

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Air alert: Hacked apps trigger fake nuclear warnings in Russia, Ukraine

UKRAINE and Russia have both said air alert apps were hacked on Sunday night after fake messages warning of attacks, including nuclear, were sent to users.

Ukraine's widely used app sent red-level air raid warnings across the country, with additional warnings of radiation, chemical attacks, and street fighting sent to some residents in areas including Kyiv.

A few hours later, Russian authorities said a similar app was hacked after fake alerts, some of which contained foul language, were triggered.

It was unclear who was behind the cyberattacks or whether the two incidents were connected.

Many Ukrainian citizens are used to receiving almost nightly alerts warning of incoming Russian missile and drone attacks.

Some told the BBC that, four and a half years into the war, they have disabled the app altogether. After Sunday night's hack, the country's air force urged people to consult other official channels. In a post on Telegram, the air force said: "The Air Alarm application has probably been subjected to hostile interference.

There is no radiation threat! Stay calm and follow our updates on our [Telegram] channel." The government said it had temporarily disabled the app for maintenance, saying it had "apparently been compromised". Some of the fake warnings were written in Russian, which would have alerted many users to the fact they were not legitimate.

But Olena, a Kyiv resident, told BBC Radio 4's Today programme she had been alarmed, not prepared for nuclear attack. Olena says her husband also received alerts for street fighting attacks in Kyiv and another written in Russian.

"After that I understood that somebody had attacked the app, because all notifications we get in Ukrainian." In Russia, the government said one of its air raid alert apps had also been targeted by "a massive cyberattack", which sent "fake information to the public.

A purported screenshot of a fake alert was shared on Telegram by Atesh, a partisan Ukrainian group operating inside Russian-held territory, warning some users that "nuclear warheads mounted on P1-Suns (a Ukrainian attack drone) had been launched at all regions of Russia."

The alert, which included profanities, opened with a message telling residents there was a "risk of (things) getting lively" and told them to "stock up urgently on food for three weeks and hide". Kremlin spokesman, Dmitry Peskov, did not address it specifically but said all Russian government internet resources were "one way or another, under constant cyberattacks, including the presidential site, which is targeted round the clock."

Women make up only 5% of global peace negotiators, says UN chief

By Silver Nwokoro

WOMEN accounted for only five per cent of negotiators across 57 peace processes reviewed in 2025, down from seven per cent in the previous year, the United Nations has said.

UN Under-Secretary General and UN Women Executive Director, Sima Bahous, disclosed this while presenting the Secretary General's annual report on Women, Peace and Security at the United Nations Security Council open debate held at the UN headquarters. Bahous said the declining participation of women in peace negotiations was happening at a time their leadership was increasingly needed, particularly as military spending rises and humanitarian assistance declines.

She however noted that women's participation reached 22 per cent in the three peace processes led or co-led by the United Nations, although the figure remained below the minimum one-third target.

According to her, nearly 80 per cent of active peace negotiations in 2025 took place without a single woman at the table, despite 26 years of commitments under UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security.

She attributed the exclusion to persistent institutional barriers, unequal power relations and deeply entrenched gender norms that continue to deny women opportunities to influence peace processes.

She further disclosed that almost 40 per cent of women and girls living in extreme poverty were in conflict-affected areas, where disruptions to essential services and displacement increased their exposure to gender-based violence, sexual exploitation and human trafficking.

On funding, Bahous said a survey of women's organisations in crisis-affected settings found that 61 per cent were in a worse financial position than a year earlier while 45 per cent had less than six months of funding available.

Iran says contacts over ending war continue

CONTACTS between Iran and the United States to end their eight-month war are continuing, Tehran said yesterday, after days of Iranian talks with Qatari mediators ended with altered proposals but no breakthrough.

"Consultations through mediators are very intensive. We have presented our conditions and proposals and everything depends on the political rationality of Washington", Iranian Foreign Minister, Abbas Araqchi, said in comments carried by state media outlet IRNA.

