The Guardian

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Vol. 43, No. 18,263 ■ Friday, November 20, 2026 Guardian Nigeria GuardianNigeria 08136370421 Guardiannigeria N300



ASUU demands unpaid salaries, end to 'punishment' of dons

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FG targets single budget cycle, carries over 2026 capital spending

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Pate tasks states on healthcare reforms, warns of huge funding gap

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Many certificates, few jobs:

BIG STORY PAGES 4 & 5

Inside Nigeria's graduate employment paradox



FG seeks N70b to complete library project as Tinubu raises N25.6b

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Resident doctors demand 14-month arrears before Christmas

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2027: Stakeholders warn of voter fraud, hate speech, rising political violence

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Jonathan pitches national interest above ambition as Shettima, Issoufou laud Buhari's legacy

NEWS PAGE 6



Tinubu, Elumelu urge faster justice delivery to attract investment

NEWS PAGE 28



Coordinating Director of the Decade of Gas Programme, Mr Ed Ubong (left) with the Managing Director/CEO of Nigeria LNG Limited (NLNG), Engr. Adeleye (Leye) Falade, during a facility tour of the NLNG plant on Bonny Island, Rivers State, by young industry professionals as part of the Decade of Gas Capability Building Programme.



Panorama

Court restrains Odukoya as Fountain of Life Church suspends services

THE Lagos State High Court has restrained Jimmy Odukoya from parading himself as the senior pastor and spiritual head of the Fountain of Life Church, following a legal challenge by the church's board of trustees.

Justice O.O. Adewunmi-Oshin issued the order on Wednesday after hearing an application filed by the incorporated trustees of the church seeking to prevent Jimmy from acting in the capacity of senior pastor.

The trustees told the court that Jimmy had ceased to occupy the position following the appointment of a successor by the church's late founder, Pastor Taiwo Odukoya, who died in 2023.

In their application, the trustees sought an injunction to prevent Jimmy, either personally or through representatives, from interfering in the church's administration and activities while the legal process continues.

In the interim, the church has been sealed by the police while all pending programmes have been cancelled. The church also postponed its Thanksgiving Service earlier billed to hold on Sunday, November 22.

In an official notice to members, the church announced: "Please be informed that our Thanksgiving Service, previously scheduled for Sunday has been postponed. A new date will be communicated in due course."

... DAY 4590

OUR GIRLS STILL MISSING

Tope Templer Olaiya, News Editor
@TopeTempler

20 years after relocation, Mbah renames ESUT after Nwobodo

From **Lawrence Njoku** (Enugu)

GOVERNOR Peter Mbah of Enugu State has renamed the Enugu State University of Science and Technology (ESUT) after Second Republic Governor of old Anambra State, Senator Jim Nwobodo.

This is coming 20 years after the school was relocated to its permanent site at Agbani in Nkanu West Local Government Area of the state.

The School founded in 1980, and originally named Anambra State University of Technology (ASUTECH), was late named ESUT, following the creation of Enugu State in 1991.

Former Governor, Chimaro Nnamani had in 2006 moved the University to its permanent site at Agbani, known as Ebeano city.

But on Thursday, current Governor, Peter Mbah, who is the Visitor to the University renamed the institution after Nwobodo.

Mbah announced the new name at the 22nd Convocation Ceremony of the School, held at Agbani, where Nwobodo featured as the Convocation Guest Lecturer .

The renaming is said to be in recognition of the place of Senator Nwobodo in the history of Enugu State and his contributions to public service.

Osiri varsity appoints Okhai as business school dean

By **Victoria Nwachukwu**

OSIRI University has appointed Dr Victor Okhai as Dean of its School of Business, following unanimous approval by the university's Council of Elders at its August 2026 meeting. He will assume full duties on January 1, 2027.

The university's Chancellor, Dr John Kalu Osiri, said Okhai had spent his career building institutions in business, the creative industry and public life.

He said, "He shares our conviction that leadership is measured by what endures after us, and our students will learn from someone who has done the work."

Born in Edo State, Nigeria, Okhai is a policy analyst and business strategist whose career spans the creative industry, business, academia, investment and technology.

He holds two doctorates, the first in business leadership from the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, and the second in film and media studies from Gregory University, Uturu.

TODAY IN HISTORY

•Transgender Day of Remembrance (LGBT community)

• 2022 - Qatar

FIFA World Cup began in Qatar. This is the first time the tournament will be held in the Middle East.

• 2018 - Nigeria

Prominent Nigerians hailed ex-Pres. Goodluck Jonathan for saving Nigeria from being plunged into war in 2015. They included Pres. Muhammadu Buhari, Gen. Yakubu Gowon (rtd), Ex-Pres. Olusegun Obasanjo, Gen. Abdusalam Abubakar (rtd), and Gen. Theophilus Danjuma (rtd) They described him as a great patriot and true democrat for conceding the 2015 presidential elections at the presentation of his book, *My Transition Hours* in Abuja. Contained in the book is how ex-U.S. Pres. Barack Obama meddled in the election. Jonathan said Obama sent his secretary of state, John Kerry, and made a video broadcast to Nigerians designed to influence the outcome of the election against him.

• 2011 - Nigeria

Alex Ibru, founder and publisher of *The Guardian* newspaper, died in Lagos after a prolonged period of illness, aged 66. He was Minister of Internal Affairs from 1993 to 1995 during the military regime of Gen. Sani Abacha.

TODAY'S QUOTE

My political ambition is not worth the blood of any Nigerian.

GOODLUCK JONATHAN

In three words I can sum up everything I've learned about life: it goes on.

ROBERT FROST

A corrupt country has no future.

ALEX IBRU

RANDOM FACTS

• Apanthropy (n): An aversion to spending time with other people; a love of solitude.

• Exercise! The more you circulate your blood through your body, the more vibrant you will look. Also, sweating helps detoxify your skin.

• A popular Russian proverb: "A smile without a reason is a sign of idiocy."

TheGuardian WEEKEND

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NOVEMBER 21 - 22, 2026

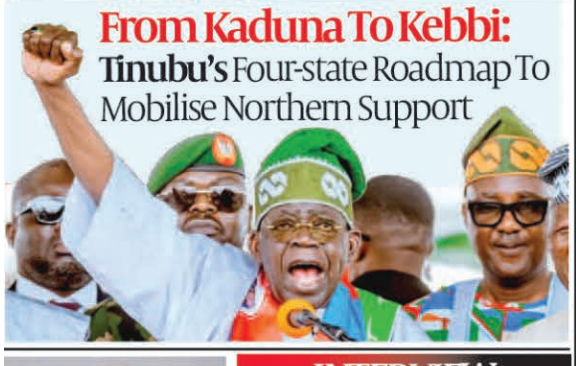
SPECIAL FEATURE

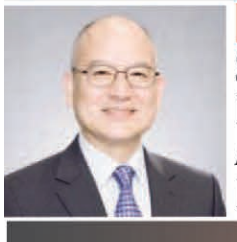
2027 Elections: Accessibility Gaps Threaten To Disenfranchise Voters With Disabilities



POLITICS

From Kaduna To Kebbi: Tinubu's Four-state Roadmap To Mobilise Northern Support





INTERVIEW

Steven Yi-Min Lin: Nigeria Can Learn A Lot From Taiwan's Experience

NEWSFEATURE



Path To Realising Nigeria's Quest For $50b Offshore Investments

SHOWBLAST



At Sixth PAO Conference, Stakeholders Discuss Content Balancing, Innovation In Digital Era

WEEKENDBEATS



With *Euphoria, Omo Ologo,* **Zinoleesky** Signals Turning Point For Street Pop

IBRUCENTRE

Life That Pleases God (2), By **Pastor W. F. Kumuyi**

Preach The Word In Season, Out Of Season, By **Pastor Lazarus Muoka**

Coming Out Of A Shameful Past, By **Bishop Charles Ighele**

The Future Is Now (2), By **Reverend Abel Ukachi Amadi**



ARTS

Five Decades After, OAU Drama Dept Celebrates Excellence

Nsofor Explores Identity, Ancestry In *Eje Ayó* Homecoming Exhibition

At *Realms: Beyond Imagination,* Artists Confront Social Issues With Technology

Interrogating Role Of Literature In National Security



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Happy 77th Birthday!

On the momentous occasion of your 77th birthday, Ma, we celebrate not just the passing of another year, but a life of grace, strength and remarkable accomplishments.

We are grateful for the path you have carved, the legacy you have sustained and the countless lives you continue to touch with your kindness and wisdom. We pray that you continue to age gracefully, in good health, joy and the peace of God.

Wishing you a joyful birthday filled with the love, pride and respect you deserve, and for the steadfast leadership you provide.

Happy Birthday, Ma.



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LADY MAIDEN ALEX-IBRU, MFR

Many certificates, few jobs: Inside Nigeria's

Across the country, an expanding pool of young graduates is trapped on an expensive upskilling treadmill, piling new certifications onto university degrees in the hope of securing a first job, yet still struggling to gain employment. Meanwhile, companies complain of difficulties finding candidates with the practical competencies to deliver on the job. Experts and business leaders agree that aligning tertiary curricula with evolving labour-market demands, embedding practical internships and mentorship by seasoned professionals into students' learning experiences, and shifting employers away from rigid credential-based recruitment towards hiring for potential could help bridge the divide. VICTORIA NWACHUKWU reports on the cost of the disconnect between academic qualifications and workplace readiness.



JOY Okowa's graduation was supposed to mark the beginning of another phase of life – working life. It did not. Instead, it became the beginning of another search.

After completing her degree in mass communication and subsequently undertaking the mandatory National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) programme, she entered the labour market with the qualification she had spent years earning and the expectation that, eventually, an opportunity would come. It did not. So, she went back to school, this time not for another degree, but to acquire a skill she believed could make her more useful to an employer.

She trained in product management, learning another discipline in the expanding technology space. It was a deliberate attempt to respond to what the labour market appeared to be demanding. If a degree was not enough, perhaps another practical skill would make the difference.

But when the training ended, the applications continued, even after her certificates and résumé had received a makeover. What, however, did not change was the difficulty of getting an employer to give her an opportunity to demonstrate what she could actually do.

In at least one recruitment process, she made it beyond the application stage and sat for an assessment. It was a moment that seemed to suggest that the door might finally be opening, but it did not. She fell short of the required score and did not get the position.

That experience exposed Okowa to an uncomfortable truth about the modern job search: there is a point at which collecting qualifications and learning new skills cease to be the problem. The harder task is finding an employer willing to let a candidate turn those qualifications into demonstrated ability. Her story would be easier to explain if employers were simply refusing to hire, but that is not what the evidence shows.

In one recruitment exercise for a joint-venture accountant, more than 200 applications were received, but only seven candidates were considered suitable. None was eventually selected. Instead, the company decided to train a newly hired mid-level accountant to take on the role.


Mrs. Olajumoke Ajayi

On paper, the two sides of the labour market appear to be moving in opposite directions. There are graduates looking for opportunities and companies looking for workers. Yet somewhere between the application form and the workplace, something is being lost.

As Head of Talent Resourcing at FirstBank of Nigeria Ltd., Osasuyi Erhunmwunsee, put it: "One of the biggest misconceptions about recruitment is that qualification equals capability. It does not."

That distinction is at the centre of a growing employment dilemma in Nigeria. A degree can prove that someone has completed a course of study, just as a certificate can show that someone has undergone training. But neither, by itself, tells an employer how that person will perform when faced with a difficult client, an unfamiliar problem, a demanding deadline, a team conflict or a task that was never taught in the classroom. And for the young person seeking that first opportunity, there is a cruel circularity to the demand: employers want experience, while experience comes from working. Yet, to work, the candidate first has to convince someone to provide the opportunity.

Helen Ugochi knows what it means to wait for an opportunity. After her NYSC programme, the communication graduate spent more than a year searching for work in the areas she had trained and wanted to pursue: public relations, writing and advertising.

She applied, waited and applied again. But as the search dragged on, the distance between what she had studied and what the market was willing to offer became increasingly apparent.

After months of searching for roles in the communication industry, she secured a position as a sales executive and investment adviser. It was not her dream role, but it gave her a foothold in the workplace.

Her employer trained her in product knowledge and taught her how to engage customers. The experience helped her begin acquiring the practical knowledge that employers often expect candidates to possess even before they are hired.

Faustina Chinekezie, a 2023 economics graduate of the University of Nigeria (UNN), Nsukka, decided to take a different route by choosing not to build her career around the subject printed on her degree. Instead, she pursued a skill she had begun developing before graduation: graphic design.

During her NYSC year, she took on design work for clients and organisations. What began as an additional skill gradually became the work through which she learnt the practical habits that employers and clients value, but which are difficult to acquire through certificates alone.

She learnt to interpret client briefs, work towards deadlines, communicate professionally, receive feedback and design with a business objective in mind.

Through projects, tutorials and practice, the skill developed into a career. Today, she works primarily as a brand identity and graphic designer.

Her journey illustrates another feature of the changing labour market: a degree is increasingly only one part of a person's employability story.

Skills realignment needed for survival as job seekers outpace available opportunities

DAILY, key issues such as the alignment between education, skills, career aspirations, employer expectations and the actual direction of the economy continue to generate contradictions across the polity.

For a country whose education system places an immense premium on passing examinations and accumulating certificates, often at the expense of critical thinking, basic problem-solving skills and the development of practical, functional competencies, among others, the recent lamentation by the Chief Executive Officer of Moniepoint, Tosin Eniolorunda, that Nigeria lacks the skilled talent needed to meet the company's global standards strikes at the heart of a national malaise.

> "One of the biggest misconceptions about recruitment is that qualification equals capability. It does not"

In his remarks at an earlier edition of The Platform Nigeria in Lagos, Eniolorunda claimed that most Nigerians applying for positions at the fintech outfit failed to meet its global standards, despite the company's commitment to hiring more Nigerians. He attributed the company's inability to fill 500 vacancies with world-class professionals since 2025 to this shortfall.

"In 2024, we made a decision that we will no longer hire from any other place except Nigeria. And we chopped the cane in 2025. If you go to the Moniepoint career website now, we have 500 vacancies on our website, and we are struggling to see people fill those roles.

"Not only could we not find people in the quantity and the quality we needed, but the people we found also were not up to the global standards of quality that we needed. And we are competing globally, not only with local players, you know, where our biggest competition comes from, China.

"I have world-class people working in the organisation, and here I am, looking for Nigerians that cannot meet the requirements to build world-class products," the Moniepoint boss stated, adding: "I blame our education system. I used to think Nigerians are really bright, but I am beginning to feel we need to do something for the general IQ of this country, not to go lower. I am really worried.

"I used to think intelligence is equally distributed around the world, but I am realising that the environment shapes a lot of things that we consume on social media. I am realising the value shaping our system now; what hook-up culture, yahoo-yahoo culture, is a problem," he stated.

For Erhunmwunsee, one of the most difficult aspects of entering the labour market as a young graduate is being told that a job requires experience when, without that first job, such experience remains beyond the candidate's reach.

This explains why he insists that while employers assess candidates with a view to finding the best fit for a position, many job seekers approach the labour market from the perspective of, "What job can I get with my qualification?"

According to him, some sectors of the economy are generating employment opportunities faster than the traditional talent pipeline can respond, while large numbers of graduates continue to pursue career paths where the supply of candidates significantly exceeds the available opportunities.

A talent management specialist at Lekoil Nigeria Limited, Chijioke Amaechi, noted that the pressures facing employers account for why many organisations are increasingly searching for "ready-made talents".

Amaechi explained that companies have targets to meet and revenue to generate, while training an inexperienced worker takes time, requires supervision and comes at a cost. For businesses already operating under financial pressure, training budgets can be difficult to sustain, resulting in a preference for candidates who can hit the ground running and contribute immediately.

A Senior Human Resources Business Partner at Jobberman Nigeria, Oreoluwa Aboderin, said difficult-to-fill positions frequently expose gaps in behavioural skills and practical experience, even among applicants who meet the educational requirements.

"Employers are looking for candidates who can contribute, collaborate effectively, and adapt quickly to changing business needs," she said.

Search for fresh graduates with capacity to handle specialised roles as wild goose chase

AN economist, policy analyst and Chief Executive Officer of the Centre for the Promotion of Private Enterprise (CPPE), Dr Muda Yusuf, said it was unrealistic to expect every fresh graduate to enter the workplace fully prepared for a specialised role without further training.

According to the immediate past Director-General of the Lagos Chamber of Commerce and Industry, while universities are saddled with the responsibility of providing foundational knowledge and intellectual capacity, employers must be willing to provide the organisation-specific, sector-specific and occupational training needed to strengthen their operations.

Yusuf, however, cautioned against reducing universities to vocational training centres. Higher education, he said, "should continue developing critical thinking, analytical ability, communication, self-confidence and problem-solving skills while strengthening its connection to workplace needs. Those transferable competencies remain important precisely because the workplace itself keeps changing."

He added that the discipline studied was therefore not always the most accurate predictor of workplace performance.

For the Head of Career Service and Alumni Relations at Rome Business School Nigeria, Sarah Ugwu, many graduates leave school with knowledge but without sufficient exposure to the environments in which that knowledge must eventually be applied.

Internships, consulting projects, case competitions, mentoring and company engagements, she added, should therefore form part of the student experience rather than remain optional additions.

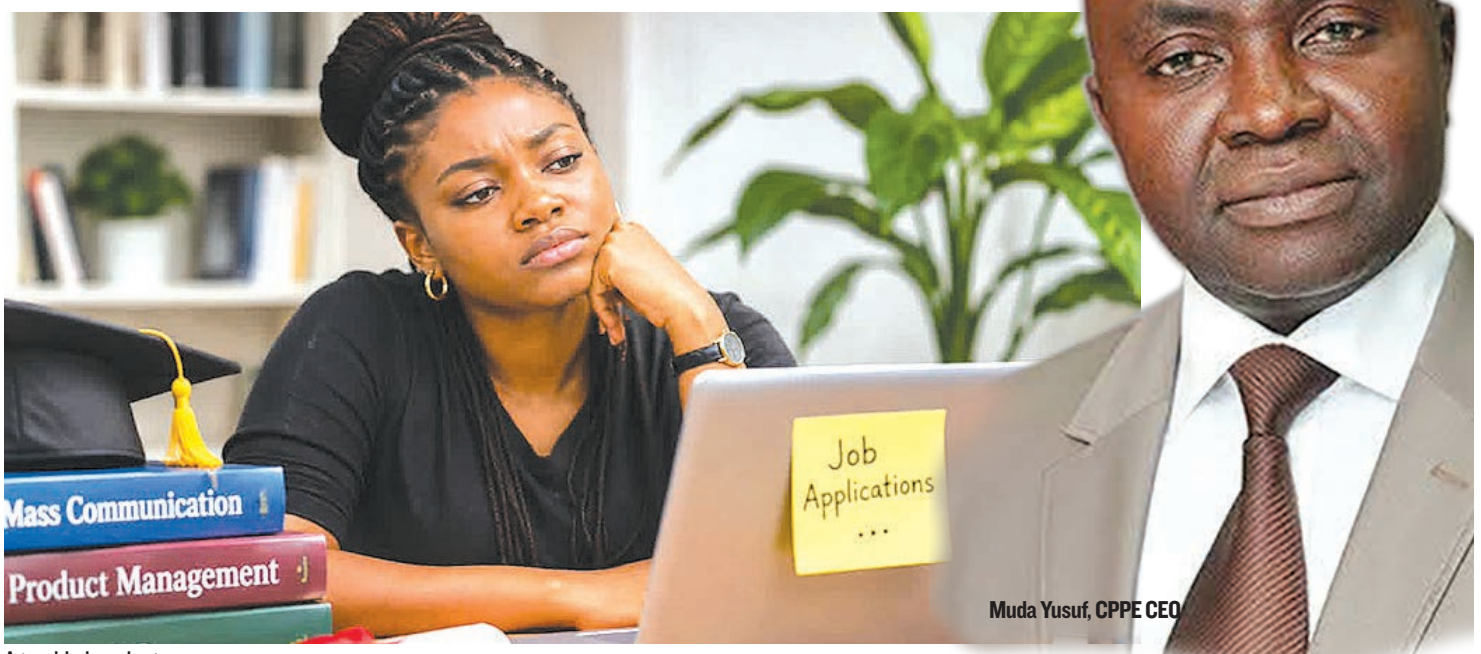
For Okowa, Ugochi and countless others navigating the same labour market, such exposure is more than another item to add to a CV; it can make the difference between being told they lack sufficient experience and being given the opportunity to acquire it. That is why the experience trap is so difficult to escape.

With the disconnect between academia and industry representing a "very huge gap", the Founder

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The Big Story

graduate employment paradox



A troubled graduate

Muda Yusuf, CPPE CEO

of Zion Tech Hub, Godsent Ndoma, said the call for educational institutions and industry players to work together to understand current demands and re-engineer curricula accordingly was timely.

The problem, he argued, also extends to how learners choose what to study, with some selecting courses based on trends or celebrity endorsements rather than first examining the skills employers actually need.

The Director of Career Development Services at the Federal Polytechnic Nekede, Dr Ijeoma Emeagi, also acknowledged that keeping curricula relevant requires continuous feedback from employers, professional bodies, industry partners, alumni and organisations that receive students for industrial training, including through the Students Industrial Work Experience Scheme (SIWES) and internships.

She noted that the pace of change in artificial intelligence, data analytics, cybersecurity, automation and digital services also calls for more frequent curriculum reviews.

An online poll of more than 800 students at the Federal Polytechnic Nekede, conducted ahead of a career-readiness programme, showed that many students, including those in their third and final years, wanted guidance on CV preparation, interview confidence, professional communication, digital visibility and understanding workplace expectations.

Amassing new skills to maximise opportunities, become employable costs a fortune

WHEN the first qualification fails to open doors, many Nigerians respond in the most logical way they know: they learn something else. The Founder of Axia Africa, Olawale Samuel, confirmed this trend, noting that demand had increased for practical technology skills, including data analytics, product design, software development, cybersecurity, AI automation and product management. Increasingly, he said, learners were asking, "What can I learn that will make me useful in the workplace?"

Interestingly, those enrolling for these programmes are not necessarily school leavers. Visits by *The Guardian* to skills-training centres revealed a mix of undergraduates, unemployed graduates, career changers and working professionals. While some were seeking their first jobs, others wanted to change careers, earn through freelance work or remain relevant in their existing fields.

At one data analytics programme visited by *The Guardian*, learners worked with Excel, SQL, Python and Power BI. Their training also involved assignments, practical exercises, group projects, dashboard development and presentations.

For a young person already struggling to find employment, however, the cost of becoming "employable" can become another financial burden. A single course can cost as much as $100 or $200, representing a significant commitment for young Africans earning in local currencies, particularly those without any source of income.

At Adavi Digital Institute, a 12-week data analytics programme costs N190,000, while its cybersecurity and full-stack software engineering programmes were listed at N280,000 and N270,000, respectively.

At Wild Fusion Digital Centre, programmes reviewed by *The Guardian* were priced between N200,000 and N350,000, with durations ranging from eight days to 10 weeks.

Other advanced technology boot camps and masterclasses cost between N500,000 and N1 million. However, free and subsidised alternatives are also available.

The Federal Government's 3 Million Technical Talent (3MTT) programme states that participants pay no fees for its first phase of training, although they are responsible for transportation, meals and other associated costs.

Yet, completing training does not guarantee placement. Some learners finish their programmes and continue searching for jobs, while others enrol for additional courses, move into different fields, take up freelance work or attempt to build their own businesses.

Certificates without a runway

DAVID Itodo, a psychology graduate who moved into technology-related work after developing programming skills during his NYSC year, later enrolled in another six-month programme to deepen his technical knowledge.

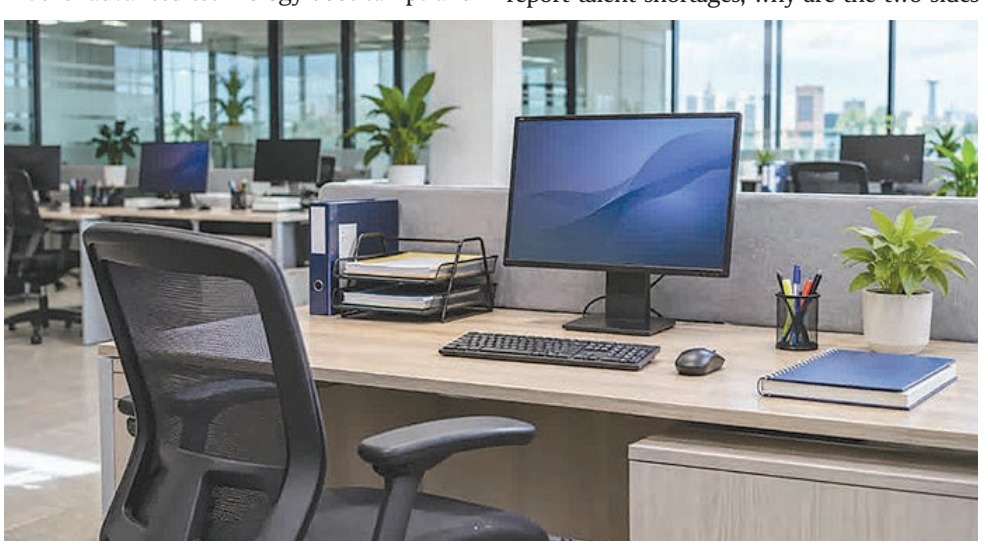
He was not learning because his initial skill had become obsolete, but because workplace demands had evolved. He said he was able to apply what he learnt to his work.

For some people, therefore, upskilling is no longer a bridge used once to cross into employment. It has become a road they must keep travelling.

A strategic communications adviser, Nosike Nwigene, described the danger as an "endless cycle" in which people continue acquiring new skills without getting opportunities to demonstrate them.

That is the uncomfortable question at the heart of Nigeria's skills economy. If people are willing to learn, training programmes are expanding, graduates are adding technology skills to their university degrees, and employers continue to report talent shortages, why are the two sides still struggling to meet?

> "For a young person already struggling to find employment, however, the cost of becoming "employable" can become another financial burden. A single course can cost as much as $100 or $200, representing a significant commitment for young Africans earning in local currencies, particularly those without any source of income."



Unoccupied workplace

Jobberman's Young Nigeria Works evaluation found that 63 per cent of participants had tertiary qualifications, even as the programme continued to identify a mismatch between available skills and job requirements.

Its assessments also recorded improvements in soft skills, from an average baseline of 46 per cent among more than 116,000 assessed jobseekers to about 85 per cent of 1,024,843 learners classified as proficient at the endline.

Training, therefore, can improve measured capabilities, but it cannot, on its own, create employers or vacancies, nor can it guarantee the work experience employers say they need. This is where the story moves beyond the individual job seeker.

The cost of waiting for the 'right' worker

EVERY vacant position has consequences. At MoreMonee MFB, HR professional Shittu Zainab said unfilled roles could redistribute workloads across teams, placing additional pressure on existing employees and affecting productivity, morale and staff retention.

At The Goodland Exclusive Company, a design, real estate and lifestyle investment firm, the Head of Human Resources, Sharon Adegbe, said prolonged vacancies could slow decision-making and execution, ultimately affecting revenue, customer experience and business growth.

Product leader Kelechi Ndieze added that experienced product managers, senior software engineers, AI and data specialists, cybersecurity professionals and technology leaders were among the hardest roles to fill. He noted that vacancies in these specialised positions could slow delivery and innovation, increase pressure on existing teams and push companies towards consultants or outsourcing. Delayed product launches and slower innovation, he added, could also affect revenue and competitiveness.

The World Economic Forum's employer data reinforces these concerns, with 65 per cent of employers operating in Nigeria identifying skills gaps as a barrier to business transformation, while 50 per cent cited difficulties attracting talent to their industries as another barrier.

Brain drain from within

INDUSTRIES do not build expertise overnight. They develop it over years through mistakes, mentoring, field exposure, challenging assignments and the accumulated knowledge of people who have spent decades learning how things work.

Amaechi said this problem was increasingly evident in the oil and gas sector, where older professionals had benefited from extensive training and mentoring by international oil companies, while younger workers had received less exposure. As experienced professionals retire or leave the industry, less-experienced workers may inherit their responsibilities without having received the same depth of training.

The Nigerian Association of Petroleum Explorationists' (NAPE) proposed Academy is, in part, a response to this concern. It builds on the former Shell Intensive Training Programme (SITP), which NAPE said produced generations of petroleum professionals before it was discontinued due to funding constraints.

At a NAPE event, its President, Olajumoke Ajayi, recalled how an internship transformed what she had learnt as an applied geophysics student into practical understanding. Before the internship, she said, many of the concepts she encountered at university remained abstract.

At Mobil Producing Nigeria Unlimited, experienced professionals exposed her to seismic interpretation and demonstrated how geology, geophysics and engineering came together to solve field problems. The lesson stayed with her.

Ajayi has since urged senior professionals and retirees to ensure that the knowledge accumulated over decades does not leave the industry with them, but is passed on through teaching and mentoring younger professionals.

The point extends beyond the oil and gas industry. The workforce cannot be built solely by sending people into classrooms; someone must also show them how knowledge translates into practice when confronted with the complex and unpredictable demands of real work.

That is the thinking behind NAPE's proposed Academy. The programme aims to provide graduates with practical industry training and exposure before they enter the workforce, while NAPE is also calling for university curricula to incorporate more practical, industry-relevant learning.

Counting trainees, missing jobs

THE Federal Government's NYSC Skill Acquisition and Entrepreneurship Development (SAED) programme already provides a formal post-graduation skills pathway.

The NYSC says the programme encompasses training and mentoring, identification of training organisations, monitoring and supervision, and efforts to facilitate access to funding.

In its 2023 yearly report, the NYSC said 325,892 corps members underwent SAED in-camp sensitisation that year. The report also recorded quarterly monitoring and evaluation of post-camp activities, entrepreneurship-support initiatives, and the development of a Jobs Portal and CV Bank intended to connect former corps members with prospective employers.

But there is a crucial piece of information missing: the 2023 report reviewed for this investigation does not provide a national post-training employment rate for SAED participants.

This makes it difficult to determine, from the published figures, how effectively the training translates into employment. The report also identified inadequate skills-training centres to accommodate the number of corps members participating in post-camp training as a challenge.

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

2027: Stakeholders warn of voter fraud, hate speech, rising political violence

From **Seye Olumide, Olusegun Koiki** (Lagos) and **Sodiq Omolaoye** (Abuja)

- Okoye blames political actors for attempts to compromise voters' register
- ADC seeks independent audit, prosecution of 54 INEC officials
- Ezekwesili accuses electoral insiders, demands mock poll results
- Okonkwo warns against hate speech, AI-driven disinformation
- Shari'ah Council, Ndume caution against electoral violence
- Oloja, Barkindo fault weak citizenship as Yoruba group seeks Option A4

STAKEHOLDERS have raised concerns over the credibility and safety of Nigeria's 2027 general elections, warning that alleged manipulation of the voters' register, artificial intelligence (AI)-generated disinformation, hate speech and rising political violence could undermine public confidence in the electoral process.

Former National Commissioner of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), Festus Okoye, blamed politicians and other political actors for attempts to compromise the register, while the African Democratic Congress (ADC) demanded an independent forensic audit and the prosecution of officials implicated in registration irregularities.

Former Minister of Education, Dr Obiageli Ezekwesili, also accused insiders within the commission of manufacturing voter records and urged INEC to publish its mock election results, as other groups and public figures called for peaceful campaigns, responsible communication and greater accountability.

The concerns emerged against the backdrop of the controversy surrounding more than 1.6 million invalid registrations identified by INEC, alongside growing apprehension over the commission's preparedness to conduct credible elections.

Stakeholders at separate engagements in Abuja also drew attention to the role of political actors, the media, citizens and security agencies in protecting democratic institutions from manipulation and violence.

Speaking at the seminar of the Hubert H. Humphrey Fellowship Alumni Association of Nigeria (HHHFAAN) in Abuja, with the theme, "Rebuilding Public Trust in Nigerian Democracy: Citizens, Stakeholders and the Quest for Credible Elections", Okoye said the infiltration of the voters' register was a recurring challenge driven largely by political interests.

He recalled that similar problems had been identified and addressed during previous registration exercises, noting that INEC removed more than four million multiple registrations during the 2011 register clean-up.

He added that the Continuous Voter Registration (CVR) exercise conducted between 2021 and July 2022 recorded more than 12 million registrants, out of which over two million duplicate records were removed after deduplication.

Acknowledging concerns over the emergence of AI-generated images and audio in the latest controversy, the former INEC spokesman said political actors and other individuals seeking to compromise the process had long found ways to infiltrate the register.

He said: "The politicians have always been interested in the voters' register. Before the introduction of the smart card reader, they could get one person to vote 20 times. But the introduction of the smart card reader and the BVAS eliminated their ability to use the permanent voters' cards multiple times."

Okoye argued that those who facilitated the insertion of questionable records might not necessarily be their intended beneficiaries.

"These 1.6 million people who are AI-generated in the voters' register, the people who registered them are not the beneficiaries. Somebody engineered them, somebody compromised them. So let us be honest in relation to that," he added.

He also clarified that the INEC Result Viewing Portal (IReV) was designed to enable the public to view polling unit results and was not the platform for the formal collation of election results.

Ezekwesili accuses INEC insiders, seeks mock poll results

IN her keynote address, Ezekwesili accused insiders within INEC of using artificial intelligence to manufacture voter records and undermine confidence in the electoral process.

She urged the commission to publish the full results of its November 28 mock election exercise, including details of transmission failure rates, to enable Nigerians to assess its preparedness for the 2027 elections and independently examine the performance of its electoral technology.

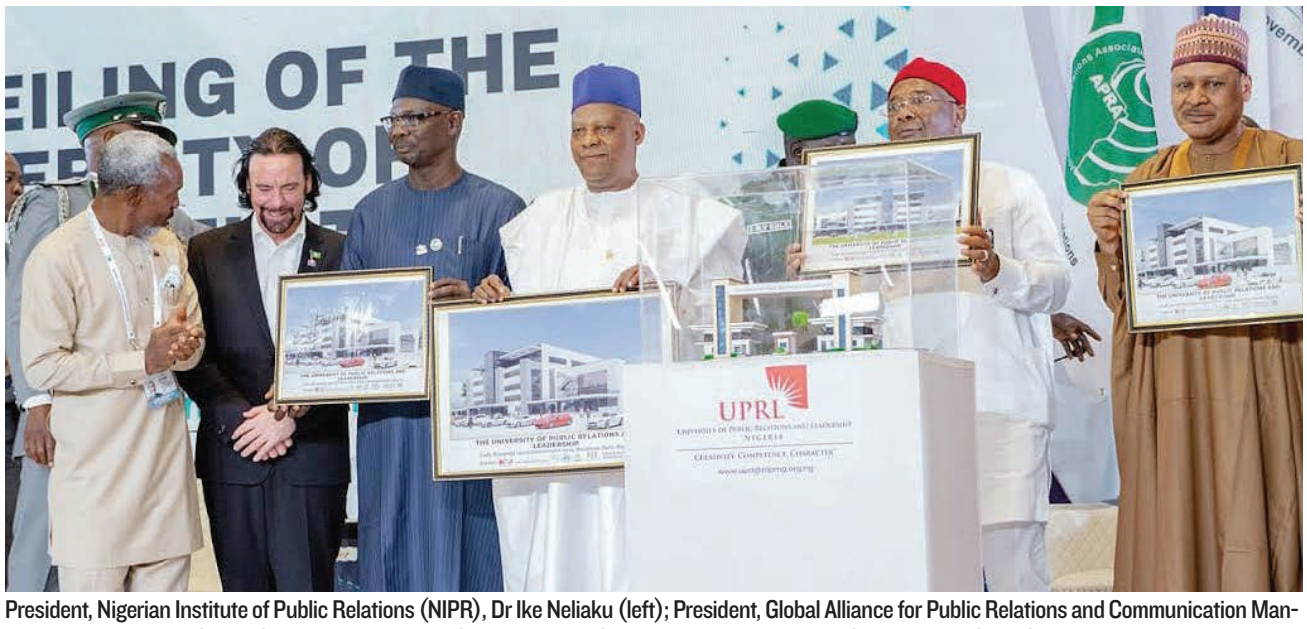
"This is not about hackers. This is not about a technical glitch. This is about insiders, not foreigners, violating the electoral trust record," she said.

The former minister cautioned against dismissing allegations that 1.6 million AI-generated names had been introduced into the voters' register, arguing that even a smaller number of fabricated entries could affect the credibility of an election.

"A fabricated record is a ballot in search of a hand," she said.

Ezekwesili maintained that Nigeria's electoral crisis was fundamentally a problem of accountability, insisting that technology alone could not guarantee credible elections without consequences for those who manipulated the process.

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



President, Nigerian Institute of Public Relations (NIPR), Dr Ike Neliaku (left); President, Global Alliance for Public Relations and Communication Management, Prof. Justin Green; Governor of Nasarawa State, Abdullahi Sule; Vice President, Kashim Shettima; Imo State Governor, Hope Uzodimma, and Minister of Information and National Orientation, Mohammed Idris, during the opening of the 13th World Public Relations Forum (NPRF), and 51st Africa Public Relations Association (APRA) Conference in Abuja. PHOTO: NAN

Jonathan pitches national interest above ambition as Shettima, Issoufou laud Buhari's legacy

From **Terhemba Daka** and **Adamu Abuh** (Abuja)

- Jonathan: Why I conceded defeat to Buhari without resistance
- Buhari foresaw Sahel security crisis, opposed foreign intervention, Issoufou says
- Dangote, Rabiu, Nasarawa, Borno, donate N800m to Buhari's biography, legacy project

BARELY 12 years after the historic concession call by former President Goodluck Jonathan to his challenger, the late President Muhammadu Buhari, to congratulate him on his hard-fought victory while results were being collated, Jonathan yesterday disclosed that his decision to concede defeat and hand over power to Buhari in the 2015 presidential election without resistance was informed by his belief that his successor was a statesman who genuinely loved Nigeria.

Jonathan disclosed this through a former Senate President, Anyim Pius Anyim, who represented him at the public presentation of Muhammadu Buhari: The Authorised Presidential Biography, in Abuja on Thursday. The three-volume biography, written by Dr Udu Yakubu, was presented at an event attended by several political leaders and prominent Nigerians.

Speaking on Jonathan's behalf, Anyim said the former president contacted him about two hours before the event to inform him that he would be unable to attend. He added that Jonathan had cleared his other engagements to ensure he was properly represented.

Anyim said many Nigerians continued to ask why Jonathan accepted Buhari's victory without contesting the outcome even in court, recalling that Buhari was widely recognised as the politician who defeated an incumbent president, while Jonathan earned a reputation as the African leader who peacefully relinquished power without controversy.

"It was easy for President Jonathan to say, 'Look, this is a statesman that I know will love Nigeria.' So there was no need for any form of contention. That is the story," Anyim said, adding that Jonathan's acceptance of the 2015 election results underscored the need to place national interest above party politics.

Anyim further recounted that prior to Jonathan accepting defeat in the 2015 presidential election to avert a political crisis and place Nigeria's unity and stability above his personal ambition, Jonathan had facilitated the provision of bulletproof vehicles for Buhari following a bomb attack on his convoy in Kaduna during the 2015 election campaign, despite the two leaders being presidential rivals. He said he informed Jonathan about the incident, prompting the former president to direct that a memorandum be prepared for the procurement of bulletproof vehicles to protect governors and other important public office holders.

"He called me and asked whether I had heard about the bomb incident involving General Buhari's convoy. He directed that I should bring a memo because we had to buy bulletproof vehicles for governors so that a former Head of State would not die from any form of violent attack," Anyim recalled.

He described the relationship between Buhari and Jonathan as an important chapter in Nigeria's political history, demonstrating that political differences should not override national interests. Anyim also recalled that Buhari had used his residence in Abuja as his first campaign office during the period leading up to the 2015 election.

THIS is as Vice President Kashim Shettima and former President of Niger Republic, Mahamadou Issoufou, have reflected on the legacy of the late former Nigerian leader, Muhammadu Buhari, describing his life and political career as an important chapter in Nigeria's history that offers enduring lessons on leadership, character and public accountability.

While Shettima said Buhari demonstrated that the true measure of leadership lies in personal character rather than the power and privileges of public office, Issoufou urged Nigerians to assess the former President's legacy objectively, considering his achievements, decisions and controversies.

Shettima, who was represented by the Special Adviser to the President on General Duties, Office of the Vice President, Dr Aliyu Modibbo, said Buhari's modest lifestyle, personal discipline and devotion to national service distinguished him from many political leaders.

Speaking on the theme, "The Life We Leave to History", the Vice President recalled lessons from his personal relationship with the late President, particularly his indifference to material possessions and commitment to Nigeria.

"He taught me that the dignity of office depends upon the character of its occupant. He also taught me that a leader's example continues to speak long after he is out of service," Shettima said.

He described Buhari's Spartan lifestyle as remarkable in a political environment where public office is sometimes pursued to satisfy private interests.

Shettima noted that Buhari's political journey, spanning military leadership and democratic governance, attracted both extraordinary public affection and strong criticism over his policies and decisions. He, however, said the former President's enduring connection with millions of Nigerians reflected a distinctive leadership disposition that defied conventional political calculations.

Beyond the tribute, the Vice President described the biography as an important contribution to historical documentation, institutional memory and public accountability.

Shettima commended Buhari for authorising the biographical project during his lifetime and participating in the research, noting that his recollections, alongside interviews and documentary evidence, would enrich the historical record.

He added that the 2015 victory demonstrated the importance of political alliances and support beyond a candidate's traditional regional base. "It was only by extending a handshake across the Niger and forging a national coalition that we were able to win the presidential election in 2015," Shettima said.

IN his remarks, Issoufou, who chaired the occasion, said the publication provided an opportunity to move beyond mourning and subject Buhari's life and leadership to objective historical reflection.

He described the three-volume work as a significant contribution to Nigeria's historical record, particularly for younger generations who did not have personal encounters with the former President.

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



15th YEAR REMEMBRANCE

In loving memory of our Founding Chairman and Publisher,

Mr Alexander Uruemu Ibru

March 1, 1945 – November 20, 2011

Fifteen years have passed since you departed this world,
yet your legacy remains indelible in the sands of time.

Your vision continues to guide us, your values remain our compass,
and your memory we will continue to cherish.

You built more than a newspaper; you built an institution, a family and a legacy of truth, courage and excellence that lives on.

Continue to rest in the bosom of our Lord, until we meet to part no more.

Lady Maiden Alex-Ibru, MFR
Chairman/Publisher

News

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ASUU demands unpaid salaries, end to 'punishment' of dons

From **Charles Akpeji** (Jalingo) and **Owede Agbajileke** (Abuja)

ACADEMIC Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) has accused President Bola Tinubu of punishing university lecturers for suspending their 2022 countrywide strike, demanding immediate payment of the outstanding three-and-a-half months' withheld salaries.

Relatedly, the Taraba State University (TSU) branch of the union is awaiting the formal signing of a Memorandum of Action (MoA) by the state government before suspending its ongoing strike.

ASUU described the continued withholding of salaries, nearly four years after the industrial action, as unjust and as a penalty to lecturers for making sacrifices to restore academic stability and prevent further disruption to students' academic programmes.

In a statement issued on November 18, 2026, and signed by its President, Prof. Chris Piwuna, ASUU expressed disappointment that Tinubu had failed to resolve the dispute despite having expressed sympathy for the union's grievances before becoming President.

Piwuna revealed that ASUU National Executive Council (NEC), during a meeting on November 13 and 14 at the University of Abuja, renewed its demand for immediate payment of the outstanding salaries in the interest of justice.

The union disclosed that the Federal Government had released only four months of the seven-and-a-half salaries withheld during the administration of former President Muhammadu Buhari, leaving three-and-a-half months unpaid.

It recalled that Tinubu, during his engagement with the union before the 2023 presidential election, had acknowledged that the prolonged industrial dispute could have been avoided if the government had addressed lecturers' grievances promptly.

According to ASUU, the President had also expressed support for resolving the controversy through clemency, raising lecturers' hopes that the withheld salaries would be fully restored under his administration.

"ASUU members heaved a sigh of relief when Tinubu won the presidential election, with the expectation of a full release of the seven-and-a-half months' salaries seized under Buhari. However, the hope raised through his pre-election intervention now seems to have been dashed," the union said.

It said its efforts to secure the release of the outstanding payments through the President's Chief of Staff, Femi Gbajabiamila, had failed, alleging that he had indicated that the government was unwilling to pay the full amount.

It also accused the Minister of Education, Dr Tunji Alausa, of maintaining the same position, while lamenting that repeated attempts to secure a direct audience with Tinubu had been unsuccessful.

FOLLOWING its congress yesterday, ASUU-TSU, in a statement yesterday signed by its chairman, Dr. Joshua Mbave, noted that its acceptance was subject to the formal signing of an MoA by the state government, incorporating all commitments, terms and conditions contained in the communiqué.

According to the statement, the congress has accepted the payment arrangement proposed by the state government for the Consolidated Academic Tools Allowance (CATA) and the settlement of outstanding arrears.

Read the remaining story on www.guardian.ng

Taraba ASUU awaits govt's action to suspend strike

2027: INEC extends ad hoc staff recruitment by two weeks

Yiaga demands guidelines, PU list ahead mock accreditation

From **Sodiq Omolaoye**, Abuja

INDEPENDENT National Electoral Commission (INEC) has extended the deadline for registration of ad hoc staff for the 2027 general elections by two weeks.

Meanwhile, Yiaga Africa called on the commission to immediately publish the guidelines and list of polling units (PUs) selected for its nationwide mock accreditation and results-upload exercise scheduled for November 28, 2026.

INEC said the registration portal, which was initially scheduled to close on November 18, 2026, would now remain open until 11:59 pm on December 3.

Disclosing the extension in a statement yesterday, Chairman of INEC's Information and Voter Education Committee (IVEC), Mohammed Haruna, said the development followed a review of the recruitment exercise to give more eligible Nigerians the opportunity to apply, while ensuring adequate pool of applicants for deployment across the country.

The electoral umpire had opened the INEC Portal for Recruitment of Election Staff (INECPRES) at 8:00 am on September 18, 2026, to recruit ad hoc personnel for the 2027 general elections.

It urged interested Nigerians who have yet to apply to do so through its dedicated portal before the deadline.

Stressing that applications were free, the commission warned that neither its officials nor any other person was authorised to demand payment from applicants.

It advised Nigerians to disregard any website, link or message claiming to be a recruitment portal of the commission other than its official platform.

INEC said the registration could only be completed through the INECPRES portal, which was also accessible through its official website.

YIAGA said the commission's failure to make public the framework for the exercise and the locations where it would take place could limit citizens, political parties and election observers' ability to participate in and monitor the process.

Read the remaining story on www.guardian.ng



All Progressives Congress (APC) chieftain, Bisi Akande (left); Ekiti State Governor, Biodun Oyebanji; Ondo State Governor, Lucky Aiyedatiwa; wife of the celebrator, Omolola Olanipekun; her husband, Wole Olanipekun; President Bola Tinubu; Chief Justice of Nigeria, Kudirat Kekere-Ekun; Senate President Godswill Akpabio; APC Chieftain, Olusegun Osoba; and Attorney General of the Federation (AGF) and Minister of Justice, Lateef Fagbemi, during the public presentation of Olanipekun's book as part of activities marking his 75th birthday, in Abuja. PHOTO: LUCY LADIDI ATEKO

FG targets single budget cycle, carries over 2026 capital spending

From **Collins Olayinka**, Abuja

THE Federal Government is moving to harmonise Nigeria's 2026 and 2027 budgets, with plans to carry outstanding capital expenditure balances into next year and eventually adopting a single yearly budget cycle to improve fiscal planning and budget implementation.

However, the Nigerian Economic Society (NES) warned against economic decisions that could undermine the gains of ongoing reforms, urging political parties, governments and other stakeholders to maintain fiscal discipline and policy continuity ahead of the 2027 general elections.

The Federal Government's decision followed a meeting of the Economic Management Team (EMT), chaired by the Minister of Finance and Coordinating Minister of the Economy, Taiwo Oyedele, in Abuja on Wednesday.

Under the proposed arrangement, the government intends to implement as much of the 2026 capital budget as possible while transferring outstanding balances to 2027 as part of efforts to align public spending with more realistic revenue and financing expectations.

The move is expected to improve coordination between government revenue and expenditure plans and address challenges associated with budget execution.

The EMT said it had advanced work on harmonising the budget around more realistic revenue and financing assumptions, while working towards a single yearly budget cycle going forward.

The development comes alongside efforts to strengthen fiscal discipline and ensure that available government resources are directed towards priority projects.

The meeting also reviewed progress on the 2027 Finance Bill, which is expected to update Nigeria's tax laws and introduce further improvements to the ongoing tax reform programme.

The proposed legislation is part of a widergovernment strategy to improve the ease of doing business, reduce borrowing costs and ensure that more funds within the financial system are available to businesses and other productive sectors of the economy.

According to the EMT, the proposed tax changes are intended to support economic activities by improving the business environment and encouraging the flow of financial-sector liquidity into the real economy.

It reported that real Gross Domestic Product (GDP) grew by 4.43 per cent in the second quarter of 2026, while headline and core inflation continued to slow. It put October's inflation reading at 14.06 per cent and described it as a six-year low.

According to the ministry, Moody's and Fitch have both revised Nigeria's sovereign credit outlook from stable to positive in 2026. It noted that this followed S&P Global's upgrade of the country's rating to 'B' from 'B-' in May.

NES warns against sacrificing economic gains for politics

THE President of NES, Dr Baba Musa, at the 2026 National Growth and Development Forum, yesterday, organised by Moneyline with Nancy on African Independent Television (AIT) in Abuja, warned that Nigeria's development challenges required disciplined public finance, credible institutions and consistent implementation of economic policies.

Read the remaining story on www.guardian.ng

COP31: Africa rejects Paris Agreement renegotiation as COP31 winds down

Revised draft draws criticism over retreat on fossil fuel transition

AFRICAN countries have warned against attempts to renegotiate the Paris Agreement, insisting that developed nations must honour their existing climate obligations, as disagreements over finance and support for vulnerable economies continue at the 31st United Nations Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP31) in Antalya, Türkiye.

However, a revised draft of the proposed outcome of COP31 removed all references to fossil fuels, including an earlier call for countries to accelerate the transition away from them, drawing criticism from climate organisations and campaigners.

The African Group of Negotiators (AGN) on Climate Change, which represents the continent's 54 countries in international climate negotiations, described any attempt to reopen the agreement, particularly its provisions on countries' obligations, as unacceptable.

The position reflects a broader concern among African negotiators that discussions about the future of global climate action must not weaken responsibilities already established under the 2015 agreement, especially when developing countries still struggle to secure the resources needed to implement their climate commitments.

The Paris Agreement, adopted at COP21 in France, established a framework for countries to limit global warming to well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels, while pursuing efforts to keep the increase to 1.5°C.