Amid fears the conflict could reignite after Tuesday's midterm elections in the United States, China and Russia both spoke out yesterday against the possibility of renewed military action in a war that has hit the global economy.

While oil prices fell nearly four per cent yesterday on hopes that the latest round of mediation could lead to a diplomatic solution to the crisis, Iranian sources said they believed a new U.S attack was still more likely than a deal. Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesperson, Esmaeil Baghaei, said the plan Iran had submitted in September to end the war remained the focus of discussions, but he confirmed comments attributed to Araqchi on Saturday that the proposal could be shortened.

"The basis of dialogue and talks between Iran and the United States via mediators is still Iran's seven-step proposal, which is now condensed, making it possible to implement it within two days", he said.United States President Donald Trump rejected the seven-step proposal in September.

Uganda begins withdrawing troops from Somalia after 20 years

UGANDA has started withdrawing its troops from Somalia after nearly two decades of military involvement in the country.

Uganda's acting army spokesperson, Chris Magezi on Monday, said the first group of troops deployed to Somalia through a bilateral arrangement had already arrived back home and others would follow in a few days' time.

He said all forces, including those under the African Union (AU) mission, would exit by the end of 2027 in the phased withdrawal. Uganda was the first African country to deploy troops to Somalia under the African Union Mission in Somalia (Amisom), established in 2007 to help protect the country's transitional government from attacks by Islamist militants.

A first contingent of 109 Uganda People's Defence Forces (UPDF) troops reportedly left the capital, Mogadishu, last Friday, following an announcement by Uganda's army chief, Gen Muhoozi Kainerugaba.

Last week, Kainerugaba said Uganda had begun pulling out its troops and would hand over security responsibilities to Somali forces. "As we promised, we have started withdrawing UPDF from Somalia.

After 20 years of a lot of blood and sacrifice, we are handing over security to our Somali brothers", he wrote on X. Yesterday, Magezi said this would mark the end of Uganda's operations in the Horn of Africa country, with Somalia expected to "assume full responsibility for security."

The withdrawal is coming after Somalia President, Sheikh Mohamud, met his Ugandan counterpart, Yoweri Museveni, in Kampala last week. The meeting was planned to discuss Somalia's security situation as well as trade and economic ties between the two countries.

The Somali President reportedly sought to persuade Uganda to extend its military presence. Speaking during the visit, Museveni urged Somali leaders and citizens to unite in the fight against the militant insurgency led by al-Shabab, which is part of al-Qaeda.

An estimated 4,500 troops are in Somalia under the Africa Union mission, alongside about 2,000 deployed through bilateral arrangements.



Uganda first deployed its troops to Somalia in 2007.

Nine killed as small jet crashes on Florida street

A BUSINESS jet crashed in a neighbourhood in Florida on Sunday, killing all nine people on board, the United States transport secretary has said.

The crash happened near Cresthaven, some nine miles (14 km) from Mar-a-Lago, President Donald Trump's resort in the wealthy enclave of Palm Beach County, around 12:50 EST (17:50 GMT).

Images show a large crater in the middle of a multi-lane road, with fire and debris from the Learjet 60 aircraft scattered across it, but nobody on the ground was hurt.

The aircraft had departed from Austin, Texas, and was headed to the Bahamas, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) said in a statement.

Flight analysis indicates that the jet was plummeting hundreds of feet per second before crashing. In air traffic control audio recorded moments before the crash, someone in the cockpit can be heard reporting "moderate turbulence" and that the crew was "managing the ice". The person can then be heard saying the plane was "picking up precipitation" and "we need to climb".

Moments later, the same voice said the plane was descending at a rate of 10,000ft (3,048m) per minute. The crew member declared an emergency, yelling "we are in an overspeed condition descending 20,000ft per minute", before saying, "we are going to crash into the ground."

About 35 seconds after the initial mayday announcement, the last remark from the cockpit was "we are out of time." Unverified footage posted on social media showed what appeared to be a dash-camera recording of the moment of the crash. It showed vehicles driving on a residential suburban street, when suddenly an aircraft nosedived into the ground almost vertically, and exploded into a large fireball. "When you see that video, it is a jarring thing", Florida Governor, Ron DeSantis, told reporters at a news conference after the crash.