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Resident doctors demand 14-month arrears before Christmas

From **Nkechi Onyedika-Ugoeze, Abuja**

- Gives FG four weeks to resolve outstanding entitlements
- Seeks Batch 10 promotion arrears, CBA conclusion

NIGERIAN Association of Resident Doctors (NARD) has appealed to President Bola Tinubu to ensure the payment of 14 months' outstanding Professional Allowance for Training (PAT) arrears and Batch 10 promotion arrears before Christmas, warning that failure to address the issues could threaten industrial harmony in the nation's health sector.

The association, however, commended the President for the commencement of payment of the outstanding allowances, disclosing that four months out of the 18 months owed to healthcare workers nationwide had been paid.

Speaking with journalists yesterday in Abuja, NARD President, Dr Ogar Emmanuel Idoko, said the association appreciated the Federal Government's recent interventions but insisted that more needed to be done to fulfil outstanding welfare obligations to doctors.

Idoko spoke following the association's Extraordinary National Executive Council (E-NEC) meeting held on November 19, 2026, to review the implementation of welfare demands arising from its 46th Annual General Meeting in Calabar in September.

He said the council particularly appreciated the completion of the 2026 Medical Residency Training Fund (MRTF), following payment of the final supplementary list on November 18, as well as the upward review of the fund for 2027.

According to him, the association also secured assurances that the January 2026 retroactive payment of PAT arrears would be made to healthcare workers alongside their November salaries.

The NARD President also expressed concern over delays in the computation, verification, and payment of Batch 10 promotion arrears, urging the President to direct the relevant ministries, departments, and agencies to expedite the process.

He called on the Ministries of Labour and Employment and Health and Social Welfare, alongside other relevant government agencies, to accelerate negotiations and ensure that the agreement is approved and circularised, with appropriate budgetary provisions and a definite implementation timeline.

Idoko further demanded that the eventual agreement include a retroactive implementation date to compensate healthcare workers for the prolonged delay.

NARD warned that the continued delay in reviewing doctors' remuneration, against the backdrop of rising living costs and the migration of skilled medical professionals, could further undermine the country's healthcare system.

On its next line of action, Idoko stated that the association had resolved to sustain constructive engagement with the Federal Government rather than immediately embark on industrial action.

NCC targets VAS pricing gap, warns on mandatory data compliance

By **Adeyemi Adepetun**

NIGERIAN Communications Commission (NCC) has kicked off a comprehensive cost determination study for Value-Added Services (VAS) across Nigeria's $76 billion telecommunications industry, signalling a push to anchor pricing, revenue sharing, and next-generation digital services on empirical data.

At a Stakeholder Consultative Forum held yesterday in Lagos, the Commission formally introduced its consultants, Skyquest Concept Projects Limited, and unveiled a multi-step costing methodology covering the value chain from FY2017 through YTD 2026.

While framing the initiative as collaborative and focused on sustainability rather than on predetermining prices, the NCC underscored that responding to formal data requests under Section 64 of the Nigerian Communications Act (NCA) 2003 is a statutory obligation.

Seven Nigerian UK alumni get grants to drive climate action, inclusion

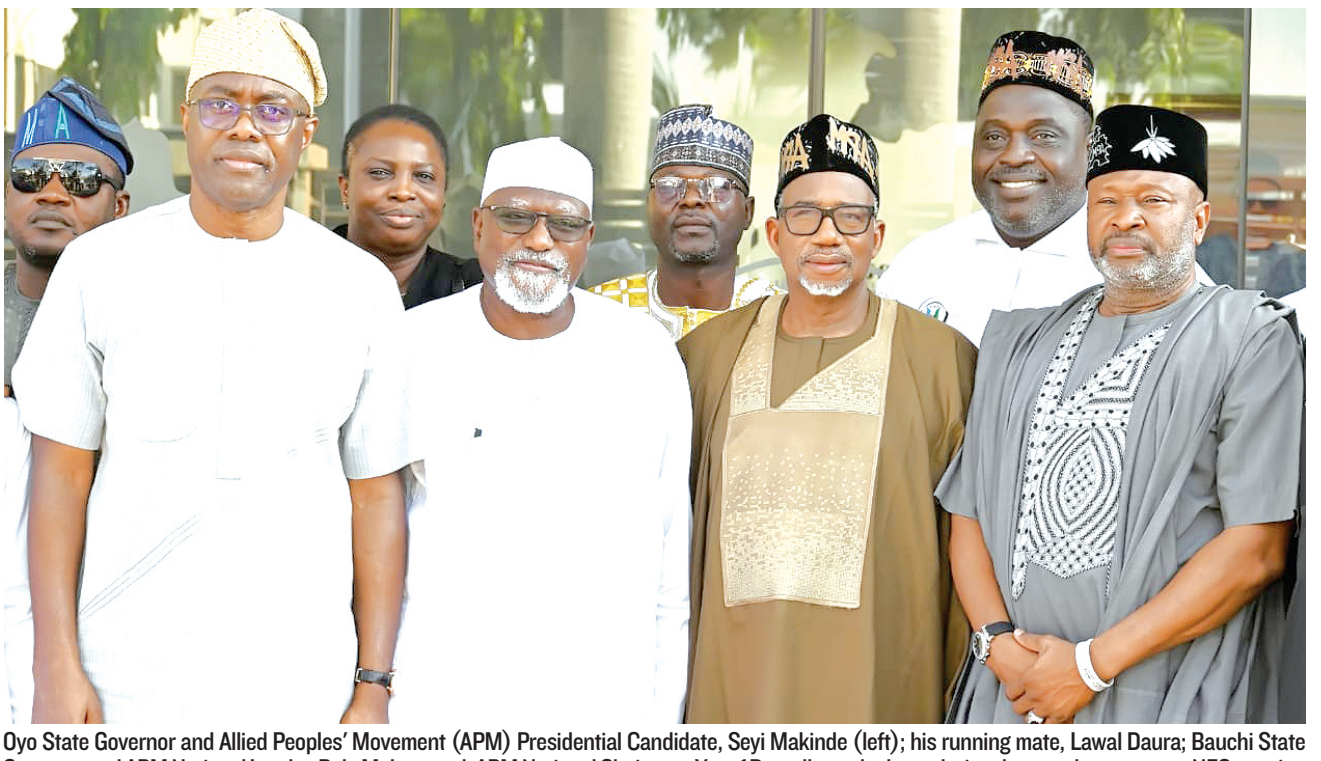
By **Victoria Nwachukwu**

SEVEN Nigerian graduates of UK institutions have been selected for grants of up to £5,000 each to implement projects that address climate change, environmental sustainability, inequality, and social inclusion in their communities.

The beneficiaries were announced by the British Council Nigeria at the 2026 Alumni UK Grantee Reception in Lagos, with four projects focusing on climate action and sustainability and three addressing inclusion, reducing inequality and empowerment.

Speaking at a media briefing yesterday, the British Council's Deputy Country Director, Chilufya Besa, said the funding was tied to specific projects, agreed budgets and expected results, rather than recognition of the recipients' previous achievements.

He said the initiative was intended to support practical interventions, adding that climate change affected not only the environment but also jobs.



Oyo State Governor and Allied Peoples' Movement (APM) Presidential Candidate, Seyi Makinde (left); his running mate, Lawal Daura; Bauchi State Governor and APM National Leader, Bala Mohammed; APM National Chairman, Yusuf Dantalle, and others, during the party's emergency NEC meeting in Abuja, yesterday.

International Fraud Week: Institute blames poor governance in Africa on fraud

THE Chartered Institute of Forensics and Certified Fraud Investigators of Nigeria (CIFCFIN) has said that the estimated scale of global fraud losses has reached alarming proportions, blaming it in particular on poor governance in Africa.

The institute called on governments, public institutions, private sector organisations, professionals and citizens to intensify collective efforts to combat fraud, strengthen accountability and safeguard national resources.

It maintained that the growing scale of global fraud losses poses a serious threat to good governance, institutional integrity and sustainable economic development in Nigeria, Africa and the world at large.

The Founder and Chairman, Governing Council of CIFCFIN, Dr Iliyasu Gashinbaki, made the call during an international press conference in Abuja to officially flag off the 2026 International Fraud Awareness Week titled: "Fraud Losses Rival National GDP: A Threat to Governance in Nigeria and Africa."

Addressing journalists, Gashinbaki stressed that fraud should no longer be viewed "merely as financial misconduct but as a fundamental governance challenge capable of weakening public institutions, eroding investor confidence, undermining public trust and diverting critical resources from infrastructure, healthcare, education and other essential services."

Highlighting the global significance of the awareness campaign, Gashinbaki explained that the Association of Certified Fraud Examiners (ACFE), the world's largest anti-fraud organisation, brings together professionals.

Lagos Speaker tells global lawmakers to turn hunger pledges into laws, budgets

From **Shakirah Adunola** (Lagos) and **Sodiq Omolaoye** (Abuja)

As NIPR says African leaders face credibility crisis

SPEAKER of the Lagos State House of Assembly, Mudashiru Obasa, has called on lawmakers around the world to translate anti-hunger commitments into enforceable legislation, dedicated budgetary allocations and strict parliamentary oversight.

Delivering Nigeria's position at the Third Global Parliamentary Summit on Hunger and Malnutrition in Nairobi, Kenya, the first edition of the gathering to be hosted on African soil, Obasa warned that policy declarations alone will not end food insecurity unless backed by statutory frameworks and sustained financing.

The two-day summit, held from 16 to 17 November at the Parliament of Kenya under the theme "Legislating for Resilient Agrifood Systems and Zero Hunger in a Changing Climate", convened more than 200 legislators from over 60 countries. It was jointly organised by the Kenyan Parliament, the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), and the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (AECID).

Represented at the forum by a delegation of lawmakers, senior Assembly officials and legislative aides, Obasa outlined ongoing federal and subnational efforts in Nigeria to overhaul food systems amid rising population pressures and climate shocks.

At the federal level, he pointed to President Bola Tinubu's Renewed Hope Agenda, noting that the government has approved the National Nutrition Bill 2026, along with a revised National Policy on Food and Nutrition.

Obasa's intervention echoed the keynote address by Kenyan President, William Ruto, who cautioned that Africa could account for nearly 60 per cent of the world's hungry population by 2030 unless governments accelerate domestic agricultural reforms, despite the continent holding over 60 per cent of the globe's remaining uncultivated arable land.

MEANWHILE, the Nigerian Institute of Public Relations (NIPR) has said African leaders are facing a growing credibility crisis, with only 46 per cent of citizens expressing trust in their presidents and 37 per cent having confidence in their parliaments.

Nigeria, Russian Customs agree to share trade flows, data, intelligence

By **Adaku Onyenucheya**

NIGERIA Customs Service (NCS) and the Federal Customs Service of the Russian Federation have strengthened bilateral cooperation on trade facilitation, information exchange, customs enforcement, financial integrity and capacity development, while opening new opportunities for the two administrations to deepen operational cooperation.

This follows the signing of an Agreement on Cooperation and Mutual Assistance in Customs Matters (CMAA) by both Customs administrations in Moscow on October 28, 2026.

The CMAA provides for four principal areas of cooperation, which include streamlined customs procedures to facilitate legitimate trade; secure information exchange to prevent, detect, investigate and suppress customs offences; financial integrity measures targeting illicit financial flows, grey-market importations and tax evasion; and stronger border security through cooperation against counterfeit goods, narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances and other prohibited or hazardous materials.

In a statement issued by the NCS yesterday, the Comptroller-General of Customs, Dr Bashir Adeniyi, during bilateral discussions with the Head of the Federal Customs Service of Russia, Mr Valery Pikalyov, described the agreement as a strategic instrument to safeguard economic integrity, secure supply chains and strengthen trade governance.

He said the engagement marked the culmination of months of technical consultations, legal reviews, and constructive discussions between both administrations, reflecting a shared commitment to modernising customs operations and responding more effectively to emerging challenges in international trade.

Change of Name

We are pleased to announce to the general public that **FBNQuest Funds** has been changed to **First Equity Partners.**

FirstEquityPartners

Leveraging the heritage in the name **"FIRST"**and establishing a consistent presence globally is more easily achieved with a unified naming convention. This change was motivated by a desire to become a retail-focused financial group,and involves dropping the platinum and grey colours in favor of yellow gold which represents the commercial banking group.

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LAUNCH OF MOBILE ONE-STOP SHOP





Nigeria's Federal Government, Germany and UNHCR Launch the Mobile One-Stop Shop Initiative to Bring Documentation and Protection Services to Displaced Communities in Hard-to-Reach Areas

Abuja, Nigeria, 11 November 2026 – UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, handed over ten Mobile One-Stop Shop vehicles to State Governments, in partnership with the Federal Government and with funding from the Government of Germany, to take documentation and protection services to displaced and host communities in remote, hard-to-reach areas.

The mobile units will deliver NIN enrolment, birth registration, SIM registration, BVN enrolment, bank account opening, enrolment in the National Social Register, and protection counselling across ten states: Borno, Adamawa, Yobe, Akwa Ibom, Benue, Cross River, Taraba, Katsina, Zamfara and Sokoto. The fleet removes the barriers of distance, cost and insecurity that have kept displaced families from the documents they need to rebuild their lives.

Identity Is the First Step

"When people cannot reach essential services, we must bring the services to them. Identity is the first step out of poverty: you cannot be paid if you cannot be identified, and you cannot be protected if you cannot be counted.

No Nigerian should be left behind simply because of where they live, or because they were forced to flee," said Dr. Bernard M. Doro, Honourable Minister of Humanitarian Affairs and Poverty Reduction.

Arjun Jain, UNHCR Representative in Nigeria, said the partnership "*puts solutions into action: the first steps towards self-reliance.*"

A Partnership for Access and Inclusion

For many displaced people, the nearest registration office can be days away, leaving children out of school and families locked out of financial services.

German Ambassador-designate to Nigeria and ECOWAS, Stefan Russell, said: *"Germany is proud to support this initiative. The vehicles bring access to documentation to displaced and host communities, enabling them, for example, to go to school or to access banking, in other words, to take their life in their own hands."*

Elias and Fatima's Story

Elias, a refugee from Cameroon, received his identity documents in 2018. *"Once I had my documents, everything started to change,"* he says.

He enrolled his children in school, opened a bank account and, by 2022, opened a shop. For Fatima, an internally displaced mother of three, birth certificates received in March 2025 ended her fear of having her children turned away from school. "*Having the birth certificates has opened doors for my children beyond primary school,"* she says.

Looking Ahead

The initiative aligns with the Ministry's One Humanitarian, One Poverty Response System (OHOPRS), which connects humanitarian intervention, social protection and poverty reduction to move vulnerable households beyond repeated emergency assistance towards dignity, resilience and self-reliance.

"Today we hand the State Governments more than vehicles. We hand them a responsibility: to keep these units fuelled, maintained and on the road, reaching the last camp, the last village and the last family. Ten states, one innovative response. If we get this right, these ten will become thirty-six, plus the FCT," the Minister added.

EXPRESSION OF INTEREST



TOTALENERGIES PORT HARCOURT CLINIC:
Recurrent Water Leakage Diagnostic Investigation and Remedial Works

INVITATION AND PURPOSE

TotalEnergies Closed Pension Fund Administrator (TEPNG CPFA of the Company) invites suitably qualified contractors to submit an Expression of Interest for the diagnostic investigation, remedial design and execution of works associated with recurrent water leakage at the Port Harcourt Clinic.

The objective is to verify leakage sources, entry points and migration pathways before committing to permanent remedial works, and to implement only repairs justified by accepted diagnostic evidence.

SCOPE OF SERVICES

- Mobilization, access, phasing, HSE controls, Clinic protection and temporary weatherproofing.
- Diagnostic survey: leak history, coordinated visual survey, moisture mapping and common traceable records.
- Thermography, roof-level/fall/ponding survey, drainage assessment and membrane/build-up investigation.
- Electronic leak detection, impedance scanning where compatible, and controlled roof water testing.
- Façade/window diagnostic water testing, tracer testing, borescope inspection and targeted opening-up.
- MEP/HVAC investigation including concealed pipework testing, condensation assessment, condensate drainage and rainfall-event monitoring.
- Diagnostic Report, Root-Cause Matrix, repair-versus-replacement assessment, remedial design basis and measurable quantities.
- Coordinated remedial design, material submissions and representative trial repairs/mock-ups.
- Authorized permanent remedial works to roofs, drainage, façades/windows, penetrations, HVAC/condensate and verified concealed pipework.
- Post-repair performance verification, drying, reinstatement, monitoring and final close-out.

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

Interested firms are required to submit the following documents:

1. Evidence of Certificate of Incorporation with the Corporate Affairs Commission (CAC), including Forms CAC 2 and CAC 7 (or CAC Status Report).
2. Evidence of Company Income Tax Clearance Certificate for the last three (3) years (2023, 2024 and 2025), valid.
3. Evidence of Pension Clearance Certificate valid till 31st December 2026, in compliance with the Pension Reform Act 2014.
4. Company profile, including organisational structure and evidence of relevant professional registration of key personnel (e.g. COREN)
5. Proposed Resources (Project organogram and CV of the project team)
6. Verifiable Evidence of five (5) similar jobs successfully executed in the last five (5) years, with letters of award and completion certificates, along with respective and relevant references to be contacted for verification.
7. Evidence of financial capability, including audited accounts for the last three (3) years and a reference letter from a reputable bank.
8. A covering letter on company letterhead, signed by an authorised officer, stating the firm's contact address, telephone number and email address.
9. Sworn Affidavit confirming solvency, absence of criminal convictions, and accuracy of submitted documents
10. Declaration of "No conflict of Interest"

Please note that Joint ventures/consortia must provide a Memorandum of Understanding, and each partner must meet the requirements stated above.

CONTRACTING ARRANGEMENT

Contractor may bid as a single Contractor, consortium or Joint Venture (JV), or may engage specialist subcontractors where complementary capabilities are required. The Contractor shall clearly identify the Lead Contractor, consortium/JV members and/or key subcontractors, together with their respective scope and responsibilities. The Lead/Main Contractor shall remain responsible for the overall coordination, integration and performance of the Works.

SUBMISSION OF EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

Interested Firms are required to submit their Expression of Interest (EOI) electronically via email in PDF format. The submission should be properly organized, paginated, and include a table of contents and appropriate section dividers.

The email subject line should be clearly stated as follows:

EXPRESSION OF INTEREST FOR PORT HARCOURT CLINIC PROJECT

The submission email should be addressed to:

The Procurement and General Purpose Committee
TotalEnergies Closed Pension Fund Administrator

Email: PGPCom@tepngcpfa.com

SUBMISSION DEADLINE

The completed Expression of Interest, together with all required supporting documents, must be submitted to the above email address on or before **12:00 noon Wednesday, December 2, 2026.**

GENERAL INFORMATION

- Only contractors that meet the requirements above will be shortlisted and invited to collect the Request for Proposal (RFP) / tender documents.
- Late submissions will not be considered for the RFP process.
- This advertisement shall not be construed as a commitment on the part of TEPNG CPFA, nor shall it entitle any contractor to make claims whatsoever or seek indemnity from the Company by virtue of having responded to this invitation.
- The Company reserves the right to verify any claims made by applicants and to disqualify any firm that provides false information.
- The Company is not bound to shortlist any firm and reserves the right to annul the procurement process at any time without incurring liability
- Enquiries may be directed to the Procurement and General Purpose Committee via PGPCom@tepngcpfa.com between 9:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m., Monday to Friday.

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Conscience is an open wound; only truth can heal it. Uthman dan Fodio 1754-1816

Editorial

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Wanted: A permanent end to gas flaring business

NIGERIA'S latest warning to revoke the licences of investors who fail to develop projects under the Nigerian Gas Flare Commercialisation Programme (NGFCP) is well-directed, but it must not become another regulatory warning without measurable consequences, as many previous warnings have.

After decades of promises, deadlines, penalties and programmes, gas flaring remains one of the clearest manifestations of Nigeria's failure to convert its abundant natural resources into economic value while protecting communities and the environment.

The Nigerian Upstream Petroleum Regulatory Commission (NUPRC) said 43 flare gas sites were initially identified under the commercialisation programme and 27 have so far been awarded for development. It has now warned that investors who fail to demonstrate sufficient progress one year after receiving an award could lose their permits.

The warning is significant because the NGFCP was conceived precisely to move Nigeria beyond the old approach of merely imposing financial penalties on oil producers. The programme seeks to allow technically and commercially competent investors to capture gas that would otherwise be flared and convert it into useful products and services. The Federal Government has also set 2030 as its target for ending routine gas flaring.

But the latest figures suggest that the country is still some distance from that objective. The World Bank's 2026 Global Gas Flaring Tracker reported that Nigeria's gas flaring increased by eight per cent in 2025, alongside an eight per cent increase in oil production. It specifically identified inadequate infrastructure for transporting associated gas to markets and ageing gas-processing facilities with high downtime as contributing factors.

This raises a fundamental question: Why has Nigeria been able to collect hundreds of billions of naira in gas-flaring penalties without eliminating the practice? The answer is partly embedded in the design of the system itself. Penalties are supposed to make flaring economically unattractive. But where the infrastructure to gather, process, transport and sell associated gas is inadequate, a producer may still regard a penalty as a cost of doing business rather than an incentive to make a much larger capital investment.

This is why the reported N521.87 billion collected in gas-flaring penalties in 2025 should not be celebrated simply as evidence of regulatory success. It is also evidence of the enormous scale of the continuing problem. If billions of naira are being collected while gas continues to be burned, the government must ask whether the penalty regime is actually changing behaviour or merely monetising non-compliance.

Government therefore cannot escape responsibility. Successive administrations have announced deadlines to end routine flaring, yet those deadlines have repeatedly shifted. The NGFCP was conceived in 2016 and subsequently relaunched in 2022 after years of delays and changes to the regulatory framework. The NUPRC's own documentation acknowledges that the programme had to be restructured to reflect changing industry and market realities.

That history matters. It is difficult to hold investors entirely responsible for delays in a programme whose policy, regulatory and institutional architecture has itself taken years to stabilise. Government also has a responsibility to create the infrastructure and market conditions that make gas utilisation commercially viable.

Gas cannot simply be captured at the flare point and magically become electricity, LPG, CNG, feedstock or export revenue. It requires gathering systems, processing plants, pipelines, compression, transportation, financing and reliable markets.

The World Bank's latest assessment is particularly instructive. Globally, it says the technologies needed to end routine flaring are already available; the continuing obstacles include inadequate regulation, insufficient capital, limited market infrastructure and failures by governments and operators to treat flaring reduction as a priority.

Nigeria therefore needs to stop approaching gas flaring primarily as a compliance problem and begin treating it as an infrastructure and industrial-development challenge. There is also a clear responsibility on the oil and gas companies. Operators cannot continue to argue that gas utilisation is difficult while investing heavily in oil production that generates the associated gas in the first place.

Where commercially viable solutions exist, producers should be compelled to install the necessary gathering and utilisation facilities. The NUPRC's 2023 regulations already require operators to submit flare-elimination and monetisation plans, while its facility guidelines state that there should be no routine flaring during operations.

The argument, therefore, is not that companies should be punished regardless of circumstances. It is that legitimate technical or economic difficulties should be transparently identified, subjected to independent verification, and addressed within defined timelines, rather than allowed to become permanent excuses.

The government should also examine the economics of marginal and remote fields. Some flare sites may not support standalone commercial projects because the gas volume is small or the distance to markets is considerable. In such cases, shared infrastructure for gathering and processing, pooled investment, and targeted financing may be more effective than simply threatening revocation.

The NGFCP should consequently be redesigned around measurable milestones. Every awarded flare site should have a public development timetable covering financing, engineering, construction, gas capture and commercial production. Investors that fail without demonstrable justification should lose their awards. But government agencies should also be held accountable where delays are caused by limitations in approvals, infrastructure, market access or regulatory uncertainty.

There is a further reason for urgency: the communities living around these oil fields have paid the price for decades. Gas flaring releases carbon dioxide, methane and other pollutants, while exposing oil-producing communities to persistent environmental and health burdens. The World Bank notes that gas flaring contributes to climate change and releases pollutants including unburnt methane and black carbon.

Nigeria cannot continue to speak of gas as the foundation of its industrialisation while allowing enormous quantities of the resource to be lost to flare stacks. With proven gas reserves now exceeding 215 trillion cubic feet, according to the NUPRC, the contradiction is difficult to justify.

The responsibility is shared, but not equally. Oil producers are responsible for complying with the law and investing in appropriate flare-elimination measures. Investors awarded flare sites are responsible for delivering the projects for which they received permits.

But government bears the greater institutional responsibility because it writes the rules, grants the licences, collects the penalties, designs the commercialisation programmes and controls much of the infrastructure and policy environment on which gas utilisation depends.

The way forward is therefore neither another deadline nor another threat. Nigeria needs a binding national flare-elimination roadmap with annual targets, transparent site-by-site reporting, strict enforcement, infrastructure investment and incentives for viable gas utilisation projects.

Penalties collected from flaring should also be transparently accounted for, with a clearly defined portion potentially directed towards gas-capture infrastructure, environmental remediation and affected communities, subject to the applicable legal framework.

Above all, the government must stop measuring success by how much it collects from flaring and start measuring success by how much gas is no longer flared. A country with severe electricity shortages, expensive energy, widespread reliance on generators and a vast gas resource cannot afford to continue burning away a valuable commodity. Nigeria has endured the consequences of wasted gas for too long. The time has come to make the gas work for Nigerians.

LETTER

2027: Nigerians should open contestants' scorecards

SIR: With the general elections a few months away, it is imperative for Nigerians to check the scorecards of our previous leaders, and those that are interested to come in, from local councils, governors to the Federal House. We need those who would listen and who have the interest of the masses at heart to be voted for. This is so because it takes a compassionate man to know the poor are really suffering, and therefore, takes measures to better their lot.

For voters to know the leader who will have compassion, they should look at their backgrounds, antecedents and previous performance of the candidates in their respective endeavours.

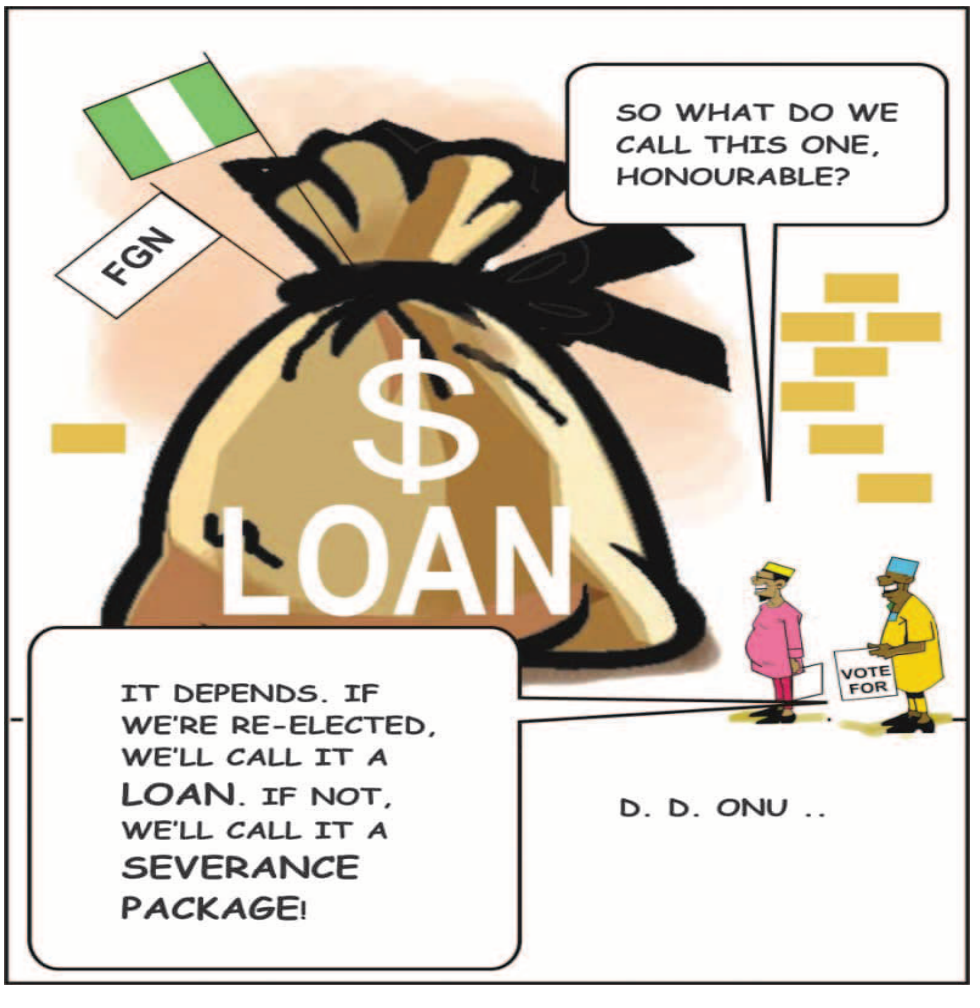
For the avoidance of doubt, only a leader, who has experienced the vicissitudes of life, would understand what the people go through, not one who has, all his life, enjoyed life. This is not to say that people from rich backgrounds do not make good leaders. No. What I mean is that, only those who understand what it takes to survive in harsh economic environment would know that welfarism is a good policy.

Indeed, the leader Nigeria needs at this time is somebody with technical competence, patience and love. Also, we need somebody who acknowledges dialogue as a better way of solving problems. He should not be somebody who suppresses the poor. Above all, we need a God-fearing leader, irrespective of religion.

This is the time for reflection on past records or score card, whether or not the leaders have contributed to socio-economic and political development of the country. We must ask ourselves questions, as to whether those seeking our mandate want power for themselves or to cater to the welfare of the people. Those seeking elective office to feather their nests, they should not get our votes, and it is easy to know those who are seeking office for selfish end. We can know this from their manifestoes or planned programmes. Those who do not have welfarist programme can't be for the masses.

To ensure that the country gets this type of leaders, Nigerians must exercise their franchise, they must vote and ensure that their votes count. Therefore, those who are of voting age and registered must collect their permanent voters card (PVC). It is with the card and in exercising their civil rights of voting, would they take control of their destiny. With that, they should stop bad leaders from occupying government offices. The electorate must avoid violence, so as not to play into the hands of those who would want to manipulate the system and rig the elections. It is when there are peaceful polls that the will of the people will prevail. God bless Nigeria.

Edeson Effiong wrote from Oshodi, Lagos.



Opinion

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Olu Obafemi's *Illuminations* as wholesome prophecy

By **Tony Afejuku**

THE Glitterer is inclined today to take a look at Olu Obafemi, University of Ilorin Professor Emeritus. At different times in the past I had written on him and his work, literary and non-literary. Those who are hearing or may be hearing about him for the first time now should be served a briefly brief introduction of him. In a career spanning over forty years, Olu Obafemi has been widely recognised as one of our country's leading scholars and men of letters. He has numerous writings that should interest and arrest their attention.

But the Glitterer is not inclined to name them here. He is only devoting his glittering eyes to the great man's *Illuminations*, a 2009 collection of poems he noticed recently, and fetched from his long list of yet to be devoured books and books and books. Readers should be served this early notice, however; the Glitterer is not at all interested in doing a wholesome reading of the collection here. The work has certain fundamental resemblances to our current cultural, political, and environmental experiences. Indeed, patriots of our current age will find the book very worthy of the little but very precious time they should give to it after tasting this column today.

Obafemi is a very influential political, social and cultural thinker, dramatist, playwright, critic and poet of our time. But, as has been alluded-to above, his poetry as contained in *Illuminations* is what appeals to my palate after a succulent taste of the named old but yet to be ancient book of slim but powerful weight.

As a writer, as a poet, Obafemi professionally deftly manipulates symbols and figures of place and environment, and of actual beings living and dead to illustrate and draw attention to the poetic truths he espouses. He consistently deals with the poems in *Illuminations* as the products of his creative imagination which never wanes – and which he pens on behalf of his fellow Okun (Yoruba) people in particular, and Nigerian people in general. In varying degrees, he dwells on the sun and stars, earth and water of our land through which he demonstrates and underlines the peculiar service he renders on behalf of all of us.

He serves as an interpreter of our environment, community, society and nation in his unquestionable knowledge and understanding that the great majority of our people are seemingly minors, who lack the wherewithal to come into possession of their own innate powers to change their circumstances.

As a matter of fact, the poet sees them as mutes, who cannot properly report the conversation they have had at different times with nature and the creator relating to how they can compel their rulers and leaders to beautify materially and otherwise the architecture of their human-beingness. Like several poets of his generation, Obafemi is a man of severe political and cultural prejudices and peculiarly intransigent political views.

In this regard we can liken him to the Glitterer. The point, however, should not be extended beyond here. The reason for this is simple. The Glitterer is not studying the text as he should or estimating the quality of the poet's political or cultural ideology as he ought to do – as some readers and critics may say.

The torment this composer has been going through for sometime now on account of the political or ideological questions he has quietly and openly raised in his writings and outside them relating to the methods of our political rulers and leaders compelled him to enter the abode of his long forgotten and misplaced books of books. This was when our just passed independence "celebrations" and the painted picture of our president, who is always at large were approaching the compass of his intense delusion. He worked, step by step, to locate materials/manuals to teach and re-teach him about things, old or new or both, in a manner that would snatch him from his moments of illusion and delusion that should not render him a peculiar mystery unto himself in this mysterious country called Nigeria.

He beheld Obafemi's *Illuminations* and other authors' books. He tasted the authors as a connoisseur of choice wine would. He was carried away by their vintages, but he elected to stick to Obafemi's *Illuminations* on account essentially of the environmental reality in the first section, what the poet calls "movement one", that sets forth the collection's presage. In plain terms, in other words, the Glitterer, this composer, carefully sampled books from several great authors and deeply enjoyed them. He, however, decided to dedicate himself to Obafemi's book, *Illuminations*, because he was deeply moved by the realistic atmosphere established in the very first section ("movement one"), which perfectly sets up the themes for the rest of the poems – of seven sections (seven movements).

The description of the physical, social and political surroundings (environmental reality) in the book whose sections, as already said, the poet calls "movements" (a term he borrowed from music) illuminates the "songs" and "dances" contained therein "From the Belly of Time" that presaged at the time of the book's publication (in 2009 aforesaid) what we are tragically experiencing now. Why my palate enjoyed *Illuminations*, and why I chose to highlight it as I have done (without earnestly studying it), cannot be gainsaid. When the book was published, it acted as a prophetic warning (presaged). The social, cultural, political, and economic decay the poet warned about years ago has unfortunately become the harsh reality today. Our presidency nologists should distinguish themselves by reading it, along with the works of the various authors (and columnists and journalists) in our country.

Does the Glitterer need to say more? Yes and yes and yes, but he is exhausting and extinguishing himself here.

Afejuku can be reached via 08055213059.

Neither Igbo, Yoruba nor Hausa/Fulani presidency

By **Emmanuel Nnadozie Onwubiko**

WITH only a few days remaining before one of the most significant presidential elections in Nigeria's political history, a rather mundane political argument about an Igbo presidency has been resurrected. I am not suggesting that there is no validity in advancing the argument that it is unjust, unfair and discriminatory that the Igbo, one of Nigeria's three major ethnic groups, alongside the Yoruba and Hausa/Fulani, have yet to produce a democratically elected president of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, while the other two ethnic blocs have had opportunities to produce occupants of the nation's highest political office.

Indeed, this apparent historical imbalance was among the considerations that informed the advocacy for rotational presidency, championed by prominent political figures, including former Vice-President of Nigeria, Alex Ekwueme.

Therefore, this article is not intended to cast aspersions on the legitimate demand for equity, equality and equal opportunities in the contest for Nigeria's presidency, particularly among the country's three dominant ethnic blocs. Rather, it seeks to establish that making an unnecessary political mountain out of the supposed question of an Igbo presidency defeats the very essence of the agitation for fairness and equal opportunities in the Nigerian political system.

I wholeheartedly support the proposition that a competent Nigerian of Igbo extraction who aspires to become president should be given a fair opportunity to contest and win the election. Such an outcome would help address a longstanding perception of political exclusion and historical injustice against the Igbo.

However, attaching an ethnic nomenclature to the presidency, particularly in the manner currently being promoted by certain political actors, is potentially poisonous and counterproductive to the very agitation for which the Igbo have legitimately advocated.

The motivation behind amplifying this divisive narrative appears to be the fear that one of the leading challengers to the incumbent president, Mr Peter Obi, who happens to be Igbo by birth, is attracting considerable nationwide support in his aspiration to govern Nigeria.

Another fundamental reason for this infantile political narrative, particularly among some Igbo-speaking political figures (APC), is the apparent determination to poison the minds of non-Igbo voters against Peter Obi by exploiting ethnic sentiments. The ultimate objective is to persuade Nigerians to vote for Tinubu, as though the incumbent president does not himself belong to a particular ethnic group.

The insistence of some politicians that it is not yet the turn of the Igbo to produce Nigeria's president appears less like a genuine defence of national unity and more like an attempt to manufacture ethnic resentment against Peter Obi because of his ancestry.

The universally respected novelist Chinua Achebe offered a provocative interpretation of the historical tensions between the Igbo and other major ethnic communities in Nigeria.

In one of his final major books, *There Was a Country*, Achebe examined the historical experiences of the Igbo, including the resentment and discrimination that he believed had shaped their relationship with other Nigerian communities.

Achebe wrote: "I have written in my small book entitled The Trouble with Nigeria that Nigerians will probably achieve consensus on no other matter than their common resentment of the Igbo."

Writing under the heading, "A History of Ethnic Tension and Resentment", Achebe traced what he described as the national resentment of the Igbo to certain cultural characteristics that gave them an advantage in the competition for opportunities in colonial Nigeria. He argued that the Igbo culture's emphasis on change, individualism and competitiveness gave members of the ethnic group an advantage over the Hausa/Fulani, whose social environment was influenced by religious and traditional structures, and the Yoruba, whose society was characterised by established traditional hierarchies.

Achebe portrayed the Igbo as an adventurous and enterprising people who readily embraced opportunities created by the arrival of Western education, Christianity and colonial administration. He wrote that the Igbo, who feared neither God nor man, were effectively "custom-made to grasp the opportunities, such as they were, of the white man's dispensations. And the Igbo did so with both hands."

He further explored the historical transformation of educational and economic opportunities in southern Nigeria, arguing that the Igbo rapidly overcame the earlier advantage enjoyed by the Yoruba. Although the Yoruba had enjoyed considerable historical and geographical advantages because of their proximity to the coastline and early missionary activities, Achebe argued that the Igbo made extraordinary progress after missionaries crossed the River Niger.

He observed that within a relatively short period, the Igbo had made remarkable advances in literacy, education and professional advancement. Achebe maintained that Nigeria's political leadership should have recognised and harnessed these qualities for national development. Rather than celebrating the competitive individualism, enterprise and adventurous spirit of the Igbo, successive political arrangements often treated these characteristics as threats.

He argued that Nigeria's failure to harness the talents and entrepreneurial capacity of the Igbo contributed to the country's inability to achieve its full developmental potential. In his words, Nigeria's "pathetic attempt to crush these idiosyncrasies rather than celebrate them" was among the fundamental reasons the country had failed to develop as it should.

When Igbo politicians become instruments of ethnic division

The persistent argument that it is not yet the turn of the Igbo to become president is fundamentally misleading. It creates the impression that Nigeria's presidency is an ethnic inheritance to be distributed among competing communities according to an informal turn-by-turn arrangement.

The danger is that some Igbo-speaking politicians appear to be promoting a narrative that could encourage non-Igbo voters to reject Peter Obi, not necessarily because of his policies, competence or political record, but simply because he is Igbo. This is an unfortunate development.

Nigerians should be free to evaluate presidential candidates on the strength of their leadership capacity, integrity, public service records, policies and ability to address the country's enormous challenges. No candidate should be subjected to an ethnic test that is not equally applied to other presidential aspirants.

The presidency should not be treated as a compensation mechanism for ethnic groups. Neither should it be used as an instrument for perpetuating historical grievances. The presidency belongs to the Nigerian people. Every qualified Nigerian, whether Igbo, Yoruba, Hausa/Fulani or from any other ethnic community, has an equal constitutional right to aspire to occupy that office.

The time has come for Nigerians to abandon ethnic entitlement politics and embrace competence, accountability, integrity and national development. Nigeria needs a president who can unite its people and deliver good governance, not an ethnic representative whose legitimacy depends on the ancestry of his birth.

Onwubiko is the founder of the Human Rights Writers Association of Nigeria (HURIWA) and a former National Commissioner of the National Human Rights Commission of Nigeria.

Opinion

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Africa is not short of imagination: But making it work?

By **Rita Ezenwa-Okoro**

A YOUNG woman is turning banana stems into fabric. Another entrepreneur is making shirts with locally sourced materials, including buttons made from coconut shells. A third wants to manufacture synthetic hair in Africa using materials derived from petroleum refining. These were some of the young Africans I encountered at the Creative Africa Nexus (CANEX) Weekend, held from 5–8 November 2026 in Lagos. Their ideas fascinated me.

But as I listened, I kept wondering: what happens to all this imagination when it encounters the systems we have built, inherited or failed to put to work? For years, one question has kept me up at night: how do we sustain impactful creative programmes, products and organisations without being entirely dependent on grants?

CANEX offered plenty of opportunities to explore that question. Access to capital dominated the conversations, but I came away wondering whether Africa's challenge is simply a shortage of financing or something more fundamental. Do we really lack the systems to support our creative economy, or have we simply not learned to work the ones we already have?

Whose Language Are We Speaking?

During one session, Mrs Kanayo Awani, Executive Vice President, Intra-African Trade and Export Development at Afreximbank, challenged creatives to become more financially literate. She drew attention to how businesses in sectors such as fintech have been more successful at attracting investment, while many creative enterprises remain informal. Point noted!

We need to understand the language of investment, document our assets, know our markets and demonstrate the financial potential of our work. But shouldn't financial institutions also learn to speak the language of the arts? A theatre company, a fashion brand, a film studio and a community arts organisation do not operate the same way. Their production cycles, costs, revenue models and risks are different. Yet we sometimes discuss investment as though one financing model can serve every creative discipline. Consider live performance. Unlike some creative products that can be reproduced and sold repeatedly, theatre and dance productions often require substantial investment each time they are presented. Artists must rehearse, technicians must be paid, venues secured and touring costs covered. These are not minor details. They determine whether a creative enterprise can survive. I was therefore concerned by the limited attention given to the performing arts at CANEX. From my observation, there was only one session specifically for theatre makers and presenters of performing arts work, compared with the attention given to film, fashion, literature and gastronomy.

For a continent with such rich performance traditions, we need to take the economics of live performance more seriously. If we want the performing arts to thrive, we must give them more than applause. We must give them serious economic consideration. Who Benefits From Creative Economy Financing? One encouraging conversation at CANEX concerned intellectual property and the possibility of using it as collateral.

Mrs Awani referenced South African musician Yvonne Chaka Chaka's experience with her iconic song Umqombothi. Chaka Chaka has maintained that she received no payment for songwriting contributions that were not formally credited, although her account has been disputed. The lesson is important: creators must understand, document and protect their intellectual property if they hope to benefit economically from it. Register what you own. Document what you contribute. Record what you earn. Know your numbers. But the responsibility cannot rest on creatives alone. Nigeria already has financing initiatives designed to support the sector.

The Creative Economy Development Fund promises new financing opportunities, while the Investment in Digital and Creative Enterprises Programme, iDICE, explicitly includes performing arts businesses among the creative enterprises eligible for its debt-financing facilities.

These are welcome developments. But who has actually benefited? How much financing has reached independent theatre companies, dance organisations and community-based cultural institutions? How accessible are these opportunities to creative enterprises outside the most commercially visible industries? And are we distinguishing between financing creative businesses for commercial growth and supporting cultural organisations whose contributions are primarily social? I ask because I want these initiatives to work. The existence of a fund is not, by itself, evidence that it has delivered meaningful benefits. We need to know who received financing, how much was disbursed and what it enabled them to achieve.

In October 2024, Afreximbank announced plans to increase CANEX financing from $1 billion to $2 billion over the following three years. At CANEX WKND 2026, the Bank targeted at least $1 billion in investment commitments from prospective investors. These figures are encouraging. But commitments are not disbursements, and announcements are not outcomes. How much of this capital will reach the independent theatre maker, the emerging designer or the cultural organisation developing young talent?

The Arts Are Also a Public Good

In our excitement about the commercial potential of the creative economy, we must be careful not to reduce the value of the arts to profitability alone. The arts preserve cultural memory, facilitate dialogue, nurture imagination and challenge injustice. They contribute to education, civic participation and social development in ways that cannot always be captured on a balance sheet. I have spent much of my professional life using the performing arts to develop young people and mobilise communities around social issues. I know firsthand that the value created through this work does not always translate into commercial revenue. A theatre production challenging child exploitation may not generate millions in ticket sales. But what is the value of influencing behaviour or inspiring communities to protect their children? This is why I believe African governments have a moral responsibility to support the arts as a public good.

In Canada, for example, eligible arts organisations can receive recurring, multi-year public grants that contribute to their stability while they continue generating income and pursuing other opportunities. We need to develop comparable approaches suited to our own realities. At the same time, cultural organisations must build diversified models that combine earned income, partnerships, philanthropy and grants.

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

Ezenwa-Okoro is a creative arts advocate, strategic communicator and author who helps young people and leaders grow through the power of play and imagination..

The constant frustration of INEC chairman (2)

By **Eric Teniola**

UNDER Mr Wraith's leadership, the ECN organised the 1958 regional elections, which served as a precursor to federal polls, achieving widespread voter registration despite challenges like low literacy rates and geographic isolation in rural areas. The subsequent 1959 federal elections, held on December 12, saw the Northern People's Congress secure 134 seats in the 312-member House of Representatives, forming a coalition government with the National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons.

Voter's participation reached approximately 79.5%, reflecting effective mobilisation efforts, though ethnic-based campaigning intensified regional rivalries. Wraith's commission addressed logistical issues by deploying polling stations in remote locations and training local staff, enabling the process to proceed without widespread disruption despite predictions of potential violence. The outcomes of these elections contributed to short-term political stability, paving the way for Nigeria's independence on October 1, 1960, with Alhaji Abubakar Tafawa Balewa appointed as Prime Minister.

Success metrics included the acceptance of results by major parties, minimal reported irregularities in vote counting, and the establishment of a precedent for federal oversight of polls. However, persistent ethnic tensions, evident in the uneven regional vote distributions—such as the Northern People's Congress dominating the North while the Action Group prevailed in the West—foreshadowed future instability, including the 1964 election crises that undermined the nascent democratic framework. Wraith's role emphasised procedural integrity over partisan influence, though critics later noted that structural ethnic imbalances limited long-term cohesion.

By 1963, there was agitation for a Nigerian to be appointed to head the body. Nigerianisation became the key word. So, Alhaji Tafawa Balewa's friend, Dr. Moses Adekoyejo Majekodunmi (17 August 1916 – 11 April 2012), a pioneering obstetrician, gynaecologist, administrator, and politician, who served as Federal Minister of Health from 1961 to 1966 and as Administrator of the Western Region in 1962, introduced his friend, Sir Kofo Abayomi to replace Mr. Wraith, who resigned his appointment in frustration. Thereafter, Mr. Wraith went back to England and Sir Kofo Abayomi was appointed chairman of the electoral body.

Sir Kofo Adekunle Abayomi was a doctor and politician born on 10 July 1896 in Lagos. He attended the UNA School and then, from 1909, the Wesleyan College (now Methodist Boys' High School) in Lagos, where he became a pupil teacher, on completion in 1912. He later transferred to a similar job at the Eko Boys' School. He joined the civil service as a government dispenser in 1914, working first at the African Hospital in Lagos. A few months later, when the First World War broke out, he worked as a dispenser with the Nigerians Forces which fought for the British in the Cameroons Campaign. He was decorated for this service.

In 1922, he went to Edinburgh University, where several other West African doctors had already qualified, to study medicine. He completed those studies at Moorfields Eye Hospital, London, and specialized as an ophthalmologist. He won the M.B. and Ch.B. of Edinburgh in 1928, and the M.D. in 1936. From 1928 to 1930 he was demonstrator in Physiological Methods at Edinburgh.

Returning to Nigeria in 1930, he combined private medical practice with politics. In 1938, he took over from the deceased Dr. J.C. Vaughn the presidency of the Nigeria Youth Movement (NYM) which he had joined on its foundation as the Lagos Youth Movement in 1933. Also, in 1938 he was elected to the Legislative Council as an NYM member for Lagos. He served for two years but resigned in 1940 to go to Britain for further studies.

In 1958, Sir Kofoworola Adekunle Abayomi was appointed chairman of the Lagos Executive Development Board, which had authority to demolish unsanitary buildings and undertake town planning schemes. The board was also involved in freehold housing and estate development in Surulere, North East and South West Ikoyi reclamation schemes and up to one thousand acres reclaimed in Victoria Island.

Sir Abayomi became the first Nigerian Chairman of the Board of the University College Hospital, Ibadan in 1958, a position he held until 1965. In 1959, he was chairman of the Board of Management of the Lagos University Teaching Hospital in Lagos. He served on the board or as chairman of several companies for the rest of his life.

By 1964, at the age of 68, it became clearer that Abayomi was too old to function as the chairman of the electoral body. He spent less than a year in office, but conducted the Mid-West House of Assembly election in 1964. He too resigned in frustration.

Following his resignation as the Chairman of the Federal Electoral Commission (FEC), the Electoral Body at that time, the then Prime Minister, Alhaji Tafawa Balewa replaced him with Chief Eyo Ita Esua (14 January 1901 – 6 December 1973).

Chief Esua was a school master and a founder member of the Nigeria Union of Teachers. He was the first full-time general secretary of the union from 1943 until his retirement in 1964. He was an Efik, Calabar man, renowned for his dedication to duty and uprightness.

The Esua-led commission organised the December 1964 elections, which was mired in controversy. Two members of the commission, Mr. Anthony Aniagolu from Eastern Region and Prince Peter Akenzua from Mid-Western Region, disagreed with the chairman and resigned from the commission. Prince Akenzua later served as Vice-President the Legal Aid Council under Chief Timothy Chimezie Ikeazor SAN (1930-October 12, 2012), the Oboli Obosi from Anambra State. As for Mr. Anthony Nnaemezie Christopher Aniagolu (October 22, 1922- June 28, 2011), he later served as Chief Judge of Anambra State from 1976 to 1978 and was a justice of the Supreme Court from 1978 to 1987. In 1988, he chaired a Constituent Assembly to propose a draft constitution for the Third Republic.

Chief Esua also conducted the 1965 Western Region elections, which was violent and was disputed by the opposition United Party Grand Alliance. A few days before these elections Chief Esua acknowledged that his organisation could not guarantee a free and fair poll. The widespread electoral abuses may have been a factor in the success of the military coup of January 1966 in which Major General Johnson Aguiyi-Ironsi came to power.