"It was like a missile coming down, and a massive explosion, debris going everywhere." It is not yet clear who was aboard the jet when it crashed.

As of now, we don't have any reports of anyone who was on the ground who was killed or injured", DeSantis said. Transportation Secretary, Sean Duffy, described the crash as a "horrific tragedy", and said the FAA was sending a team to the scene to help an investigation by the National Transportation Safety Board.

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GuardianProperty

Developers hinge luxury property growth on coastal highway project

By **Isaac Chibuife**

PROPERTY developers are projecting a surge in luxury residential property values along the Atlantic shoreline, driven by the ongoing Lagos-Calabar Coastal Highway project.

The emerging coastal corridor, they believe, could become a major destination for high-end residential developments, potentially challenging Victoria Island's longstanding dominance in Lagos' premium property market.

The highway, designed to improve connectivity along Nigeria's coastline, is expected to open up previously inaccessible locations, reduce travel time and attract fresh investments in residential, commercial and hospitality developments. Developers are increasingly looking towards the coastal stretch, anticipating that improved infrastructure could transform its property market and create new opportunities for luxury housing.

The expectation is already shaping investment decisions around the Lagos coastline, where developers are positioning luxury residential projects to benefit from improved road access and anticipated commercial activity.

Palton Morgan Holdings is among the developers banking on the potential of the corridor. Speaking during a tour of its Paramount Twin Towers project in Oniru, Lagos, the company's Chief Marketing Officer, Ikechukwu Ugwu, described the area as Lagos' "new Victoria Island".

The company has already begun a flagship project, Paramount Twin Towers, a 13-storey residential development comprising two towers on the Oniru Waterfront, within the corridor. The project is being developed by Grenadines Homes, a subsidiary of Palton Morgan Holdings and completion is expected in 2027.

However, the extent to which the coastal highway will translate into higher property values and sustained demand remains uncertain, particularly as construction progresses and the wider economic benefits of the project are yet to be established.

Ugwu said construction of Paramount Twin Towers began before the coastal highway was announced. He explained that the emergence of the road project prompted developers in the area to pause and assess the government's plans before proceeding with their investments.

He said the highway had since improved the area's accessibility and attractiveness, adding that its anticipated impact extended beyond individual developments to other properties along the corridor. The prices reflect the premium segment the developer is targeting. Ugwu said two-bedroom apartments in the development were being offered at N858 million each, while penthouses were priced at N8.4 billion.

The optimism comes amid rising prices in Nigeria's high-end residential property market. Citing a 2026 report by Agusto & Co, the company's Brand Marketing Manager, Oludara Ogunbowale, said the average price of a two-bedroom premium apartment increased from about N120 million in 2024 to N190 million in 2026.

She also put yearly property price appreciation in Nigeria at between 25 and 45 per cent, while prices in Abuja rose by between 15 and 45 per cent, depending on location.

Despite rising prices, Ogunbowale said demand for luxury homes remained relatively strong, driven largely by high-net-worth individuals in Nigeria and the diaspora.

She acknowledged that inflation and higher construction costs had affected purchasing decisions but said wealthy buyers continued to regard real estate as a store of value amid economic uncertainty.

According to her, investors in the segment are more concerned about long-term capital appreciation and potential rental income than immediate market pressures. She said prime land and luxury residential properties remained attractive to investors seeking to preserve wealth against inflation and currency depreciation.

However, the company's assessment largely reflects activity in the high-end segment of the market, where buyers have greater financial capacity. It does not address the constraints facing middle-income earners, including high property prices, expensive credit and limited access to mortgage financing.

Experts seek incentives for private developers to scale housing

By **Victor Gbonegun**

PROPERTY experts have called for tax credits, Value Added Tax (VAT) exemptions and government-backed guarantees to encourage private developers to deliver affordable homes at scale and address the housing deficit.

The Group Chief Commercial Officer of Mixta Africa, Tola Akinsulire, made the call during a chief executive officers' panel on "Public–Private Partnerships (PPPs) for Large-Scale Housing Delivery: Unlocking Housing at Scale Through Collaboration" at the Africa PropTech Priority Summit (Appsummit 2026), organised by Proptech Roundup in Lagos.

Akinsulire said Nigeria's housing policies had focused largely on mortgages without addressing the wider system required to deliver homes and make them affordable to buyers. He cited Morocco's housing programme, under which his company delivered 4,393 units on a single site, as an example of government support for large-scale development.

He said that in 2010, developers who committed to building homes priced at 250,000 dirhams and delivering at least 500 units within five years received tax credits covering parts of the value chain, including cement and corporate income tax.

On the demand side, buyers of qualifying homes were exempted from VAT, while a government-backed guarantee scheme covered up to 70 per cent of lenders' credit risk following default. "That made banks willing to lend and buyers able to buy. That is how you create a market, engineered on both the supply and demand sides," he said.

Akinsulire urged governments to clarify whether public-private partnerships were intended to generate revenue or deliver social interventions, noting that each approach required a different allocation of costs and risks.

Where the objective was affordable housing for civil servants and other target groups, he said, governments should contribute through land, infrastructure and other support while agreeing on realistic prices.

He identified trust, buyer affordability and developers' capacity to deliver as critical to successful PPPs.

While acknowledging the Federal Ministry of Housing's Housing Delivery Framework and subsequent policy initiatives, he said more attention was needed to strengthen developers' delivery capacity.

"If people have money and there are no houses to buy, we still have the same problem," he said.

Akinsulire also urged technology companies to develop solutions that reduce costs and risks across the property value chain, including land titling, development approvals, construction monitoring, sales and off-plan financing.

"Technology must either reduce friction or reduce risk," he said, urging PropTech innovators to develop solutions integral to housing delivery.

Also speaking, the Co-founder and Managing Partner of Alitheia Capital, Olajumoke Akinwunmi, identified weak engagement, inadequate frameworks and lack of trust as major obstacles to successful PPPs.

She called for stronger collaboration and properly prepared projects, rather than reliance on land banks without the necessary groundwork. "Often, after the handshake, you get to site and still deal with Omo Onile, compensation and unbuildable portions. That is not a ready project," she said.

Planners urged to drive regional development, curb urban sprawl

By **Victor Gbonegun**

TOWN planners have been urged to develop a comprehensive regional plan for South-West Nigeria to curb urban sprawl, coordinate infrastructure investment and promote balanced economic growth.

A Professor of Urban and Regional Planning at Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, Adamu Ahmed, challenged the Nigerian Institute of Town Planners (NITP) and the Town Planners Registration Council of Nigeria (TOPREC) to lead the process.

Presenting a paper titled "Physical Planning as the Driver of Regional Development," at the NITP's annual general meeting in Lagos, themed "Shaping the Future of Regional Development in Nigeria Through Physical Planning," Ahmed said planners must move beyond development control to embrace strategic spatial planning, infrastructure coordination, environmental resilience and economic development.

Ahmed, the university's Vice-Chancellor, said Nigeria's regional development challenges required an integrated approach to economic growth, housing, agriculture, industrialisation, migration, infrastructure and environmental protection.

He warned that development decisions taken independently, without spatial coordination, could lead to inefficient resource allocation, inequality and unsustainable growth. "Economic growth, infrastructure, housing, agriculture, industry, migration, environmental change and social development interact within territories. Without deliberate spatial coordination, individually rational decisions can produce collectively inefficient, unequal and unsustainable regional outcomes," he said.



Participants at the Nigeria Clean Cooking Forum organised by the Nigerian Alliance for Clean Cooking (NACC) in Abuja.

He explained that physical planning complements economic policies, social programmes and infrastructure investment by providing a framework for integrating them. Effective planning, he added, determines suitable locations for development, links settlements with economic activities, identifies infrastructure needs and protects the environment while promoting equitable distribution of development benefits.