The major task Chief Esua faced as the chairman of the electoral commission was delimitation of constituencies. By mid July 1964, the Commission announced far reaching changes in the numbers of Federal members representing each administrative division. These changes were presumably based on the figures of the 1963 population census, still to be published in details. The main changes showed the North reduced from 1974 to 1967, the East reduced from 73 to 70, the Mid West from 15 to 14, the West increased from 47-57, and Lagos 2 to 3. Among changes in the West, Osun division was increased from 9 to 12, Ekiti from 3 to 8; in the East, Brass, Calabar and Degema were increased from 1 to 2 each, and Eket was increased from 2 to 4. In the North, Kano (31) and Sokoto (21) were increased by one.

In August, during the Northern Nigeria tour of the Commission, Mr. Esua, chairman and the leader of the delimitation committee said that to divide Nigeria into 312 constituencies was an exclusive prerogative of the Federal Government, and that the figures of the recent census were the basis of delimitation.

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

Teniola, a former director in the presidency, wrote from Lagos.

Season of irritability



NIGERIA has entered the periodic season of serious politicking. And what usually comes with it are traits and revelations, manifestations of who we truly are. It is a period refinement is in reverse, indeed, gravely in short supply. It is a season pent-up anger can be released, hence violence in words and action in substitution for an exchange of fecundity of ideas. As it can be a period of irreverence, it can also be a period of humour and jokes, the arrival of the candidates triggering a flurry of activities featuring in excitement also singing and dancing in expectation of realised hopes, of hopes fulfilled in the future! It is an Orwellian year of Big Brother is watching you, too!

One can't but be taken aback watching what one believes has been satisfactorily settled being reopened. This was the case for most people watching Dr Tokunbo Pearse, on television last week re-opening controversies over whether or not President Bola Tinubu attended Chicago State University. Dr Pearse said on *ARISE NEWS* television that the President was never a student of the university. And he said it with so much force and seeming irritability, seeking to be believed. He said he was a lecturer at the university for five years and, indeed, Director of Programmes "in which" using his words, "Tinubu said he attended." This is undoubtedly a big and troubling new twist, as it is an account greatly at variance with what the university registrar said testifying on oath in an open court in the run-up to elections in 2023.

Hearings into the matter in court were kickstarted by former Vice-President Atiku Abubakar in his epic battle to have Tinubu disqualified as campaigns into various elective offices were in full swing. Tinubu was flying the flag of his party, APC, for the presidency in 2023 but Atiku, then running for the same office on the platform of PDP, sought to get him off the ballot, querying his eligibility.

He alleged that Tinubu did not go to Chicago State University as he claimed and, therefore, did not meet the electoral requirement to contest for the office of the President of the Federal Republic. The battle raged fiercely in the United States of America. At Atiku's behest, the Court summoned the university to come with Tinubu's records if in truth he was once a student of Chicago State University.

However, the testimony of the registrar of the university couldn't but be disarming to a great many, to the discerning as well as the fair-minded which may be the reason no Opposition candidate has raised the issue of educational qualification this season until the twist last week by Pearce.

The registrar, Caleb Westberg, said Tinubu attended Chicago State University and that the person who is President of Nigeria at the moment matched the student records in the file. He went on: "The Bola Tinubu who attended CSU also took accounting courses. I see the address indicated for Bola Tinubu. It's not far from CSU. I looked at the whole record in making the determination that the Bola Tinubu who is the President of Nigeria is the same person who is the President of Nigeria today is the same person who attended CSU."

Dr Pearse worked in the university between 1985 and 1990, long after Bola Tinubu who entered the institution in 1977 had graduated and left. If he did not meet him in school, whatever information he may have could only have been gathered from third party sources—from outside the office of the University Registrar who is the official keeper of records.

As I did state in 2023, Bola Tinubu said not only did he attend the Chicago State University, he graduated in flying colours. He said publicly that he, in fact, made the equivalent of what in the British system is called First Class. And the registrar testified to this. There had been sustained impassioned debates on the subject and these were given fresh oxygen immediately he emerged the APC Presidential flagbearer.

His handlers, it must be stated, added to the waves of doubts when, ill-advised, they shielded him from accustomed public debate and scrutiny that go with such enterprise and drive. What is taken for granted; what gladiators ordinarily long for as veritable platforms to reach all and sundry seated in front of their television in their homes or offices. What better political agora can fetch you millions who would otherwise gladly elect to sit in front of their idiot box to watch or listen.

The shielding led to doubts assailing even those who may have visited him in his office as governor and had seen the picture of him among his course mates at CSU hanging on the wall in bushy hair style of a youth of the era and the boy-in-town shirt. Understandably, Tinubu is at his best at small meetings. He is excellent with figures: Add this, subtract that, add again and multiply –in the batting of an eyelid, he has given you the answer off head.

The first hurdle for the doubting Thomases, therefore, was to verify Tinubu's claims. The courageous step was taken by no less a figure than Waziri Atiku Abubakar. So thick was the suspicion that confirmation by the school authorities that Tinubu was a bona fide student of Chicago State University did not seem enough, there was insistence on academic records particularly after objections by Tinubu's lawyers to making the records public.

> It is President Tinubu who may have brought the whole hullabaloos upon himself. He has such glittering testimonial for which he should proudly beat his chest but he engaged himself in hide and seek with his compatriots. Why has it been so difficult for him to speak to the issue through a well-crafted statement clearing the air as the university Registrar has most convincingly done. What was worse, he fought valiantly to block the release of his enheartening academic records.

Rino Omokri shouted himself hoarse confirming Tinubu truly attended the university; not many people seemed interested nor were persuaded. And the university registrar stepped forwarded, disarming everybody: Bola Tinubu attended the university. "My statement that Mr. Bola Tinubu attended the university was based on the transcripts in our possession," said Mr. Caleb Westberg. He went on to say that contrary to widely circulated story, the person to whom the university gave admission *ab initio* was a male and the admission letter was issued to a male, not to a female. Asked whether the student the university admitted in 1977 from Southwest College was a man or woman, Mr. Westberg said Tinubu applied to the university as a male and a letter of admission was issued to him.

Answering a question on certificates tendered among documents turned out to Atiku, Mr. Westberg said that the university only keeps Diplomas that the students did not pick up in his custody. His deposition went as follows:

"The university does not typically keep Diplomas. I have the Diploma that was made available to Mr. Enahoro-Eboh in our possession because Mr. Tinubu did not pick it up." When asked by one of the lawyers: "Why would Mr. Tinubu request for a Diploma and not pick it up or ask that it be sent to him?" Mr. Westberg said in response: "You would have to ask him." That is Bola Tinubu. Speaking on other points in the deposition, he said:

"I am not aware of any instance where CSU had been requested to certify a document Mr. Wole Afolabi who was acting for President insisted must be certified. Mr. Wole Afolabi was Tinubu's lawyer. He and Mr. Orr communicated by email.

"I don't recall seeing the emails. I don't if Mr. Jason Carter approved of the certification. Apart from John Carter I do not know anyone else who was involved in the process. I went into Tinubu's student's file and produced the documents to Mr. Orr. I didn't know that the documents would be certified; I don't get involved in legal matters.

"Mr. Tinubu requested that the documents be released to Afolabi for legal proceedings. The signature on the consent form is similar to the signature we have on record for Mr. Tinubu.

"All of the certified documents came from CSU files. Nothing was handed over to us by Mr. Afolabi except for the FERPA form, CSU never certified documents for anyone one. It must have made because there was more of Nigerian thing. The documents were released in pursuance of FERPA request. I believe Mr. Afolabi requested that the documents be certified. I'm not aware if the stamp affixed by Mr. Orr to the documents was an official document. It is not part of CSU practice.

"Mr. Orr later departed from CSU after these documents were certified. I don't know if his departure was connected to the certification of the documents, but I don't think it was. Mr. Tinubu's counsel did not prepare any document for me. Mr. statement that Mr. Tinubu graduated from CSU was based on the transcripts in our possession. I have never met Mr. Bola Tinubu. He did not visit our campus. He does not donate money in the school.

"In the U.S., Diplomas are considered merely ceremonial documents. In some other countries it may be considered more. In the U.S. more reliance is placed on transcripts and not on Diplomas.

"I did not rely on information from public records to come to the conclusion that President Bola Tinubu is the person who attended CSU. I am not aware that FBI contacted CSU on whether Bola Tinubu attended CSU. Between 1979 and when I assumed duties, CSU must have had at least six Registrars. I never spoke to Ms. Davies. Some policies have changed over the years. When there is a replacement diplomas it is done by outside vendors. I don't know who created Exhibit 6. The institution decided that my name should not be typed on the 'To whom it may concern' letter because of the sheer volume of request I was getting.

"Before CSU, I was at UC, Berkeley and UC, Irving. I am sure people make mistakes in data entry from time to time. Before this law suit, I did not know anyone called Bola. It was possible that someone assumes Bola to be a female and therefore marked South West transcripts as such. I am familiar with the affidavit filed by Olajide Adeniji. I don't recall his gender. I don't know if Atiku Abubakar is male or female, but I heard is a male. I can't tell by his name. I checked the record and confirmed that Olajide Adeniji and Bola Tinubu were at the CSU at the same time. The person said he ran in a closely contested race for leadership of the Accounting Student Union. I see that the same person he ran against is now the President of Nigeria. The Bola Tinubu who attended Southwest College took accounting courses. The Bola Tinubu who attended CSU also took Accounting courses. I see the address indicated for Bola Tinubu. It's not far from CSU. I looked at the whole record in making the determination that the Bola Tinubu who is the President of Nigeria today is the same person who attended CSU.

"The entries '1952' and '1954' could have been made in error. The person who attended Southwest College is the person who attended CSU. The courses taken by Bola Tinubu at Southwest College and CSU are consistent. Right after entry 'F', the SSN entered in the Southwest transcript is the same as the one that was indicated CSU records. That is one of the indications that we us e to identify students. A Social Security is a unique identifier.

"I recognise Southwest College is a feeder school for CSU. Bola Tinubu graduated with Honours. It's a GPA distinction. It is awarded to high performing students. Accounting is a rigorous Major. He graduated with Honours. Yes, certain students are more motivated than others. The students who are more motivated go on to accomplish greater things in life. I've seen that. As far as I know, he is the President of Nigeria. There were materials in Mr. Tinubu's records that show that he was male. I see the application to CSU. Mr. Tinubu identified himself as a male. His letter of admission identified him as a male. It says, 'Dear Mr. Tinubu.'

"We know Mr. Tinubu's social security number. It's contained in the records. I see the entry in the APC website wherein President Bola Tinubu was said to have been born in Lagos on March 29, 1952. I don't have a copy of the Diploma was submitted to INEC so I can't comment on it. I am not aware that in the form he submitted to INEC he claimed a different nationality or date of birth. Yes, our record shows that he was born on March 29th. One has '1954' while the other shows '1952'. From time to time people do make mistakes when making such entries."

I wrote in 2023 that I refrained from interpreting the foregoing deposition by the Registrar, Mr. Caleb Westberg. I allow the deposition to speak by itself. The Registrar has confirmed without equivocation that President Bola Tinubu attended and graduated from Chicago State University with Honours. It was Tinubu who applied for admission and it was to him admission letter was issued, not to a female. Although he has never seen nor met Tinubu, he said the records are there and they speak for him. He identified him as the current President of Nigeria. He connected Tinubu of Southwest College with Tinubu of Chicago State University and that they are one and the same person. On the ages, the Registrar said if there are such differences, they are no more than human errors which do occur "when making such entries."

On the vexed issue of certificate which is called Diploma in the United States and which is believed to have been forged, although Mr. Westberg did not speak directly on any forgery, from his deposition on Diploma Replacement, it is easy to see from where what may look like forgery may be coming.

The Registrar said the university does not get involved in Diploma Replacement. It is outsourced to vendors.

In the U.S. certificates "are considered merely ceremonial documents. . .more reliance is placed on transcripts and not on Diplomas." If such a document is firmed out to vendors, the possibility of errors is high if necessary proof reading is deficient or non-existence, any one familiar with printing will readily attest to that.

What I am getting at is that the onus is on Dr. Tokunbo Doherty to come out with his own convincing proof that President Tinubu did not attend Chicago State University. The world is waiting! It is President Tinubu who may have brought the whole hullabaloos upon himself. He has such glittering testimonial for which he should proudly beat his chest but he engaged himself in hide and seek with his compatriots. Why has it been so difficult for him to speak to the issue through a well-crafted statement clearing the air as the university Registrar has most convincingly done. What was worse, he fought valiantly to block the release of his enheartening academic records. It is natural to insinuate that there must be more to it than meets the eye; that there must be something to hide, thus preparing the grounds for distasteful media campaigns and agitation by human rights activists.

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


Tinubu

Atiku

HOUSE OF IGBINEDION

Birthday Felicitations!

Your Excellency,
Congratulations as you celebrate your birthday today.

The House of Igbinedion and Nigeria's leading and premier private university - Igbinedion University, Okada - which' proudly conferred an honorary degree of Doctor of Science (D.Sc.) on you in 2019 - admire your statesmanship a great deal.

Your advocacy for a Nigeria in which everyone can live peacefully, irrespective of religion, ethnicity, or political affiliation, resonates with well-meaning Nigerians across the land.
Keep up the good work, Your Excellency.

Happy birthday.





Chief Sir Dr. (hc) Gabriel Osawaru Igbinedion
CFR, CON, LL.D., D.LITT, KSJI
Esama of Benin
Proprietor and Hon. Chancellor,
Nigeria's Premier Private University -
Igbinedion University, Okoda

DR. GOODLUCK EBELE JONATHAN, GCFR
Former President and Commander-in-Chief
of the Armed Forces of the
Federal Republic of Nigeria.

APC PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN COUNCIL

SOUTHWEST ZONE

APC

Welcomes His Excellency,
President Bola Ahmed Tinubu GCFR
& the Entire **APC National Leadership** to the

OYO STATE APC MEGA RALLY



Saturday, Nov. 21, 2026
Venue - **Mapo Hall**
Time- **10.00am**

Signed
Babajide Olusola Sanwo-Olu CON
Coordinator SW APC-PCC

Prince Oladiran Iyanton
APC National Vice- Chairman, Southwest

For & Behalf of All APC SouthWest Governors, Leaders & Members

APC

The Guardian Business

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CRUDE OIL PRICE UPDATE Brent crude: $107.0 | WTI crude: $94.96 **FOREX MARKET UPDATE** I&E Window: N1,326.00

'Nigeria's lower fraud record masks 88% surge in AI deepfake attacks'

By Isaac Chibuife

NIGERIA accounts for 35 per cent of fraud networks detected across Africa, despite recording a 29 per cent year-on-year decline in its overall identity fraud rate, according to a new report by identity verification firm, Sumsub.

The Identity Fraud Report 2026-2027, which analysed 5.8 million fraud cases detected between 2025 and 2026, also found a sharp increase in the use of artificial intelligence to perpetrate identity fraud, with deepfake cases in Nigeria rising by 88 per cent.

The report drew on a survey of more than 1,400 fraud and risk professionals and 1,500 consumers across 21 markets.

It identified Nigeria as Africa's largest source of detected fraud network activity, with criminals increasingly operating through coordinated networks involving linked accounts, shared devices and multiple identities to evade security checks.

However, the largest single fraud network identified in the study was in Mauritius, where 3,038 users were connected.

Sumsub said the growing sophistication of fraud networks posed a challenge to businesses that rely mainly on conventional identity verification methods.

According to its 2026 Fraud Exposure Survey, only 24 per cent of African businesses use fraud network analysis tools, leaving many exposed to coordinated fraudulent activities.

The report called for wider adoption of network analysis and behavioural monitoring to help businesses identify suspicious connections and detect fraud beyond individual transactions or accounts.

It also warned that the decline in Nigeria's overall identity fraud rate had masked the growing threat of deepfake technology, which fraudsters increasingly use to manipulate identity documents, images and videos to bypass verification systems.

CRC launches business credit score to boost access to loans

By Adeyemi Adepetun

CRC Credit Bureau Limited has launched a business credit scoring product, CRC B-Score, to improve lenders' assessment of the creditworthiness of micro, small, medium and large enterprises in Nigeria.

The product is designed to provide lenders with a data-driven assessment of businesses' credit and repayment behaviour, while helping business owners understand factors affecting their access to financing.

CRC said the product would address a gap in Nigeria's credit market, where businesses, particularly micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs), have often been assessed using incomplete or inconsistent credit information, despite the growing maturity of individual credit scoring.

Under the framework, businesses are assigned scores ranging from zero to 100 and classified into three risk categories based on their credit performance.

Businesses scoring between 80 and 100 are classified as low-risk, reflecting strong repayment behaviour and effective credit exposure management, while those scoring between 60 and 79 fall within the moderate-risk category, indicating manageable credit profiles with some areas requiring attention.

Businesses with scores below 60 are categorised as high-risk, suggesting poor repayment trends or significant credit exposure concerns that may require further scrutiny by lenders.

Speaking at the launch in Lagos, the Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of CRC Credit Bureau, Dr Tunde Popoola, said the scores are derived from businesses' actual credit histories and banking relationships, including repayment records, loan portfolio quality, approved credit facilities, payment reliability, asset classification, banking relationship tenure and diversity of credit facilities.

According to him, the assessment also considers dishonoured cheques and failed payments, as well as regulatory classifications of loan quality based on repayment status, to provide lenders with a broader picture of a business's financial behaviour.

Fitch projects Nigeria's interest rate to fall to 18.6% by 2028

By Isaac Chibuife

FITCH Ratings has projected that Nigeria's average monetary policy rate (MPR) will decline to 21.7 per cent in 2027 and 18.6 per cent in 2028, as easing inflationary pressures create room for the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) to moderate monetary policy.

The agency, however, expects borrowing costs to remain high in the near term, citing persistent inflationary pressures.

Director of Sovereigns at Fitch, Gaimin Nonyane, presented the projections at the agency's Nigeria Sovereign Rating Review and Outlook.

Fitch's forecast table puts the average policy rate at 27.3 per cent in 2025 and 25.4 per cent in 2026. The CBN cut the MPR by 350 basis points to 23 per cent from 26.5 per cent in September.

The agency expects inflation to moderate from 15.2 per cent in 2025 to 15.1 per cent in 2026, 12.2 per cent in 2027 and 10.9 per cent in 2028.

Despite the projected decline, it warned that food, transport and utility costs, alongside elevated inflation expectations, would continue to put pressure on prices.

Fitch said the CBN's tight monetary policy had slowed credit growth from about 95 per cent in February 2024 to roughly 16 per cent. The cash reserve ratio (CRR) remains at 45 per cent.

It expects liquidity conditions to remain tight through 2026, with monetary easing gathering pace moderately in 2027 as inflation declines.

On economic growth, Fitch projected that Nigeria's economy would expand by 4.3 per cent in both 2026 and 2027, before moderating slightly to 4.2 per cent in 2028.

The agency also expects the fiscal deficit to widen to 3.6 per cent of gross domestic product (GDP) in 2026 before narrowing to 3.1 per cent in 2028.

Fitch attributed its improved assessment of Nigeria's credit outlook to ongoing economic reforms. On October 9, it revised the country's sovereign rating outlook to Positive from Stable, while affirming its long-term rating at 'B'.

However, it identified policy slippage, weaker capital inflows and significant social instability as key risks to its economic and fiscal projections.

Amuchie to succeed Onyeali-Ikpe as Fidelity Bank CEO

By Isaac Chibuife

FIDELITY Bank Plc has appointed Stanley Amuchie as its Managing Director/Chief Executive Officer, effective January 1, 2027, following approval by the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN).

He succeeds Dr Nneka Onyeali-Ikpe, whose tenure ends on December 31, 2026. The bank announced the appointment in a statement issued yesterday.

Amuchie is currently the Executive Director, Operations and Information Technology, a position he has held since January 2022.

The Chairman of the Board, Amaka Onwughalu, said the appointment reflected the board's confidence in his leadership ability, strategic insight and experience in the financial services industry. She expressed the board's commitment to supporting him in driving the bank's growth and strengthening its operations.

Onwughalu also commended Onyeali-Ikpe for her contributions to the bank, particularly its growth and transformation during her tenure.



Group Managing Director/CEO, United Bank for Africa (UBA), Oliver Alawuba (left) and President of Sierra Leone, Julius Madda Bio, after strategic meeting at the ongoing West Africa Investment and Integration Summit 2026 in Freetown, on Wednesday.

Pedabo backs African business collaboration, condemns xenophobia

From Kingsley Jeremiah, Abuja

KRESTON Pedabo, a professional services firm, has called for stronger cross-border business collaboration, investment and trade among African countries, warning that xenophobia undermines the continent's quest for economic integration and shared prosperity.

The firm made the call at The Bridge Club's 2026 Grand End-of-Year Gala in Lagos, where it served as a platinum sponsor of the event themed 'Xenophobia Contradicts Pan-Africanism'.

Speaking on behalf of the firm, its Senior Tax and Advisory Partner, Killian Khanoba, said Africa's greatest economic opportunity lay not only in the individual strengths of its countries but also in what they could achieve collectively.

He argued that the continent's shared history, cultural connections, human capital, natural resources and entrepreneurial potential provided a strong foundation for economic growth but could only deliver meaningful progress through cooperation and openness.

According to him, African countries must create opportunities across borders and recognise that the prosperity of one nation does not have to come at the expense of another.

He stressed that Pan-Africanism should go beyond political philosophy and translate into practical economic relationships, particularly in how African countries conduct business, welcome talent, facilitate trade and attract investment.

Khanoba said Kreston Pedabo's experience as a professional services firm connected to a global network had reinforced the importance of collaboration, shared expertise and relationships across markets.

He noted that strategic partnerships could unlock opportunities that individual businesses and countries might struggle to achieve independently.

The firm also commended The Bridge Club for providing a platform for dialogue, engagement and impact, expressing hope that discussions at the gathering would inspire practical action to address the contradictions between xenophobia and African solidarity.

Khanoba reaffirmed the firm's commitment to supporting conversations and initiatives aimed at building a more united, prosperous and inclusive Africa.

Report picks NIBSS as Africa's only 'mature' instant payment platform

By Isaac Chibuife

NIGERIA'S Instant Payment (NIP) system, operated by the Nigeria Inter-Bank Settlement System (NIBSS), remains Africa's only instant payment platform classified as mature, according to the 2026 State of Inclusive Instant Payment Systems (SIIPS) in Africa report.

The report, released yesterday by the AfricaNenda Foundation, the World Bank Group and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), showed that the number of instant payment systems across Africa had increased to 39, serving 43 countries.

Of the 39 systems, 11 were classified as progressed, 19 as basic, while eight were unranked. NIP was the only system in the mature category, the highest level on the report's Inclusivity Spectrum. The classifications of all other systems remained unchanged from 2025.

To qualify as mature, an instant payment system must support a wide range of payment services, offer affordable transactions and provide effective consumer protection and dispute resolution. It must also facilitate government payments, business transactions and cross-border transfers.

The report noted that 23 African countries now have progressed or mature instant payment systems, covering 56 per cent of the continent's adult population.

However, it identified gaps in functionality, governance, interoperability and consumer protection across the systems. While some lack features for merchant payments, others have inadequate channels for handling customer complaints and resolving disputes.

NIP first attained mature status in 2025, having moved from the basic category in 2021 to progressed before reaching the highest classification. The improvement was attributed to gains in interoperability, governance, payment use cases and consumer recourse.

The development builds on the system's growing transaction volumes. Data from NIBSS showed that transactions processed through NIP reached N1.07 quadrillion in 2024, representing a 79.6 per cent increase from N600 trillion in 2023. Transaction volume also rose by 15.5 per cent to 11.2 billion.

In June 2025, NIBSS introduced the National Payment Stack to improve instant settlements, bulk payments and dispute management. The platform had processed 153,000 pilot transactions by June 2026.

In January, NIBSS also announced plans to explore offline payment services to extend access to Nigerians using basic mobile phones or living in areas with unreliable internet connectivity.

Afreximbank, NEXIM seal $30m deal to finance Nigerian MSMEs

By **Tobi Awodipe**

THE African Export-Import Bank (Afreximbank) and the Nigerian Export-Import Bank (NEXIM) have signed a $30 million financing agreement to expand access to credit for micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) and export-oriented businesses in Nigeria, including those operating in the creative industries.

Under the arrangement, Afreximbank will provide the $30 million facility to NEXIM for on-lending to eligible Nigerian businesses across key sectors. NEXIM, Nigeria's export credit agency, is jointly owned by the Ministry of Finance Incorporated and the Central Bank of Nigeria.

The funding will support working capital requirements and capital expenditure for export development and intra-African trade activities.

Beneficiaries are expected to include businesses in fashion, film, music, design and other segments of the creative economy, alongside enterprises operating across the wider export value chain.

The agreement, announced during the Creative Africa Nexus (CANEX) WKND 2026, is part of Afreximbank's efforts to improve access to finance for African SMEs, strengthen export capacity and promote participation in regional and international markets.

The facility was signed by Afreximbank's Executive Vice President, Intra-African Trade and Export Development, Kanayo Awani, and NEXIM's Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer, Abba Bello.

Awani said the financing would enable Nigerian MSMEs and exporters to expand production, invest in productive capacity and improve their competitiveness in new markets. She noted that access to working capital and investment financing remained critical to helping businesses increase exports and take advantage of opportunities across Africa and beyond.

According to her, combining NEXIM's export-financing capabilities with Afreximbank's trade and development mandate would strengthen the capacity of Nigerian enterprises to participate in regional and global value chains.

She added that eligible creative businesses would also benefit from the facility, in line with CANEX's objective of connecting African creative talent and enterprises with financing and market opportunities.

Energy operators seek stronger credit system

By **Benjamin Alade**

OIL and gas operators have identified supply chain financing, transparency, payment discipline and trust as critical to improving access to funding across Nigeria's energy value chain.