Ahmed called for stronger links between regional development institutions, public investment and government policies, urging planners to translate national development goals into tangible improvements across communities.

He said the NITP should sustain public debate on spatial development, engage governments and regional institutions, strengthen professional capacity and advocate coordinated investment in major development projects.

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  Basic Function:
  - Assist the Driller in operating drilling and mud circulating equipment as instructed in the well program and in accordance to Company policies and procedures.
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Morocco 2026 FIFA U-17 Women's World Cup

Brazil: 'Our fighting spirit will see us through against Nigeria'

By Christian Okpara

PUNDITS describe Nigeria as the most intriguing team among the four in the semifinals of the ongoing FIFA U-17 Women's World Cup. The Flamingos lost their opening match of the tournament but have since beaten Puerto Rico, the seemingly unbeatable North Korea, Mexico and Venezuela, giving them a tough route to the semifinals, which they navigated anyway.

Now their reward for getting to the last four of a competition that has seen the backs of all the European nations is a clash with Brazil on Wednesday.

The game is picked as a contest of teams with contrasting styles, but Brazil is adamant that they cannot be intimidated by the muscular Africans.

After playing in an enthralling 3-3 draw with Ghana earlier in the petition, the Brazilians know all about the threat an African nation can pose.



Azeezat Oduntan's goal against Venezuela sent Nigeria to the semifinals of the ongoing Morocco 2026 FIFA U-17 World Cup. The Falconets will meet Brazil in the last four tomorrow.

Brazil's Coach, Rilany Silva, is already preparing for what she expects to be a bruising battle.

"I'm expecting an extremely difficult match," Rilany said. "Nigeria are a very physical team. By the 90th minute, they'll probably still be running as if it were the fifth. We'll need to be very strategic with our game plan to find ways to hurt Nigeria."

The former international defender is not alone in her assessment of the Flamingos, who stunned followers of the championship when they defeated defending champions, North Korea, 3-1 last week,

Flying winger Greise Kelly, who contributed two assists in the quarterfinal victory over China, also rates Nigeria highly, but she believes the Samba girls have the edge in their fighting spirit.

"There's a lot at stake in the match," Greise said. "We'll bring fighting spirit, determination and, as always, a strong mentality. We know they're not a weak team. I think it's going to be a very evenly matched game."

Greise said that the battles they have overcome since they came to Morocco have given them the mental strength to overcome all obstacles.

She said: "Despite all the battles we face on the pitch, we have one major strength: our mentality.

"Despite the mistakes and the ups and downs during matches, we manage to pick ourselves back up. We knew it was going to be a difficult match, and that's why we've been working harder and harder to go as far as possible."

Lagos, Owerri, Calabar to host Samuel Okwaraji Cup zonal finals

FOLLOWING the conclusion of the Northern Zonal playoffs of the Samuel Okwaraji Foundation National Secondary Schools Football Competition, also known as the Memoir Cup, all is now set for the southern zonal finals, the organisers have said.

The Maracana Stadium, Ajegunle, Lagos, the Dan Anyiam Stadium, Owerri, as well as the UJ Esuene Stadium, Calabar, will host the zonal playoffs of the competition for the South West, South South and South East regions.

These Zonal playoffs represent the second stage of the national championships after the state finals were played across the country earlier in the year.

According to the chairman of the competition's organising committee, Senator Osita Izunazo, the southern zonal playoffs will be held between today and Saturday, November 7, 2026.

UEFA Champions League

Galatasaray bank on Osimhen's magic to overcome Stuttgart



GALATASARAY fans are optimistic that their warhead, Victor Osimhen, can see them through when they host Germany's Stuttgart in the UEFA Champions League.

The Turkish league leaders have not fared too well in the championship this term, but with their back-to-form striker, Osimhen, leading their cause, they believe that they are in with a chance of victory.

Carrying the momentum of a ruthless 4–0 road display against Konyaspor, Turkish table-toppers Galatasaray welcome a fearless VfB Stuttgart squad buzzing from an electric 4–2 victory over Bayer Leverkusen, writes .

The two clubs have never met in UEFA competition before, making this a genuinely fresh contest between two sides with contrasting European ambitions this season.

Galatasaray arrive off the back of a derby win, having beaten Fenerbahce 2-1 in the Super Lig last Sunday. Okan Buruk's side have won four of their last five across all competitions, and their 4-2 Champions League victory over Lille last week showed they carry a real goal threat at this level.

Knight Frank explains decision to host 2026 Golf Classic in Lagos

By Florence Utor

PREMIER real estate consultancy firm, Knight Frank Nigeria, yesterday explained its decision to host corporate leaders, industry partners, and golf enthusiasts to deepen professional relationships, foster high-level networking, and celebrate long-standing business partnerships.

According to the organisers, the second edition of the yearly Knight Frank Golf Classic held at the prestigious Ikoyi Club 1938 last week was designed to transcend traditional corporate interactions.

Originally launched during Knight Frank's Diamond Jubilee celebrations to mark six decades of operations in Nigeria, the event has now been established as a cornerstone annual tradition.

Speaking on the objective behind the gathering, Senior Partner and Chief Executive Officer of Knight Frank Nigeria, Frank Okosun, emphasised the strategic importance of building connections outside the formal boardroom environment:

"We are here to enjoy a great day of golf, but more importantly, to celebrate relationships. The Knight Frank Golf Classic brings together our clients, partners, and friends in an environment where we can connect beyond the usual business setting. We value these relationships, and today is an opportunity to appreciate the people who have been part of our journey."

The 2026 tournament attracted strong backing from major institutional partners, including co-sponsor Tatum Bank. Highlighting the strategic alignment between banking, wealth creation, and golf, Managing Director of Tatum Bank, Niyi Adesegun, noted: "As a commercial bank operating for about 18 months, our sponsorship is a deliberate strategy to connect with visionary wealth creators and leaders. Golf teaches strategic patience and uncompromising integrity, core values that mirror our operations at Tatum Bank."

Dakar 2026 Youth Olympic Games

Olopade cautions Team Nigeria's athletes against desperation

From Gowon Akpodonor, Dakar, Senegal

NSC, International Volleyball Federation enter historic partnership

AS the search for medals continues at the ongoing Youth Olympic Games in Dakar, Senegal, the Director General of the National Sports Commission (NSC), Bukola Olapade, has urged Nigerian athletes to focus on building formidable careers for themselves rather than chase medals at all costs.

Olapade's message to the young athletes came a few minutes after table tennis star Matthew Kuti recorded his first victory at the Games, defeating Tunisia's Youssef Aidli 3-1 in a men's singles preliminary match after losing his opening game 3-0 to Hong Kong's Ho Ki Li.

Kuti was one win away from securing a place in the round of 16 as he faced Italy's Francesco Travesan late yesterday, hoping to grab a second victory to strengthen his progress to the knockout stage.

Olopade, who met with Nigerian athletes and their officials at the Games Village in Dakar, said: "I charge you all to be worthy ambassadors in this Youth Olympics. You must know that the essence of this tournament is exposure and capacity building, as well as helping you gain international experience ahead of the Los Angeles 2028 Olympics. We will appreciate it if the medals come your way here in Dakar, but I don't want anyone to put you under undue pressure to win medals at all costs," he said.



IOC President, Kirsty Coventry (middle), ATTF President, Wahid Enitan Oshodi (ninth left) and top officials of ITTF when IOC officials visited the table tennis arena at the ongoing Youth Olympics in Dakar, Senegal yesterday.

Ismaila named best boxer at LBHF Epe Divisional Championship

By Daniel Akinola

A GLIMPSE of what to expect at the year-end grand finale of the Lagos Boxing Hall of Fame (LBHF) Ibile Divisional Championships, tagged the Governor's Belt, was on display in Epe over the weekend, as Yusuf Ismaila emerged as the tournament's Best Boxer.