At the just-concluded National Institute of Credit Administrators (NICA) Credit Managers Conference in Lagos, stakeholders said the energy industry required a stronger and more credible credit management framework to unlock capital, improve liquidity and attract the investment needed to expand operations across the oil and gas value chain.

During a panel session moderated by the Chief Executive Officer and Managing Director of BlackGold Energy Limited, Dr Oladunni Owo, speakers identified inadequate access to credit, trapped receivables and weak payment structures as major obstacles to financing projects and expanding energy infrastructure in the country.

The panel session, themed 'The Energy, Oil and Gas Credit Revolution: Unlocking the Cash, Credit and Confidence to Power Nigeria's Energy Future', was part of preparations for a planned energy credit summit next year.

Owo described credit as the missing link between Nigeria's enormous energy resources and the economic benefits they should generate.

She said that although oil and gas remained critical to the country's foreign exchange earnings, government revenue and industrial development, operators across the sector continued to struggle with access to working capital, while distributors battled trapped receivables and consumers faced rising energy costs.

According to her, Nigeria does not lack energy resources but lacks an effective financial bridge to convert those resources into productive economic outcomes.

She warned that without a reliable credit management system, lenders would remain reluctant to finance projects, investors would hesitate to commit funds, and operators would find it difficult to expand their businesses.

Owo noted that the financing challenges facing the industry had implications beyond oil and gas companies, stressing that access to credit ultimately affected energy affordability, industrial productivity and the welfare of ordinary Nigerians.

Speaking on how operators could improve payment cycles and restore liquidity, the Chief Operating Officer of Emadeb Energy Group, Sheriff Adeeyo, identified supply chain financing as one of the most effective mechanisms for unlocking capital within the industry.

Adeeyo explained that conventional funding arrangements had become increasingly difficult for some operators, forcing companies to explore alternative financing structures and depend more on internally generated resources to sustain and expand their businesses.



Deputy Director, Department of Outdoor Advertisement and Signage (DOAS), Akintunde Babadiya (left); Chairman, RETINAAD Limited, Abiodun Iderawum; Director of Regulation, ARCON, Dr Emme Akande; President, Media Independent Practitioner Association of Nigeria (MIPAN), Brenda Nwagwu; Former Managing Director of LASAA and Managing Director of Viado Technologies Limited, Adedamola Docemo at the unveiling of Retibazaar an innovative OOH media marketplace designed to bring greater transparency efficiency and certainty to media buying and selling in Nigeria held in Lagos. PHOTO: MARVELLOUS OBASA

Denmark explores sea jobs for Nigerian cadets

By **Adaku Onyenucheya**

THE Danish Government is exploring opportunities for Nigerian cadets to work as ratings aboard Danish vessels through engagements with Maersk Shipping.

The Danish Ambassador to Nigeria, Jens Ole Bach Hansen, said discussions were ongoing with Maersk Shipping on the possibility of engaging Nigerian cadets as ratings on Danish vessels, providing them with valuable onboard experience as they advance their careers in the seafaring profession.

The ambassador disclosed this during a visit to the headquarters of the Nigerian Maritime Administration and Safety Agency (NIMASA) in Lagos yesterday, where he led a delegation to explore opportunities for strengthening maritime cooperation between the two countries.

Other areas identified for possible collaboration include maritime security, intelligence sharing, digitalisation, seafarer education, cadet training, institutional cooperation and maritime financing.

He also disclosed the Danish Government's interest in collaborating with NIMASA on its Blue Economy Acceleration Programme (N-BEAP) Hackathon.

The ambassador acknowledged the potential of the initiative and expressed the delegation's interest in the Hackathon as a platform for promoting innovation, developing technology-driven solutions and unlocking opportunities within Nigeria's blue economy.

Responding, NIMASA's Director-General, Dr Dayo Mobereola, welcomed Denmark's continued interest in Nigeria's maritime industry, describing the engagement as an opportunity to consolidate the longstanding relationship between both countries.

Mobereola emphasised that the agency's priority was to translate diplomatic goodwill and engagements between both countries into concrete partnerships and measurable outcomes.

He called for the establishment of a clear follow-up mechanism that would connect NIMASA with relevant Danish government institutions, maritime organisations, training establishments and private-sector operators capable of providing technical support and strategic partnerships.

SAHCO strengthens airport security with solar-powered CCTV

By **Olusegun Koiki**

THE Skyway Aviation Handling Company (SAHCO) PLC has enhanced its airport security infrastructure with the deployment of locally constructed solar-powered security facilities equipped with advanced Closed-Circuit Television (CCTV) monitoring systems.

The facilities, commissioned by the Managing Director of SAHCO, Adenike Aboderin, in Lagos, are designed to improve surveillance of airport operations, enhance cargo security and eliminate blind spots caused by power outages.

The structures were designed and built by SAHCO's in-house Engineering and Maintenance team, using locally sourced materials.

Aboderin described the equipment as a demonstration of indigenous technical capacity and cost-efficient infrastructure development.

Equipped with high-capacity solar panels, the facilities are expected to provide uninterrupted power supply for round-the-clock surveillance, while security personnel monitor real-time CCTV feeds covering tarmac operations, cargo handling and access control points, she said.

She added: "This initiative is also expected to strengthen efforts to curb cargo pilferage, improve personnel safety and ensure compliance with Nigeria Civil Aviation Authority (NCAA) and international aviation security standards."

Aboderin expressed that the decision to construct the facilities internally, rather than depend on imported prefabricated structures, would help conserve foreign exchange while providing infrastructure tailored to the operational realities of Nigeria's aviation industry.

and cost-efficient infrastructure development.

CITN urges FG to address tax reform gaps

By **Gloria Nwafor**

THE Chartered Institute of Taxation of Nigeria (CITN) has urged the Federal Government to address emerging gaps in the implementation of its tax reforms ahead of the 2027 Finance Act, warning that failure to make necessary adjustments could undermine the objectives of the new tax regime.

The institute said the success of the reforms would depend on the government's willingness to address concerns raised by businesses and taxpayers, as well as the competence and integrity of professionals responsible for translating the new laws into effective tax administration.

Its President, Innocent Ohagwa, made the point at the institute's 55th induction ceremony in Lagos. He acknowledged concerns among businesses, tax professionals and other stakeholders over the implementation of the reforms, which he described as a fundamental restructuring of Nigeria's legal, policy and administrative frameworks for taxation.

He, however, argued that the emerging challenges should not be interpreted as evidence of failure but as part of the process of building a more effective tax system.

"Lasting systems are built by testing the law against reality, and correcting it where necessary," he said.

Ohagwa commended the Federal Government for responding to stakeholders' concerns through the inauguration of the Technical Sub-Committee of the Presidential Fiscal Policy and Tax Reforms Committee by the Minister of Finance and Coordinating Minister of the Economy, Taiwo Oyedele.

He disclosed that CITN was represented on the sub-committee, which was working to harmonise stakeholders' concerns ahead of the 2027 Finance Act.

The committee is also reviewing the 2024 Withholding Tax Regulations, the 2020 Significant Economic Presence Order and the Value Added Tax threshold to ensure that the provisions better achieve the objectives of the reforms.

Ohagwa urged the government to sustain consultations and remain open to policy adjustments, stressing that reforms of such magnitude required continuous evaluation against economic and administrative realities.

He also called on businesses, tax professionals and other stakeholders to remain constructive and support the implementation process rather than allow emerging difficulties to derail the broader reform agenda.

eTranzact to pay N1.15 billion dividend

By **Abigail Ikhaghu**

ETRANZACT International Plc will pay a total dividend of N1.15 billion for the 2025 financial year. The proposal was approved at the company's yearly general meeting held in Lagos yesterday.

The company posted a profit after tax (PAT) of N2.47 billion during the year, about 27 per cent below the N3.39 billion recorded in the previous year.

Its gross revenue stood at N30.61 billion, slightly above the N29.9 billion posted in the previous year. Gross profit rose to N14.31 billion from N11.36 billion in 2024, while profit before tax fell by 14.25 per cent to N4.2 billion, following an increase in operating costs.

The company's Chairman, Wole Abegunde, said eTranzact would continue to explore cost-control measures and improve profitability to maximise shareholder value.

He said strong corporate governance and risk management practices would remain critical to building a sustainable organisation and maintaining its position in the industry.

He also noted that quality customer service would continue to guide its operations as it sought to deepen its business and create new opportunities.

"We are committed to being a regional leader in the medium term and, in the long term, a global leader in the electronic and mobile payment industry. To this end, we will continue to deliver secure, cost-effective and innovative electronic and mobile payment services that are compliant with globally recognised standards," Abegunde said.

The Chief Executive Officer, Olaniyi Toluwalope, said the adoption of Pocketmoni, the company's flagship product, would grow in the coming years and support its financial performance and market leadership.

He assured shareholders that management had put measures in place to improve cost management, financial performance and profitability in the coming years.

Earlier in the year, eTranzact witnessed a major board overhaul following a change in shareholding. Trademarks Global Concepts Limited acquired 56.18 per cent of its equity, leading to the appointment of five new directors.

The company said it had processed 850 billion transactions valued at N750 trillion in the past 20 years, with an average processing speed of 1.2 seconds.

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Operator faults NAMA's unilateral approach, isolation of airlines

Stories by **Olusegun Koiki**

THE Managing Director of Aero Contractors, Ado Sanusi, has faulted the Nigerian Airspace Management Agency's (NAMA) approach to infrastructure investment, urging the agency to involve airlines in decisions on facilities and equipment acquired for the industry.

Sanusi, a former Managing Director of NAMA, told *The Guardian* that airlines were rarely consulted before the installation of facilities funded with public resources to support their operations.

He warned that the agency risked spending billions of dollars on sophisticated equipment and infrastructure that airlines might lack the technical capacity to utilise effectively.

He urged NAMA to adopt a customer-driven investment strategy, arguing that the airlines constitute its primary customers and should have a say in determining its investment priorities.

He said: "We are left behind. I am telling you, we are left behind. The thing I would like to discuss also is that NAMA has to understand that 100 per cent of their customers, in fact, are the airlines.

"You don't give any other services to any other person apart from the airlines. I also made a mistake when I was sitting in NAMA, thinking that I would give the best surveillance system, the best communication system, the controller, the pilot, and the data link system, not knowing what the actual customer wants.

"Does the customer have the capability to actually use what I've given him? And I think that is also important in what we are doing now. I heard the Minister of Aviation and Aerospace Development, Festus Keyamo, saying we have the Automatic Dependent Surveillance-Broadcast (ADS-B); we are going to do this. Who are you giving these services to? Is it to Nigeria or to whom?"

Sanusi also called on the Federal Government to immediately constitute NAMA's board of directors to provide airlines with a formal platform to participate in decisions affecting air navigation services and infrastructure development.

He said his experience as a former chief executive of the agency and his subsequent leadership of an airline had exposed the disconnect that could arise between infrastructure providers and their customers.

He recalled that while at NAMA, he had prioritised the acquisition of advanced surveillance, communication, and controller-pilot data link systems without adequately considering whether airlines had the technical capacity to use them.

Sanusi maintained that constituting the agency's board would help address the problem by giving operators a voice in its operations and creating a structured platform for consultations.

He also urged NAMA to take responsibility for regularly engaging with airlines to understand their operational requirements, rather than relying solely on directives or interventions from the Ministry of Aviation and Aerospace Development.

"The constitution of the NAMA board should be done immediately because that's the only way the airlines can have a say in what NAMA does.

"We can go to the minister and start talking to him to talk to NAMA, and NAMA too must understand and visit their customers. The forum should be there when you discuss with your customers what they need," he added.

Sanusi also raised concerns about coordination challenges among aviation agencies, citing an experience involving NAMA and the Nigerian Meteorological Agency (NiMet) during the implementation of a safety tower project.

He explained that the project included an automated weather reporting system designed to enable pilots to receive hourly weather information through air traffic control facilities.

However, implementation was initially delayed because the meteorological component was under NiMet's control, complicating integration of the system into NAMA's operations.

Although the agencies eventually resolved the issue through consultations, Sanusi said it was concerning that Nigeria continued to struggle with inter-agency collaboration even as the global aviation industry moved towards more integrated systems.

He called for a review of the governance structures and funding arrangements of aviation agencies to improve operational efficiency and service delivery.

Sanusi also advocated the commercialisation of NAMA, urging the Federal Government to consider adopting the Canadian model, under which aviation professionals manage air navigation services on a cost-recovery basis.

He argued that such an arrangement would promote professional management, improve accountability and ensure that services were aligned with operators' needs.

While commending the leadership of the National Association of Air Traffic Controllers (NATCA) for initiating discussions on NAMA's future, he said the engagement should translate into concrete reforms.

Delta emerges Best U.S. Airline for third consecutive year

DELTA Air Lines has been named the Best U.S. Airline by Forbes Travel Guide for the third consecutive year, reinforcing its standing in customer experience, premium travel and operational performance.

A statement by the airline said the recognition was announced as part of Forbes Travel Guide's 2026 Verified Air Travel Awards and reflected Delta's premium service, customer satisfaction and on-time arrival performance.

Beyond the overall airline award, Delta received five other honours in the 2026 awards, recognising its performance across different aspects of the passenger experience.

The additional awards include Best U.S. First Class for Delta First on the Airbus A321neo; Best U.S. Business Class for Delta One; Best U.S. Airline Lounge for its Delta One Lounge at New York's John F. Kennedy International Airport; Best Loyalty Programme for SkyMiles; and Best Airline App for the Fly Delta mobile application.

The statement said the recognition for Delta One reflected the airline's investment in its premium cabin experience, which features lie-flat seating, Missoni amenity kits with Grown Alchemist skincare products and an enhanced wine programme featuring selections from Napa Valley and other international destinations.

Its Delta One Lounge at JFK Airport was also recognised for its extensive facilities, including premium dining, relaxation pods, shower suites and dedicated spaces designed to improve the airport experience for premium passengers.

Meanwhile, the SkyMiles programme received its first-ever Forbes Travel Guide award for Best Loyalty Programme.

The programme allows members to earn miles through travel and everyday activities, with opportunities to redeem them for future trips and other benefits. Miles earned through the programme do not expire.

The Fly Delta application was also recognised for its digital travel support features, including real-time flight updates, notifications, baggage tracking and assistance with travel-related enquiries.



Minister of Finance and Coordinating Minister of Economy, Taiwo Oyedele (left) and the Chairman of United Nigeria Airlines, Prof. Obiora Okonkwo speaking as panelists at the World Public Relations Forum held in Abuja, recently.

Umza Air introduces daily Lagos-Abuja, Kano, Kaduna flights

DOMESTIC airline, Umza Air, has expanded its route network with the introduction of new services connecting Lagos to Abuja, Kano, Kaduna and Sokoto.

The airline said the expansion, which took effect earlier this month, aimed to improve domestic connectivity and make air travel more affordable for Nigerians.

Under the new arrangement, the airline will operate daily flights from Lagos to Abuja, Kano and Kaduna, while the Lagos-Sokoto route will run three times weekly.

The Managing Director of Umza Aviation Services Limited, Henry Anachuna, said the expansion was driven by the need to ease the financial burden on passengers and provide more affordable travel options amid rising domestic airfares.

He said the airline recognised the difficulties Nigerians faced when travelling within the country and was determined to make air transportation more accessible, particularly for business travellers and those undertaking journeys for family and other personal commitments.

"Air travel should not be a luxury that ordinary Nigerians struggle to afford. We understand the financial pressure passengers face when connecting to their preferred destinations, and we are determined to help ease that burden by providing more affordable travel options.

"Our objective is to ensure that passengers can travel for business, family commitments and other important engagements without having to contend with excessively high fares," Anachuna said.

He said the expansion was part of the airline's strategy to strengthen its domestic operations and connect more economic and regional centres across the country.

According to him, Umza Air's existing network covers Abuja, Kano, Birnin Kebbi, Maiduguri, Yola, Sokoto, Lagos, Ilorin and Gombe.

Anachuna assured passengers that operational reliability, competitive fares and improved customer experience would remain central to the airline's operations as it expanded its network.

N712b MMIA terminal reconstruction goes beyond facelift, Caulcrick says

A FORMER official of the Nigerian College of Aviation Technology (NCAT), Zaria, Samuel Caulcrick, has defended the Federal Government's decision to commit N712 billion to the reconstruction of Terminal 1 of the Murtala Muhammed International Airport (MMIA), Lagos.

Caulcrick, who spoke with *The Guardian* in Lagos, said the project involved far more than an ordinary terminal renovation, arguing that critics of its cost might be overlooking the extensive structural, civil engineering and infrastructure works covered by the contract.

He said that an objective assessment of the project should be based on its bill of quantities rather than comparisons with the cost of conventional terminal construction or routine renovation.

According to him, the project involves stripping the existing 1979 terminal down to its concrete structural frame and rebuilding it, including installing new mechanical, electrical, and plumbing systems.

He said the scope also covers two independent landside ring roads, overhead bridges, a skywalk and a connecting building between Terminals 1 and 2. It also includes the expansion of Terminal 2's apron and boarding fingers by approximately 15,000 square metres.

Caulcrick, who is also the Chief Executive Officer of Merchant Express Cargo Airlines, said these components distinguish the project from routine renovation or cosmetic improvements, which critics had often used as the basis for questioning the contract sum.

He said: "Critics who compare the cost to basic terminal facelifts often overlook that the contract bundles several heavy civil engineering works.

"Apart from stripping the 1979 structure down to its concrete frame, the bill covers two independent landside ring roads and overhead bridges, a skywalk and connecting building linking T1 and T2, and a 15,000-square-metre apron and boarding finger expansion for Terminal 2."

CNG: Seeking market efficiency beyond tax waivers, relief

Lower fuel costs alone may not guarantee the success of compressed natural gas (CNG) adoption in Nigeria, as the benefits of tax incentives and import-duty exemptions will depend on the availability of conversion facilities, refuelling infrastructure and affordable vehicles, ***BENJAMIN ALADE*** *reports.*



President, Nigeria Liquefied and Compressed Gases Association (NLCGA), Ladi Falola (left); Special Adviser on Energy to the President, Mrs. Olu Verheighn and ES/CEO of NLCGA, Lanre Baiyewu, during a meeting on CNG at the SA's office in Abuja.

NIGERIA'S decision to remove value-added tax (VAT) and import duties on CNG-powered vehicles, conversion kits, and related equipment could accelerate the adoption of gas-powered transportation among motorists.

However, experts warn that lower costs alone will not guarantee widespread adoption, as infrastructure, consumer awareness, safety and financing remain critical to making CNG a viable alternative to petrol and diesel.

Nigeria's transition to gas-powered transportation is entering a critical phase, with the Federal Government's fiscal incentives offering fresh opportunities to reduce vehicle operating costs and stimulate investment across the automotive industry.

The removal of VAT and import duties on CNG, liquefied petroleum gas (LPG), conversion kits, and associated equipment is expected to ease some of the financial barriers facing motorists, fleet operators, and businesses seeking alternatives to conventional fuels.

For an automotive industry grappling with rising vehicle acquisition costs, expensive maintenance and fuel price volatility, the intervention could influence decisions on vehicle purchases, conversions and fleet renewal. Yet questions remain about whether the incentives will translate into a sustainable motoring culture centred on gas-powered vehicles.

Unlike conventional petrol and diesel vehicles, CNG adoption requires an ecosystem of specialised conversion equipment, refuelling facilities, trained technicians, reliable gas supply and accessible maintenance services. Without these supporting structures, the financial benefits of cheaper conversions could remain largely untapped.

The policy intervention followed advocacy by the Nigeria Liquefied and Compressed Gases Association (NLCGA), which approached the Presidency in 2023 through an engagement with the Special Adviser to President Bola Tinubu on Energy, Olu Verheijen.

The association had raised concerns about the fiscal burden imposed by VAT and import duties on LPG, CNG and equipment required for gas storage, transportation, distribution and utilisation.

For the automotive sector, the concerns were particularly relevant because expanding CNG-powered mobility requires substantial investment in cylinders, conversion kits, compressors, dispensers, valves, pipelines and other specialised components.

Where these items attract additional taxes and import charges, the costs are ultimately reflected in higher conversion prices, infrastructure investment and, potentially, the cost of operating gas-powered vehicles.

Following engagements with the Office of the Special Adviser and the Federal Ministry of Finance, the government introduced measures granting zero import duty and VAT exemptions on LPG and qualifying equipment. The measures were approved by the Federal Government in July 2026.

The intervention presents an opportunity to reduce the cost of establishing gas infrastructure while improving the economics of converting existing vehicles and acquiring CNG-powered models.

For motorists, lower conversion costs, combined with the price advantage of CNG over conventional fuels on an equivalent energy basis, could shorten the period required to recover their investment. This is particularly relevant for commercial buses, taxis, delivery vehicles and haulage trucks that cover substantial distances daily.

For fleet operators, fuel savings could become significant when multiplied across hundreds or thousands of vehicles. Companies operating large commercial fleets are increasingly considering alternative fuels as they seek to manage operating expenses and reduce exposure to petrol and diesel price fluctuations.

Dangote Cement, for instance, has announced plans to transition substantial portions of its fleet to CNG-powered vehicles, illustrating growing commercial interest in gas as a transportation fuel.

However, the economics of fleet conversion extend beyond purchasing and installing conversion equipment. Transport companies must consider the availability of refuelling stations along their operating routes, refuelling time, vehicle range, maintenance requirements and access to trained personnel.

Commenting on the issue, the President of NLCGA, Ladi Falola, said the incentives should be considered within the broader objective of developing a viable domestic gas market, rather than merely as a tax-reduction measure.

Falola, in an interview with *The Guardian*, maintained that reducing the fiscal burden on CNG equipment could encourage investment and make gas-powered transportation more attractive to motorists and fleet operators.

He, however, stressed the importance of complementary measures, including investment in refuelling infrastructure, reliable gas supply, technical capacity, appropriate financing and policy consistency.

Falola also argued that the policy could create opportunities for local assembly, equipment supply and technical services as the CNG market expands.

Similarly, Associate Professor of Marketing and Transport Services Researcher at Keele University, United Kingdom, Dr Emmanuel Mogaji, said VAT and import-duty exemptions could encourage CNG adoption by reducing costs but cautioned that affordability alone would not guarantee acceptance.

According to him, the transition must also address consumer behaviour, particularly awareness, confidence and trust in the technology.

Mogaji identified three important interventions that could improve public acceptance.

First, he said Nigerians needed adequate awareness and education about CNG, including its potential cost savings, operational benefits and safety considerations.

He argued that the government should move beyond announcing fiscal incentives to providing practical information that would help motorists understand how the technology works and what it means for vehicle ownership.

The VAT and import-duty exemptions are helpful, but they will not deliver mass CNG adoption on their own. Incentives can reduce the cost of conversion kits, cylinders and gas-powered vehicles, but the principal question for motorists remains whether they can refuel reliably.

Mogaji advocated practical demonstrations involving taxis, buses and private vehicles to show that CNG-powered vehicles could operate safely and reliably under everyday conditions.

Such demonstrations, he explained, could reduce uncertainty among motorists who might otherwise hesitate to adopt an unfamiliar technology.

He also highlighted the importance of credible endorsements from trusted transport operators, experienced drivers, automobile experts and early adopters.

According to him, consumers are more likely to embrace unfamiliar technology when they see others using it successfully.

He explained that while tax incentives could make CNG affordable, awareness creates interest, demonstrations build confidence and credible endorsements establish trust.

He said: "Consumers need adequate awareness and education about CNG, including its potential cost savings, operational benefits and safety considerations.

"Practical demonstrations involving taxis, buses and private vehicles can help motorists understand how CNG-powered vehicles perform under everyday conditions.

"Such demonstrations can reduce uncertainty among motorists who may be reluctant to embrace a technology they consider unfamiliar."

Energy Partner at Bloomfield Law Practice, Dr Ayodele Oni, also told *The Guardian* that VAT and import-duty exemptions were useful but would not, on their own, deliver mass adoption of CNG.

Oni explained that one of the major challenges confronting motorists was access to dependable refuelling infrastructure.

He said: "The VAT and import-duty exemptions are helpful, but they will not deliver mass CNG adoption on their own. Incentives can reduce the cost of conversion kits, cylinders and gas-powered vehicles, but the principal question for motorists remains whether they can refuel reliably.

"Official figures put the CNG fleet at slightly above 143,000 vehicles and the network at 105 refuelling stations, compared with a target of one million conversions by 2027. The relief has limitations because access runs through an Import Duty Exemption Certificate, while dual-fuel vehicles and some spare parts are outside the scope of the exemption."

According to Oni, additional measures were necessary to make gas-powered mobility more affordable and sustainable.

He called for government and private investors to build more refuelling stations along major transport corridors and in underserved parts of the country and also advocated a transparent and predictable price regime for transport gas, backed by reliable supply contracts that would give investors' confidence to finance new stations.

He also advocated financing schemes that would enable commercial drivers and transport unions to pay for vehicle conversions from the savings generated from lower fuel costs.

PNLHub targets delivery market with digital platform

By **Benjamin Alade**

POMEGRANATE Nigeria Limited (PNL) has introduced PNLHub, a two-application digital delivery platform designed to simplify the movement of goods while creating additional business opportunities for transport operators and vehicle owners.

The platform, comprising PNLHub Shippers and PNLHub Transporters, connects individuals and businesses seeking delivery services with riders, drivers and owners of different categories of vehicles.

Speaking at the launch, the Chief Executive Officer of PNL, Wole Elusakin, said the initiative was developed to make delivery services more accessible and improve opportunities for transport operators to generate income from their vehicles.

He explained that PNLHub Shippers enables individuals, traders, online vendors and corporate organisations to book delivery services through their mobile phones, while PNLHub Transporters connects service providers with available delivery jobs.

"Our intention is to make the process of sending and receiving goods easier. Individuals and businesses need convenient ways to move their goods, while transport operators also need access to customers and opportunities to earn from their vehicles," he said.

He noted that the platform accommodates different vehicle categories, including motorcycles, cars, mini vans, medium vans and trailers, allowing customers to select options based on the size and nature of their consignments.

According to him, the flexibility is intended to serve different delivery requirements, from small personal packages to larger commercial consignments.

Elusakin said the platform would particularly benefit small and medium-sized businesses, online vendors and retailers whose operations depend on efficient product distribution.

He added that accessing delivery services through a mobile application could help businesses organise their distribution activities, improve customer service and reach customers beyond their immediate locations.

On opportunities for transport operators, he said PNLHub Transporters would provide an additional channel for vehicle owners to access customers, secure delivery jobs and improve vehicle utilisation.

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122 DR. MONDAY UBANI, SAN
123. ABIODUN.A. OLATUNJI, SAN
124. HE. MOHAMMED ABUBAKAR, SAN
125. OLUKAYODE ENITAN, SAN
126. LUKMAN FAGBEMI, SAN
127. ALEX MUOKA, SAN
128. CHIEF BOLAJI AYORINDE SAN, OFR
129. KEMI PINHEIRO, OFR; SAN
130. ADAMSON ADEBORO, SAN
131. DR. DAPO OLANIPEKUN, SAN
132. BODE OLANIPEKUN, SAN
133. FEMI FALANA, SAN, CON
134. KAZEEM ADEKUNLE GBADAMOSI,SAN
135. EMEKA OZOANI, SAN
136. OLUWOLE AFOLABI, SAN
137. CHIEF DURO ADEYELE,SAN
138. JONATHAN GUNU TAIDI, SAN
139. ADESINA ADEGBITE ESQ
140. CHIEF PAUL C. OBI, SAN.
141. ADEOLA ADEDIPE, SAN
142. OLA OLANIPEKUN, SAN
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145. CHIEF OLUSOLA OKE, SAN
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BENIN, EDO STATE

BY HIS EXCELLENCY,
SEN. MONDAY OKPEBHOLO
EXECUTIVE GOVERNOR, EDO STATE

TUESDAY 24TH NOVEMBER, 2026 | 11:00AM | UNIVERSITY OF BENIN TEACHING HOSPITAL, BENIN, EDO STATE





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In the Name of the Almighty, the Beneficent, the Merciful

"And Allah presents an example: a city which was safe and secure, its provision coming to it in abundance from every location, but it denied the favours of Allah. So Allah made it taste the envelopment of hunger and fear for what they had been doing." Qur'an 16 verse 112.

By **Kabir Alabi Garba**

إِنَّ ٱلدِّينَ عِندَ ٱللَّهِ ٱلْإِسْلَٰمُ

"Surely, the religion with Allah is ISLAM,complete submission"... Qur'an 3:19

Islam and politics of human suffering

BRETHREN, there is something particularly disturbing about the ongoing electioneering leading to the 2027 general elections. It is this political culture in which the suffering of Nigerians becomes more politically valuable than the solutions required to end it. Indeed, citizens are already witnesses to familiar political theatrics.

Politicians who have little to show for years in public office have suddenly discovered the suffering of ordinary citizens. Those who presided over economic policies that weakened household purchasing power have now become passionate advocates of the poor. They are turning insecurity, unemployment and the displacement of farming communities into campaign talking points, as though the misery of millions were an electoral opportunity rather than a national emergency.

Often, food distribution is being presented as empowerment, temporary palliatives as economic policy, and inflammatory speeches about insecurity as evidence of concern. Yet, after the campaign rallies, the hungry still return to empty kitchens, displaced farmers remain unable to access their farms, and unemployed youths continue searching for opportunities that are nowhere in sight.

This raises a fundamental question: can politicians continue to exploit the misery of the people for electoral advantage without confronting the moral, economic and institutional failures responsible for it?

The Qur'anic verse (Chapter 16:112) quoted above offers a compelling entry point into this national conversation through the parable of a prosperous community whose fortunes changed because of ingratitude and wrongdoing.

Although revealed in a particular historical context, this verse (Qur'an 16:112) carries an enduring warning for societies that enjoy abundant resources but fail to preserve the conditions necessary for collective prosperity.

Nigeria is richly endowed with petroleum, fertile agricultural land, solid minerals, a vast youthful population and enormous entrepreneurial potential. Yet, millions of its citizens struggle to afford basic necessities, while insecurity threatens lives, livelihoods and investments.

The contradiction is striking: a country with enormous agricultural potential imports or struggles to produce sufficient quantities of essential food commodities; a country with immense human resources battles mass unemployment; and a nation blessed with considerable wealth struggles to guarantee basic security and decent living conditions for its citizens.

The lesson of Qur'an 16:112 is that prosperity cannot be sustained where divine blessings are abused, public trust is betrayed, justice is neglected and society becomes indifferent to the welfare of its people.

So, the weaponisation of hunger and insecurity during political campaigns represents a dangerous distortion of democratic competition. There is nothing wrong with political parties making hunger, poverty, unemployment and insecurity central to their manifestoes. Indeed, these are precisely the issues that should dominate national political discourse. What is unacceptable is the deliberate exploitation of these challenges without credible programmes for resolving them.

Politicians must not confuse distributing bags of rice with building food security, nor mistake occasional financial handouts for sustainable poverty reduction. A hungry electorate needs more than campaign generosity; it needs an economy that creates opportunities and makes food affordable.

Islam demands that political competition be governed by truth, justice and integrity. Allah (SWT) commands in Qur'an 4:58: "Indeed, Allah commands you to render trusts to whom they are due and when you judge between people to judge with justice. "

Public office is an *amanah*, a sacred trust, not a personal inheritance or an instrument for political enrichment. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) reinforced this responsibility when he said: "Each of you is a shepherd, and each of you is responsible for his flock."

Leadership, therefore, must be judged by the protection of lives, responsible management of public resources and tangible improvements in the welfare of citizens, not by the sophistication of campaign slogans.

While politicians may exploit public suffering, Nigeria must confront the underlying causes of its social and economic difficulties.

First is corruption and the diversion of public resources. Money intended for roads, schools, hospitals, agricultural infrastructure and security is frequently undermined by procurement abuses, inflated contracts, abandoned projects and financial misconduct. Every stolen public resource represents an opportunity denied to citizens.

The Qur'an expressly condemns the unlawful consumption of wealth. Allah says in Chapter 2, verse 188: "And do not consume one another's wealth unjustly or send it in bribery to the rulers in order that you might aid yourselves to consume a portion of the wealth of the people in sin, while you know it is unlawful."

Second is the failure to build a productive, diversified economy. Despite decades of oil earnings, Nigeria remains vulnerable to external economic shocks, inadequate industrial capacity, unreliable electricity, poor infrastructure and excessive dependence on imports. Economic reforms that fail to stimulate production, protect vulnerable households and expand employment risk transferring the burden of adjustment disproportionately to ordinary citizens.

> **There is nothing wrong with political parties making hunger, poverty, unemployment and insecurity central to their manifestoes. Indeed, these are precisely the issues that should dominate national political discourse. What is unacceptable is the deliberate exploitation of these challenges without credible programmes for resolving them. Politicians must not confuse distributing bags of rice with building food security, nor mistake occasional financial handouts for sustainable poverty reduction. A hungry electorate needs more than campaign generosity; it needs an economy that creates opportunities and makes food affordable.**

Third is insecurity, particularly its devastating consequences for agriculture. Banditry, terrorism, kidnapping, communal violence and farmer-herder conflicts have displaced farming communities and reduced access to productive land. The resulting disruption of food supply contributes to rising prices and deepens poverty.

Allah (SWT) condemns activities that destroy productive life and social order in Qur'an 2:205: "And when he turns away, he strives throughout the land to cause corruption therein and destroy crops and animals. And Allah does not like corruption."

Fourth is institutional weakness. A country cannot guarantee prosperity where law enforcement is compromised, justice is delayed, public institutions are politicised and public policies are frequently abandoned whenever governments change.

Moreover, there is a crisis of values. Greed, nepotism, tribalism, religious manipulation, dishonesty and ostentatious consumption have weakened the ethical foundations of public life. When political loyalty becomes more important than competence and wealth is celebrated without questions about its source, national development suffers.

These challenges are interconnected. Hunger cannot be resolved independently of insecurity, corruption, agricultural productivity, economic management and institutional reform.

Islam places human welfare at the centre of social responsibility. Significantly, Qur'an 106:3-4 connects the provision of food with freedom from fear: "Let them worship the Lord of this House, who has fed them against hunger and made them safe from fear."

The combination is instructive. Food security and physical security are inseparable foundations of human dignity. A society cannot claim genuine prosperity when its citizens have food but live under constant threat, or enjoy relative security but cannot afford basic necessities.

The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: "He is not a believer whose stomach is filled while his neighbour goes hungry."

This Hadith challenges Muslims to translate religious devotion into practical compassion. Mosques, Islamic organisations, wealthy individuals, businesses and community associations must strengthen their interventions for vulnerable families.

However, charitable interventions must complement, not replace, responsible government. Feeding a hungry family today is commendable; building an economy in which that family can sustainably feed itself is transformative.

Nigeria requires a shift from the politics of sympathy to a practical programme of national recovery. The solutions must be specific, adequately funded and measurable.

Al-Hujaaj donates educational edifice to Markaz Agege

By **Opeyemi Babalola**

IN a remarkable display of generosity and commitment to giving back to his alma mater, the Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of Al-Hujaaj International Hajj and Umrah Services Ltd., Alhaji Abdul Jaleel Animashaun, has donated a newly constructed multi-purpose educational edifice to the Markaz Arabic and Islamic Training Centre, Agege, Lagos to support the advancement of Islamic education and social activities at the institution.

The two-storey building, comprising six spacious rooms that can serve as classrooms, seminar rooms and staff offices, was formally handed over to the Rector of the institute, Sheikh Habeebullah Adam Al-Ilory.

Speaking at the handing over ceremony, Alhaji Animashaun said his motivation for the donation was rooted in gratitude to the late Sheikh Adam Al-Ilory, whose advice and guidance had significantly influenced his business journey.

Recounting his first encounter with the late Islamic scholar during the early years of his Hajj and Umrah operations, while travelling to Jeddah, Animashaun said the Sheikh had encouraged him to remain patient, loyal and honest in his business dealings.

"He said it was a good job, but I had to be patient, loyal and honest," he recalled.

He added that the advice had remained with him throughout his business journey, noting that his business has continued to progress since then.

Explaining how the project began, he recalled that noted two years ago he attended the Arabic Institute Matriculation ceremony where he pledged the building project.



President-General, Niqobatul Markaziyyin, Sheikh Dr Yusuf Jumah Ilala (left); Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of Al-Hujaaj International Hajj and Umrah Services Limited., Alhaji Abdul Jaleel Animashaun; Rector, Markaz Arabic and Islamic Training Centre, Agege, Sheikh Habeebullah Adam Al-Ilory, during the handover of the newly constructed two-story building to the institute, recently.

Responding to the gesture, the Rector of the Institute, Sheikh Habeebullah Adam Al-Ilory commended Animashaun's generosity and longstanding commitment to the development of Markaz and the wider Muslim community.

The cleric disclosed that the late Sheikh Adam Al-Ilory gave Animashaun the name Al-Hujaaj, adding that his contributions to the cause of Islam were worthy of commendation.

He particularly praised the donor for going beyond the construction of modern mosques to ensuring that Islamic clerics are appointed and their salaries paid.

"His commitment towards Markaz is commendable. He has built modern mosques, and beyond building them, he ensures that Alfas are put there and their salaries are paid. These are things worthy of emulation," he said.

The cleric also extended special appreciation to the donor's wife, acknowledging her support and understanding of her husband's commitment to spending his resources in the cause of Islam.

He described her support as an important contribution to her husband's philanthropic activities.

"When you see a woman who supports her husband in spending in the cause of Islam, such a woman is a good woman," he said.

PUBLIC NOTICE

LOSS OF DOCUMENT

This is to inform the general public that the deed of assignment dated ***8th day of November, 2020*** belonging to **F&J Properties Limited** in respect of ***4119.382 Sq metres*** of land laying and being ***Plot 46, 45, Block LXX, within Ojomu Chieftaincy family land, Ajiran in Eti-Osa Local Government Area of Lagos Stat***e, registered as ***No.61/61/2697*** dated ***8th November 2020*** and archived in Land Registry, Lagos Nigeria.

The above titled document has since been missing and all effort to find it proved abortive.

Accordingly, an Application will be presented to the Registrar of Titles for an Extract of Loss.

Signed:
The Management

PUBLIC NOTICE
FEDERAL MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT

PUBLIC DISPLAY EXERCISE ON THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT (EIA) FOR THE PROPOSED SEPNU JV EXPANSION PHASE 3D OBN SEISMIC SURVEY PROJECT IN OFFSHORE, AKWA IBOM STATE BY SEPLAT ENERGY PRODUCING NIGERIA UNLIMITED.

In accordance with the provisions of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Act CAP E12 LFN 2004, which makes it mandatory for proponents of all new major developmental activities to carry out EIA for their proposed projects, the Federal Ministry of Environment hereby announces twenty-one (21) working days public display for information and comments on the draft EIA report submitted by Seplat Energy Producing Nigeria Unlimited (SEPNU).

Brief Project Description:

The proposed project shall entail the acquisition of high-resolution three-dimensional (3D) seismic data within the Abang, Asabo, Enang, Ekpe, Isobo, and Nkop/Obu expansion areas of Oil Mining Leases (OMLs) 67 and 70. The project area lies approximately 17 km to 35 km offshore, Akwa Ibom State. The survey is intended to improve the understanding and characterization of subsurface geological formations and prospective hydrocarbon-bearing reservoirs within the project area.

The Display Centers are:

- Akwa-Ibom State Ministry of Environment, Uyo.
- Federal Ministry of Environment office, Uyo field office, Akwa-Ibom State.
- Federal Ministry of Environment, Environmental Assessment Department, Environment House, Independence Way South, Central Business District, Abuja - F.C.T.
- www.ead.gov.ng

Duration of Display:

Date: 23rd November - 21st December, 2026.
Time: 8:00am - 4:00pm Daily.

COMMENTS SHOULD BE FORWARDED TO THE HONOURABLE MINISTER, FEDERAL MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT HEADQUARTERS, MABUSHI, ABUJA - FCT AND VIA info@ead.gov.ng ON OR BEFORE 2ND DECEMBER, 2026.

SIGNED
PERMANENT SECRETARY
FOR: HONOURABLE MINISTER

UNIVERSITY OF NIGERIA TEACHING HOSPITAL

ITUKU-OZALLA, P.M.B. 01129, ENUGU, ENUGU STATE, NIGERIA

"SERVICE TO HUMANITY"

10th October, 2026

ADVERTISEMENT

Applications are invited from suitably qualified candidates for the following vacant positions in the University of Nigeria Teaching Hospital (UNTH), Ituku-Ozalla, Enugu, pursuant to the approval of the Honourable Coordinating Minister of Health and Social Welfare. The exercise shall comply with the Federal Character principle, and **persons living with disabilities who meet the requirements are strongly encouraged to apply.**

1. **Consultants**
   a. Emergency Medicine
   b. Family Medicine
   c. Internal Medicine
   d. Surgery
   e. Paediatrics
   f. Obstetrics & Gynaecology
   g. Community Medicine
2. **Registrars**
   a. Surgery
   b. Internal Medicine
   c. Paediatrics
   d. Obstetrics & Gynaecology
   e. Anaesthesia
   f. Radiodiagnosis
   g. Orthopaedics & Traumatology
   h. Haematology & Blood Transfusion
   i. Family Medicine
   j. Psychiatry
   k. Preventive Dentistry
   l. Restorative Dentistry
   m. Radiotherapy
   n. Anatomic & Molecular Pathology
   o. Microbiology
   p. Community Medicine
3. Medical Officers
4. Senior Pharmacists
5. Senior Physiotherapists
6. Senior Medical Laboratory Scientists
7. Senior Imaging Scientists
8. Senior Radiographers
9. Senior Radiotherapists
10. Senior Dietitians
11. Optometrists
12. Senior Nursing Officers
13. Nursing Officers I
14. Nursing Officers II
15. Nurse Tutors I
16. Staff Nurses
17. Bio-Medical Engineers I
18. Psychologists I
19. Dental Therapists
20. Dental Technologists
21. Administrative Officers II
22. Higher Executive Officers (General Duty)
23. Accountants II
24. Higher Executive Officers (Accounts)
25. Health Records Officers II
26. Librarians II
27. Programme Analysts II
28. Higher Data Processing Officers
29. Social Welfare Officers II
30. Planning Officers II
31. Higher Medical Laboratory Technicians
32. Environmental Health Officers II
33. Community Health Officers II
34. Primary Health Care Tutors II
35. Medical Laboratory Technicians
36. Medical Records Technicians
37. Community Health Technicians
38. Pharmacy Technicians
39. Dental Surgery Technicians
40. Assistant Stores Officers
41. Assistant Data Processing Officers
42. Store Keepers
43. Clerical Officers II
44. Motor Drivers/Mechanics
45. Health Assistants
46. Data Processing Assistants
47. Mortuary Assistants
48. Dietetics Assistants
49. Porters
50. Health Attendants

REQUIREMENTS

General: Evidence of NYSC Discharge or Exemption Certificate is compulsory for all degree and HND posts. Where a post requires professional registration, a current practising licence must also be presented.

1. CONSULTANTS: MBBS or equivalent; full registration with the Medical and Dental Council of Nigeria (MDCN); Fellowship of the National Postgraduate Medical College of Nigeria or the West African College of Physicians/Surgeons in the relevant specialty; specialist registration with MDCN.

2. REGISTRARS: MBBS/BDS; full registration with MDCN; pass in the Primary Fellowship Examination of the NPMCN or WACP/WACS in the relevant specialty, or its equivalent.

3. MEDICAL OFFICERS: MBBS; full registration with MDCN. Post-housemanship experience is an added advantage.

4. SENIOR PHARMACISTS: B.Pharm/Pharm.D; registration with the Pharmacy Council of Nigeria; one-year internship; at least three (3) years' post-internship experience.

5. SENIOR PHYSIOTHERAPISTS: B.Sc/B.MR (Physiotherapy) or DPT; registration with the Medical Rehabilitation Therapists (Registration) Board of Nigeria; internship; at least three (3) years' post-internship experience.

6. SENIOR MEDICAL LABORATORY SCIENTISTS: B.MLS; registration with the Medical Laboratory Science Council of Nigeria (MLSCN); internship; at least three (3) years' post-internship experience.

7–9. SENIOR IMAGING SCIENTISTS, SENIOR RADIOGRAPHERS, SENIOR RADIOTHERAPISTS: B.Sc/B.Rad in Radiography (Radiotherapy option for Radiotherapists); registration with the Radiographers Registration Board of Nigeria; internship; at least three (3) years' post-internship experience.

10. SENIOR DIETITIANS: B.Sc Nutrition & Dietetics; registration with the relevant regulatory council; internship; at least three (3) years' post-internship experience.

11. OPTOMETRISTS: Doctor of Optometry (OD); registration with the Optometrists and Dispensing Opticians Registration Board of Nigeria; one-year internship.

12. SENIOR NURSING OFFICERS: BNSc with RN/RM; registration with the Nursing and Midwifery Council of Nigeria (NMCN); at least three (3) years' post-registration experience.

13. NURSING OFFICERS I: BNSc with RN; registration with NMCN; internship.

14. NURSING OFFICERS II: RN plus RM or another post-basic nursing qualification; registration with NMCN.

15. NURSE TUTORS I: BNSc (Nursing Education) or RN/RM with a postgraduate qualification in Nursing Education; registration with NMCN as a Nurse Educator.

16. STAFF NURSES: RN (General Nursing); registration with NMCN.

17. BIO-MEDICAL ENGINEERS I: B.Eng/B.Sc in Biomedical, Electrical or Electronic Engineering; COREN registration; at least two (2) years' relevant experience.

18. PSYCHOLOGISTS I: M.Sc Clinical Psychology; registration with the relevant professional regulatory body; supervised clinical experience.

19. DENTAL THERAPISTS: Diploma/HND in Dental Therapy; registration with the Dental Therapists Registration Board of Nigeria.

20. DENTAL TECHNOLOGISTS: HND/B.Sc in Dental Technology; registration with the relevant regulatory board.

21. ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICERS II: Bachelor's degree, minimum Second Class (Lower Division), in Arts, Social or Management Sciences; computer literacy.

22. HIGHER EXECUTIVE OFFICERS (GENERAL DUTY): HND in Public/Business Administration or a related field; computer literacy.

23. ACCOUNTANTS II: B.Sc/HND in Accountancy. Membership of ICAN or ANAN is an added advantage.

24. HIGHER EXECUTIVE OFFICERS (ACCOUNTS): HND in Accountancy; computer literacy.

25. HEALTH RECORDS OFFICERS II: HND/B.Sc in Health Information Management; registration with the Health Records Officers Registration Board of Nigeria (HRORBN).

26. LIBRARIANS II: Bachelor's degree in Library and Information Science; registration with the Librarians' Registration Council of Nigeria.

27. PROGRAMME ANALYSTS II: B.Sc in Computer Science, Information Technology or a related field; demonstrable programming and database skills.

28. HIGHER DATA PROCESSING OFFICERS: HND in Computer Science or a related field.

29. SOCIAL WELFARE OFFICERS II: B.Sc in Social Work, Sociology or a related field.

30. PLANNING OFFICERS II: B.Sc in Economics, Statistics, Urban & Regional Planning or a related field.

31. HIGHER MEDICAL LABORATORY TECHNICIANS: Medical Laboratory Technician Certificate; registration with MLSCN; at least three (3) years' post-qualification experience.

32. ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH OFFICERS II: B.Sc/HND in Environmental Health; registration with EHORECON.

33. COMMUNITY HEALTH OFFICERS II: Community Health Officer Certificate/HND; registration with the Community Health Practitioners Registration Board of Nigeria (CHPRBN).

34. PRIMARY HEALTH CARE TUTORS II: CHO qualification plus a degree or postgraduate qualification in Education or Health Education; registration with CHPRBN.

35. MEDICAL LABORATORY TECHNICIANS: Medical Laboratory Technician Certificate (three-year programme); registration with MLSCN.

36. MEDICAL RECORDS TECHNICIANS: ND in Health Information Management; registration with HRORBN.

37. COMMUNITY HEALTH TECHNICIANS: Certificate in Community Health Extension (CHEW); registration with CHPRBN.

38. PHARMACY TECHNICIANS: ND/Certificate in Pharmacy Technology; registration with the Pharmacy Council of Nigeria.

39. DENTAL SURGERY TECHNICIANS: Dental Surgery Technician Certificate; registration with the Dental Therapists Registration Board of Nigeria.

40. ASSISTANT STORES OFFICERS: OND in Purchasing & Supply or a related field.

41. ASSISTANT DATA PROCESSING OFFICERS: OND in Computer Science or a related field.

42–43. STORE KEEPERS, CLERICAL OFFICERS II: SSCE/GCE with at least four (4) credits including English Language and Mathematics; computer literacy.

44. MOTOR DRIVERS/MECHANICS: SSCE/FSLC; valid driver's licence; Trade Test certificate; at least three (3) years' driving experience.

45–48. HEALTH, DATA PROCESSING, MORTUARY AND DIETETICS ASSISTANTS: SSCE/GCE with credits in English Language and Mathematics. A relevant certificate (computer, mortuary practice or catering) is an added advantage.

49–50. PORTERS, HEALTH ATTENDANTS: First School Leaving Certificate or SSCE; physical fitness.

METHOD OF APPLICATION

Applications in hard copy, addressed to **The Chief Medical Director, University of Nigeria Teaching Hospital, Ituku-Ozalla, P.M.B. 01129, Enugu,** should be submitted at the **Office of the Director of Administration, UNTH, Ituku-Ozalla,** enclosing photocopies of the following:

- Curriculum vitae
- All relevant credentials and practising licence
- Birth certificate or declaration of age
- Certificate of State/LGA of Origin
- NYSC Discharge/Exemption Certificate
- Evidence of change of name (where applicable)
- Names and contacts of three (3) referees

Candidates should apply for only one position per application and clearly indicate the position applied for on the top left corner of the envelope.

Please indicate a valid email address and phone number in your application.

Closing date: The advertisement runs from **Saturday, 10th October, 2026** to **Saturday, 28th November, 2026.** Applications received after the closing date will not be considered.

Only shortlisted candidates will be contacted. UNTH does not charge any fee for application or employment.

Signed
Prof. Obinna D. Onodugo
Chief Medical Director
University of Nigeria Teaching Hospital, Ituku-Ozalla, Enugu

TheMetroSection

Aseese bridge diversion: Motorists groan over gridlock, poor traffic control

From **Bertram Nwannekanma** (Lagos) and **Segun Ayinde** (Abeokuta)

MOTORISTS and commuters plying the Lagos-Ibadan Expressway were subjected to hours of hardship on Wednesday as a five-day traffic diversion for the installation of a pedestrian bridge at Aseese, Ogun State, triggered widespread gridlock, frustration and complaints over poor traffic management.

The severe congestion left thousands of road users stranded, with some motorists reportedly spending several hours on the road, while others were forced to sleep in their vehicles after being trapped in the gridlock around Aseese, opposite Christ Embassy.

The traffic crisis, which spilled over to adjoining sections of the expressway, prompted the Ogun State Traffic Compliance and Enforcement Agency (TRACE) to announce the indefinite suspension of the pedestrian bridge construction and the associated traffic diversion.

In a statement on Thursday, TRACE said the decision followed the significant traffic challenges experienced along the corridor from Wednesday into Thursday morning, necessitating a review of the traffic management arrangements surrounding the construction work.