The LBHF monthly divisional championships, which cover the five IBILE divisions of Lagos State — Ikorodu, Badagry, Ikeja, Lagos Island and Epe — are organised in partnership with the Lagos State Amateur Boxing Association (LABA). Epe hosted the final divisional tournament ahead of the prestigious Governor's Belt Championship scheduled for December.

Ten local government areas and local council development areas (LCDAs) participated in the one-day event, where Yusuf Ismaila of Eti-Osa West Local Government was named the Most Outstanding Boxer after defeating Gabriel Ogunala in the men's 70kg category.

Today's Football Matches

UEFA Champions League
Galatasaray v Stuttgart
Shakhtar Donetsk v Sporting CP
Atlético Madrid v Bayern Munich
Barcelona v Aston Villa
Bodø/Glimt v Lille
Feyenoord v Inter Milan
LASK v Slovan Bratislava
Man United v Roma
Villarreal v PSG

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Brazil: 'Our fighting spirit will see us through against Nigeria'
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Guest Writer

Chidi Anselm Odinkalu

Nigeria's unlawful judges and wholly-owned judicial surrogates



TWO and a half months from a general election, political surrogates have become Nigeria's *hommes du jour*. These are people trusted to represent or advocate the positions and platforms of principals running for office. They inhabit many spaces and perform in many theatres.

Political surrogates are not supposed to be found presiding over courts of law as judges. Nigeria's constitution prohibits that. It requires in section 36(1) that courts should be "constituted in such manner as to secure its independence and impartiality." A court presided over by a political surrogate would surely be devoid of the constitutive standards of independence and impartiality.

Put differently, a judge who acts a surrogate for a political party or politician is an unlawful judge.

There was a time when it was a common law crime to even dare to suggest that a judge could be a party-political surrogate. This arose in an interesting case decided by the High Court of Australia on June 7, 1911.

Two months earlier, on April 7, 1911, a newspaper, *The Mercury*, in Hobart, Tasmania, published an article under the title "A Modest Judge". It took aim at Mr Justice Higgins, a senior judge of the High Court of Australia who was also the first President of the Commonwealth Court of Conciliation and Arbitration.

According to the records, in a case presided over by Justice Higgins in the Court of Conciliation and Arbitration, a lawyer, Mr. Starke, accused a labour union of impunity, alleging that "they are encouraged…. by the government of this country." On hearing this, Justice Higgins prohibited the lawyer from uttering such words. When counsel protested his right to vigorously advance the case of his client, the judge retorted "[Y]ou are not entitled to speak disrespectfully of those above us."

In response, *The Mercury* wrote of Justice Higgins that he was "we believe, what is called a political Judge, that is, he was appointed because he had well served a political party. He, moreover, seems to know his position, and does not mean to allow any reflections on those to whom he may be said to be indebted for his judgeship."

The Attorney-General of Australia charged the newspaper with the common law crime of "scandalising the judiciary." Dismissing the charge, Samuel Walker Griffith, Australia's inaugural Chief Justice, decided: "I am not prepared to accede to the proposition that an imputation of want of impartiality to a judge is necessarily a contempt of Court. On the contrary, I think that, if any judge of this Court or of any other Court were to make a public utterance of such character as to be likely to impair the confidence of the public, or of suitors or any class of suitors in the impartiality of the Court in any matter likely to be brought before it, any public comment on such an utterance, if it were a fair comment, would, so far from being a contempt of Court, be for the public benefit, and would be entitled to similar protection to that which comment upon matters of public interest is entitled under the law of libel."

Nigeria's judiciary began as wholly-owned surrogates of the Royal Niger Company in the last quarter of the 19th century. Frederick Lugard, who served the Imperial British East African Company (IBEAC) in colonial Uganda before joining the staff of the Royal Niger Company, liked things that way and said clearly enough in his Amalgamation report in 1919 that he preferred his judges beholden to the executive.

After independence, the early politicians desired to continue this trend. Ladoke Akintola, then regional premier, suffered disappointment in his expectation that, Samuel Okhai Quashie-Idun, Chief Justice at the onset of the political crisis in the old Western Region in 1961, should have been his judicial surrogate.

In the 1980s, the military regime of Ibrahim Babangida recalibrated judicial appointments to advance judicial surrogates for military rule. By 1989, then Chief Judge of Lagos State, Ligali Ayorinde, ruled that the soldiers had become constitutional Kabiyesi.

It could, nevertheless, be said then that most judges under military rule in Nigeria appeared largely inclined to do right most of the time. Those who wanted to turn themselves into surrogates for the ruling soldiers were the exception, not the rule.

Today, the reverse seems to be the case, especially in the High Courts, including at the state level, the High Court of the Federal Capital Territory, and the Federal High Court. In many of these courts, the preservation of judicial integrity has been replaced with the pursuit of judicial impunity, and it can safely be said today that there are many judges in Nigeria who do "not mean to allow any reflections on those to whom [they] may be said to be indebted for [their] judgeship."

In many court systems, some parties can now pick and choose their own judge. The charges in the trial of senior lawyer, Joseph Nwobike, leading to his conviction in the High Court in 2018 were that he specialised in "inducing court registrars to ensure that his cases were assigned to his preferred judges so he could obtain favourable judgments." Nwobike, the charges read, also offered bribes to Mohammed Yinusa (now late) and Hyeladzira Nganjiwa, both judges of the Federal High Court. The Supreme Court set aside his conviction on a technicality but did not overrule these findings of fact.

The Federal High Court and the FCT High Court have become notorious as two forums where judicial careers get waylaid into political surrogacy.

In the Federal High Court system, for instance, the assignment of political cases now follows a predictable pattern. Political cases routinely end up before a settled slate of judges.

> "A court presided over by a political surrogate would surely be devoid of the constitutive standards of independence and impartiality. Put differently, a judge who acts a surrogate for a political party or politician is an unlawful judge."

With astonishing insouciance, two young judges from the class of October 2023 appointments to the Federal High Court, for instance, have now established themselves as ambitious members of this gang of judicial surrogates of known political interests. One is in Lagos. Another is in Abuja. The political cases go to them thick and fast. Their decisions almost routinely read like judicial scandals on Steroids.

Obviously, the only reason these cases keep being assigned in this way is because the Chief Judge who does the case assignment is himself unperturbed that his conduct makes him a judicial surrogate of known political interests.

There was an example of this in a case in the High Court of Anambra State in the past year. The judge was relatively young on the bench. The case was primed by political paymasters. It concerned a high-profile statutory office, a matter over which the National Industrial Court of Nigeria has exclusive jurisdiction.

This was a matter in which the State High Court lacked subject-matter jurisdiction, and the plaintiff manifestly lacked standing. The judge surely knew this. It was instituted on September 15, 2025. The judge handed down his judgment exactly 10 days later, granting mutually contradictory orders that he had no power to. It is one of those judgments that give you the vibe of having been drafted anywhere but in the judge's chambers or study.

These are the kinds of things that destroy judicial careers even before they begin. Stanley Nnaji, the now late judge of the High Court of Enugu State was an early judicial surrogate of politicians in the Peoples Democratic Party when the party was in power. It cost him.

The archetype among this species was Wilson Egbo-Egbo, the former judge of the Federal High Court, who, in a unique season of judicial rampage 23 years ago, single-handedly and "*ex parte* installed a Senate President, impeached a Governor, replaced this Governor with his deputy, and [carried] on with the air of a judicial untouchable."

At the beginning of the new judicial year last month, Chief Justice, Kudirat Kekere-Ekun pleaded for judges to be spared from "personal attacks, ridicule, threats and harassment." That comes with responsibility on the part of the National Judicial Council (NJC) that she heads to take strong and urgent measures, especially in this political season, to stop this growing rabble of wholly-owned judicial surrogates of known politicians.

They must not sit on election petition tribunals. If the NJC proves unwilling or unable to accomplish this, then the only avenue left to citizens is to treat them as political hustlers or unlawful judges.

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