The agency advised motorists that the temporary diversion had been suspended pending further directives from the relevant authorities, while promising to communicate updates on the resumption of the project.

TRACE regretted the inconvenience, delays and discomfort caused to motorists and other road users.

Before the suspension announcement, several motorists had taken to social media and other platforms to express frustration over what they described as avoidable hardship arising from poor planning and inadequate traffic control.

One of the motorists, identified simply as Ademola, said he was unable to go to work on Thursday because of the physical exhaustion and stress he suffered during the previous day's journey.

He said it took him seven hours to travel from Ikeja, Lagos, to Mowe, Ogun State, describing the experience as unnecessary hardship that could have been avoided with better planning and traffic management.

"Federal Ministry of Works and CBC Construction, I strongly believe there is a better way of doing this without putting the motoring public through this avoidable stress," he said.

Ademola cited the recently completed pedestrian bridge at the Apostolic Church, between the 7Up area and Alapere in Lagos, arguing that its construction did not cause a similar disruption to traffic.

He urged the contractors handling the Aseese project to learn from the previous construction and adopt methods that would minimise hardship for road users.



Traffic at NASFAT U-turn along Lagos-Ibadan Expressway yesterday morning.

Eight killed, others injured in multiple-vehicle crash on Niger road

From **Bala Yahaya**, Minna

EIGHT people, including an infant, have been killed in a multiple-vehicle crash along the Lapai–Suleja road in Niger State.

The accident occurred a few minutes after 11:00 p.m. on Wednesday, November 18, 2026, following a collision after a vehicle reportedly broke down on the road without any warning signs or safety indicators to alert approaching motorists.

According to an account attributed to one of the drivers, identified as Mustapha Zaiyana, he sighted the stationary vehicle ahead and attempted to pull over to avoid crashing into it. However, on noticing another vehicle approaching from behind, he reportedly veered towards a nearby forest in an attempt to escape a collision.

The evasive manoeuvre reportedly triggered a chain of events as another driver behind him also attempted to avoid the obstruction, resulting in the multiple-vehicle collision.

The victims were said to be travelling from Lagos to Abuja when the crash occurred.

Preliminary information indicated that most of those who died were from Nasarawa and Katsina states, while the identities of some victims were yet to be established.

CDHR disowns rival leadership, insists Wale Ojo remains Lagos chairman

By **Ayonote Clement**

THE Committee for the Defence of Human Rights (CDHR), Lagos State Branch, has disowned a group of individuals who reportedly visited the Lagos State Commissioner of Police, Fatai Tijani, claiming to represent the organisation, insisting that Comrade Wale Ojo remains its constitutionally recognised chairman.

The organisation said the purported visit, which took place on Wednesday, November 18, was being used to create a misleading impression about the legitimate leadership and official representation of its Lagos State branch.

In a disclaimer issued yesterday and signed by the Chairman of its Media Committee, Comrade Ola Agboola Jnr., the organisation said it did not recognise the individuals presented in a circulating publication as its executive officers.

The publication, reportedly authored by Comrade Morufu Giwa, listed Comrade Oluwatoyin Adetunji as chairman, Giwa as secretary, Olusegun Oke as treasurer, Adesanya Kolawole as assistant secretary and Adewale Savage as public relations officer.

Others were Daniel Oguine as internal auditor and Arogundade as Igando Unit Coordinator.

Two condemned inmates escape from Kwara custodial centre

From **Mansur Aramide**, Ilorin

TWO condemned inmates have escaped from the Oke-Kura Custodial Centre in Ilorin, Kwara State, prompting a manhunt by the Nigerian Correctional Service (NCoS).

The escapees, identified as Segun and Abraham, reportedly broke through and scaled the facility's perimeter wall in the early hours of Wednesday to make their escape.

Abraham was said to have previously escaped from the Mandala Custodial Centre but was rearrested and transferred to Oke-Kura, from where he escaped again.

Following the incident, correctional authorities launched a manhunt to recapture the fugitives.

The Guardian Classifieds
Change of Name
Property
Guardian Jobs
SME's/Business Page
Metro Mart
ENQUIRIES:
LAGOS OFFICE:
08028411767
07069747993

PUBLIC NOTICE ON CHANGE OF TRUSTEES

This is to inform the general public that the board of trustees of **Uruagu Women Welfare Development Association** (I.T. 81412) have changed. The following persons have ceased to be trustees.

1. Ngwube Ogechi
2. Odigbo Terry
3. Obiora Violet Uche
4. Udoye Ebere
5. Oguadima Joyce
6. Ike Chinyelu
7. Jane
8. Fanny Ojukwu (late).

The following persons have been appointed as new trustees:

1. Ojukwu Beatrice
2. Nkolika Monica Muonagolu
3. Okeke Chinyere G

Any objections to the above change should be forwarded to The registrar general Cooperate affairs commission within 28days

253 Ogun inmates pursue NECO, varsity qualifications in rehabilitation drive

From **Segun Ayinde**, Abeokuta

ABOUT 253 inmates in custodial facilities across Ogun State are pursuing educational qualifications through external secondary school and university examinations, in a move aimed at preparing them for successful reintegration into society after serving their sentences.

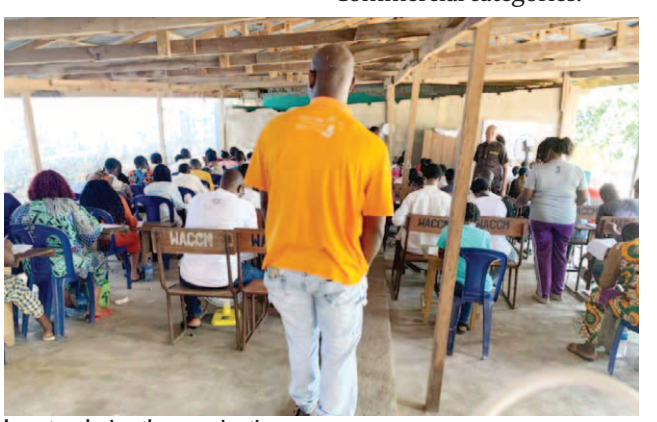
The inmates are sitting the National Examinations Council (NECO) Senior School Certificate Examination (SSCE) External, popularly known as NECO GCE, and examinations conducted by the National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN).

The Officer in Charge of Welfare and Education, Ogun State Command of the Nigerian Correctional Service (NCoS), Superintendent of Corrections AbdulHakeem Awesu, disclosed this yesterday at the Old Abeokuta Custodial Centre, Ibara.

Awesu said 156 inmates were registered for the NECO examination across five custodial facilities in the state.

According to him, 81 inmates are sitting the examination at the Old Abeokuta Custodial Centre, Ibara; 25 at Ijebu-Ode Custodial Centre; 20 at the Borstal Training Institution, Adigbe; 16 at the New Abeokuta Custodial Centre, Oba; and 14 at the Ilaro Custodial Centre.

He said the candidates were registered for various subjects in the Arts, Sciences and Commercial categories.



Inmates during the examination.

IYC demands probe, arrest of perpetrators as one dies in Warri ethnic clash

From **Julius Osahon**, Yenagoa

THE Ijaw Youth Council (IYC) Worldwide has called for an immediate investigation and arrest of those responsible for the violent clash between Ijaw and Itsekiri youths in Warri, Delta State, which reportedly left one person dead and several others injured.

The clash occurred on Wednesday during and after the All Progressives Congress (APC) campaign rally at Nana College Field in Warri South Local Council of the state.

In a statement, the IYC spokesperson, Victor Ibamingo, said the council was deeply disturbed by reports of attacks on Ijaw youths, allegedly by members of the Itsekiri National Youth Council.

Describing the incident as tragic and unacceptable, the council said it must not be treated with indifference. It also extended its condolences to the family of the reported victim.

The IYC expressed particular concern that the violence occurred amid alleged threats and heightened tension reportedly expressed by some Itsekiri youth groups ahead of the political rally.

It said the reported attacks demanded an urgent and impartial investigation to establish the circumstances surrounding the violence and bring those responsible to justice.

"The Ijaw people have an undeniable right to live, move freely and participate in political activities without intimidation or fear of violence. No ethnic group or youth organisation has the authority to take the law into its own hands or prevent others from exercising their democratic rights," the statement said.

The council called on the Delta State Police Command, the Department of State Services (DSS) and other security agencies to investigate the incident, identify and arrest those involved.

Bodija explosion: Victims seek FG's intervention, release of outstanding funds

From **Rotimi Agboluaje**, Ibadan

NEARLY three years after the January 16, 2024, explosion which devastated parts of Old Bodija, Ibadan, affected residents are still struggling to rebuild their homes, cope with medical challenges and restore their livelihoods, prompting an appeal to President Bola Tinubu to release the outstanding N20 billion in federal intervention funds.

The Bodija Estate Residents Association (BERA) has urged the President to facilitate the immediate release of the outstanding amount from the reported N50 billion Federal Government intervention package approved for victims of the disaster.

The association also wants the Federal Government to consider paying verified victims directly, or through their lawful representatives, if administrative challenges prevent the disbursement of the money through the Oyo State Government.

BERA President, Pastor Muyiwa Bamgbose, made the appeal in a letter dated November 16, 2026, addressed to Tinubu, expressing concern that many affected families were yet to recover from the devastating consequences of the explosion.

He said victims continued to grapple with the financial burden of rebuilding damaged properties, medical expenses, psychological trauma and other difficulties arising from the incident.

According to the association, the Federal Government reportedly approved N50 billion for the intervention, out of which N30 billion was released to the Oyo State Government, leaving an outstanding balance of N20 billion.

BERA recalled that the state government had announced on January 1, 2026, that the N30 billion remained unspent as of December 31, 2025.

However, Governor Seyi Makinde subsequently said on November 13, 2026, that the money had been spent.

The association said its concern was not the disagreement over the administration of the funds but the need to ensure that affected families received meaningful assistance without further delay.

It acknowledged the initial intervention by the state government, including the N4.5 billion announced for victims' support in May 2025.



Destroyed houses and vehicles in the aftermath of the blast in January 2023 (file photo).

However, it said records available to it showed that the initial payment schedule amounted to about N4.084 billion, including N3.735 billion earmarked for building support for 318 beneficiaries.

BERA said the building assistance represented only about 35 per cent of its original estimated building-related claims of N10.67 billion, leaving many property owners with substantial rebuilding costs.

It identified outstanding building repairs, continuing medical and trauma-related needs, vulnerable households, omitted or disputed claims and properties damaged beyond the initial 500-metre assessment boundary as issues requiring urgent attention.

Jurisdiction challenge stalls Achuenu's N1.5b suit in Delta

From **Monday Osayande**, Asaba

THE N1.5 billion suit filed by the suspended Rector of Delta State Polytechnic, Ogwashi-Uku, Prof. Emmanuel Achuenu, against Delta State Governor, Sheriff Oborevwori, and nine others suffered a setback on Tuesday as the defendants challenged the jurisdiction of the National Industrial Court (NIC) to entertain the case.

The defendants, through a preliminary objection filed by the second and third respondents, argued that the suit was statute-barred, having allegedly been filed outside the three-month limitation period prescribed under the Public Officers Protection Law.

The objection came up for hearing before Justice Opeloye Ogunbowale of the NIC Asaba Division, in suit No. NICN/ASB/30/2026.

However, counsel to Achuenu, Gabriel Oghenekome Okoro, opposed the argument, insisting that the action was filed within the legally prescribed period following his client's suspension.

Okoro informed the court that the claimant's legal team would respond to the preliminary objection within 48 hours.

Following the submissions, Justice Ogunbowale adjourned the hearing of the jurisdictional challenge until March 2, 2027.

The court also granted applications by the second to tenth defendants to regularise their respective statements of defence.

The third to eighth defendants were similarly granted extensions of time to file their defence processes. The applications were not opposed by the claimant's counsel.

There was also a disagreement over service of court processes on the governor.

According to Okoro, the governor's representative claimed that the Office of the Governor had not been served, despite what he described as proof of service contained in the court file.

"The proof of service was in my Lord's case file, and it was evident abundantly that they've been served," Okoro said, adding that his client was willing to effect another service if the court considered it necessary.

Troops arrest suspects, recover 38 phones, stolen items in Plateau

From **Isa Abdulsalami Ahovi**, Jos

TROOPS of Sector One, Operation Enduring Peace (OPEP), have arrested seven suspected criminals in two separate operations in Jos North Local Council of Plateau State, recovering 38 mobile phones, a motorcycle, a vehicle and other suspected stolen items.

The Media and Information Officer of OPEP, Captain Polycarp Oteh, disclosed this while parading the suspects before journalists yesterday.

He said the first operation followed a report of phone-snatching at gunpoint on November 6, 2026, which led troops to Prime House Hotel along Ring Road, Jos, where five suspects were arrested.

The suspects were identified as Tahir Suleiman, 25; Muhammed Ahmed, 25; Muhammed Labaran Haruna, 27; Yahya Yunusa, 20; and Aisha Mohammad, 22.

Items recovered from them included 38 mobile phones, 27 phone pouches, three MP3 devices, two earpods, an HP laptop, four smartwatches, a dagger, four power banks and a Mercedes-Benz E350 with registration number Plateau BBK-01NB.

Oteh said a second operation was conducted by troops deployed at Naraguta in collaboration with members of the Vigilante Group of Nigeria (VGN) during a routine patrol.

He said the operation led to the arrest of two other suspects, identified as Mudasiru Ishaq, 27, and Hasiya Sani, 22, who were allegedly found with a suspected stolen Boxer motorcycle and a toy pistol.

The seven suspects and recovered items will be handed over to the Plateau State Police Command for further investigation and possible prosecution.

Police commissioners task officers on professionalism

From **Isa Abdulsalami Ahovi** (Jos) and **Godfrey Gabriel** (Port Harcourt)

THE Rivers and Plateau State Police Commands have reiterated their commitment to professionalism, political neutrality and the protection of lives and property ahead of forthcoming elections.

While the Rivers State Commissioner of Police, Olugbenga Adepoju, warned officers against partisanship and unprofessional conduct, his Plateau State counterpart, Sunday Aisebiogun Okoebor, pledged to strengthen security operations and sustain peace before, during and after the electioneering period.

Adepoju gave the warning during the decoration of newly promoted officers of the Rivers State Police Command, where he reminded them that their elevation came with greater responsibilities and higher expectations.

He urged the officers to demonstrate discipline, integrity and accountability in the discharge of their duties, while maintaining cordial relationships with members of the public.

Mechanic seeks N50m to save 27-year-old son battling kidney disease

By **Ayonote Clement**

FOR 27-year-old Babatunde Owonuwa, the dream of becoming a successful fashion designer has been put on hold by stage 5 chronic kidney disease, leaving him dependent on regular dialysis to stay alive.

His father, Ajayi Owonuwa, a motor mechanic, is now appealing to Nigerians, corporate organisations and philanthropists to raise N50 million for his son's kidney transplant and continued medical care.

The family's ordeal reportedly began in November 2025 when Babatunde suddenly slumped at work and was rushed to hospital, where he spent three weeks receiving treatment.

Following another medical emergency, doctors recommended further investigations, which revealed that he had advanced kidney disease.

"I started feeling ill like a year ago, but I never knew what was wrong with me," Owonuwa said.

Since the diagnosis, the young man has been unable to work or pursue his fashion-designing career.

Persistent pain, dizziness and fainting spells have also made it difficult for him to maintain his normal routine.

"I can't go to work again. I can't do anything," he lamented.

His father said the family now spends much of its time travelling between home and hospital, sometimes leaving as early as 3:00 a.m. for medical appointments.

Owonuwa receives treatment at the Lagos University Teaching Hospital (LUTH) and Dialyzer Medical Centre, Oshodi.

He undergoes haemodialysis two to three times weekly, depending on his condition.

Each session costs about N70,000, rising to N85,000 when blood booster medication is required.

His father said the recurring expenses had exhausted the family's savings and income, leaving them struggling to sustain his treatment.

According to a medical report issued by Dialyzer Medical Centre on June 23, 2026, the estimated weekly cost of comprehensive treatment, including three dialysis sessions, laboratory investigations and Epogen injections, is N222,000.

Owonuwa is appealing to well-meaning Nigerians, non-governmental organisations and corporate bodies to support his treatment.

Donations can be made to Owonuwa Babatunde Opeyemi, Access Bank, account number **2001457241.**

He can also be reached on **+234 9013351553 or +2348033081632.**



Owonuwa

Businesswoman seeks property forfeiture over alleged N50.1 million debt

By **Bertram Nwannekanma**

A LAGOS businesswoman, Jimoh Damilola Salamot, has asked the Lagos State High Court to foreclose on a property allegedly pledged as collateral by Abdulhafeez Yakubu, a Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) candidate for the Lagos State House of Assembly, over an outstanding debt of N50.1 million.

Salamot, who trades as Damdarey World Ventures, is seeking an order authorising the recovery of the alleged debt through the foreclosure and sale of Yakubu's two plots of land on Freeman Street, Ebute-Metta, Lagos Mainland Local Council.

The suit, marked YSD/10612GCM/2026, came up for hearing before Justice Abisoye Jubril Bashua at the Yaba Division of the court on Tuesday.

At the proceedings, Salamot was represented by a Senior Advocate of Nigeria (SAN), Mr S.A. Oshodi, alongside O.J. Sasore and J.D. Bassey.

Yakubu, who is contesting the Lagos Mainland constituency seat in the forthcoming general election, was absent and had no legal representation.

Oshodi informed the court that he had only recently been briefed on the matter, which was listed for further directions.

Responding to an inquiry by the judge about service of court processes, the court noted that Yakubu had filed a counter-affidavit, while the claimant had submitted a reply on points of law.

The senior lawyer subsequently sought a date for the hearing of the originating summons and requested that hearing notices be issued and served on the defendant.

Justice Bashua adjourned the case to February 16, 2027, for hearing and directed that hearing notices be issued and served on Yakubu.

Deaconess Deborah Gbolagunte dies at 98

THE family of Gbolagunte of Eruwa Kingdom has announced the passing of Madam Deborah Gbolagunte, aged 98.

Deaconess Gbolagunte, wife of the Second Republic Speaker of the Oyo State House of Assembly, died peacefully in her sleep on Monday, November 16, 2026, during a brief illness.

In her lifetime, Deaconess Gbolagunte was widely known for her unwavering commitment to education, community development, humanitarian service and Christian ministry.

She dedicated her life helping others, supporting the less privileged and advancing the values of faith and compassion left a lasting impact on many lives across Eruwa Kingdom and beyond.

Described as a devoted Christian, family members said she was a loving matriarch and a respected community leader whose legacy of service would continue to inspire future generations.

Prof Gbolagade Gbolagunte on behalf of the family appreciated the prayers, condolences and support received from friends, associates and well-wishers during the period of mourning.



:Deaconess Gbolagunte

Tinubu, Elumelu urge faster justice delivery to attract investment

From **Ameh Ochojila**, Abuja

PRESIDENT Bola Ahmed Tinubu and prominent businessman, Tony Elumelu, have called for a more efficient and predictable justice system, saying timely judgments, impartial courts and effective enforcement of contracts are critical to attracting investment and strengthening Nigeria's economy.

Tinubu charged the judiciary to see timely justice delivery as part of efforts to position Nigeria as a business-friendly destination, while Elumelu warned that prolonged commercial disputes could discourage investors, undermine business confidence and constrain private sector growth.

The duo spoke yesterday in Abuja during the unveiling and public presentation of "Wole Olanipekun Through the Cases" and the 75th birthday celebration and 50 years of legal practice of former President of the Nigerian Bar Association (NBA), Chief Wole Olanipekun (SAN).

Tinubu said investors considered the quality of a country's judicial system alongside its economic performance and financial indicators when deciding where to commit capital, adding that timely judgments could strengthen Nigeria's economic reputation and signal the country's commitment to protecting investments.

The President, who urged judicial officers and legal practitioners to recognise their role in supporting the administration's economic reforms, stressed that the protection of property rights and enforcement of contractual obligations were essential to building confidence among local and foreign investors.

He also reaffirmed his administration's commitment to judicial independence, saying that the government respected court decisions even when it disagreed with them.

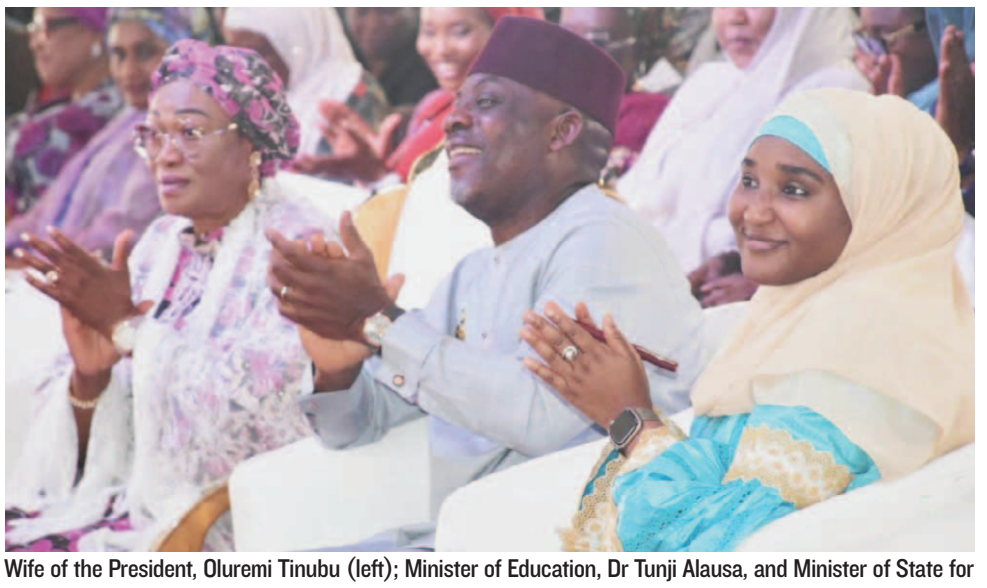
He, however, conferred the national honour of Grand Commander of the Order of the Niger (GCON) on Olanipekun at the event, making the recognition part of the celebrations marking his 75th birthday and five decades in legal practice.

Elumelu urged the judiciary to prioritise the speedy resolution of commercial disputes, saying that investors needed confidence that contracts would be honoured and their rights protected irrespective of changes in government.

He said capital naturally gravitated towards jurisdictions where laws were predictable, courts impartial and agreements enforceable.

Elumelu, therefore, called for measurable performance targets in case management and dispute settlement, particularly in commercial litigation, to reduce delays and provide businesses with greater certainty.

He maintained that investors were more willing to commit capital when government policies and regulatory requirements were consistently applied rather than determined by discretion or personal relationships.



Wife of the President, Oluremi Tinubu (left); Minister of Education, Dr Tunji Alausa, and Minister of State for Education, Prof. Suwaiba Ahmad, during the official resumption of construction of the National Library in Abuja, yesterday. PHOTO: NAN

LASG announces 7,584 newly identified HIV positive cases

By **Gbenga Salau**

LAGOS State Government, yesterday, said that 7,584 HIV-positive newly identified cases had been recorded in the state.

It further said that the state also recorded 387,558 HIV-negative results.

Chief Executive Officer of Lagos State Aids Control Agency (LSACA), Dr Folakemi Animashaun, who gave the hint this during a media briefing to announce the agency's lined up activities to mark World Aids Day, said: "As we commence the 2026 World AIDS Day commemoration in Lagos State, our message is clear: the progress we have made against HIV deserves to be protected, access to essential services deserves to be expanded, and the systems that sustain lives deserve to be strengthened.

"This year's theme, 'Ending AIDS Starts with Access: Equity, Ownership and Sustainability,' speaks directly to the choices before us and the shared responsibility we carry as a state."

Crawford varsity offers employment to best graduating students at 18th convocation

By **Adelowo Adebumiti**

CRAWFORD University, Igbesa, Ogun State, has granted automatic employment to its two overall best graduating students, Anthony Eromosele Ibazebo and Chiamaka Jasmine Njoku, alongside letters of commendation and undisclosed cash gifts.

Vice-Chancellor of the institution, Prof. Solomon Makinde, announced the reward package during the university's 18th convocation ceremony held at Faith City, Igbesa.

Makinde said that the university deliberately withheld the exact monetary value of the cash prizes for security reasons, noting that the gesture was designed to celebrate academic diligence and incentivise excellence among students.

The VC emphasised that while top performers earn immediate retention, the university prepares its entire graduating cohort, dubbed the "Unicorns 18", to be self-reliant through the National Universities Commission's (NUC) Core Curriculum and Minimum Academic Standards (CCMAS) and direct mentorship from established entrepreneurs.

He said: "Students do not leave with academic certificates alone; they acquire practical skills that prepare them for the world of work."

Adesina urges media to deny terrorists 'oxygen of publicity', promote national unity

From **Azeez Olorunlomeru**, Abeokuta

FORMER Presidential Spokesman, Femi Adesina, has urged Nigerian journalists to avoid giving terrorists and purveyors of ethnic and religious hatred undue publicity, warning that irresponsible media coverage could undermine national security and fuel conflict.

He said the media must exercise greater responsibility in reporting security challenges, saying that while journalists should hold government accountable, they must also avoid amplifying narratives capable of weakening public confidence in the country.

Adesina spoke yesterday while delivering a paper titled "Media, Conflict and National Security: The Journalist's Role in a Changing Security Landscape" at the second NUJ OGBC yearly lecture held at Iwe Iroyin Hall, the Nigeria Union of Journalists (NUJ) Press Centre, Abeokuta, the state capital.

The former presidential spokesman also called for responsible journalism, balanced reporting and an end to sensationalism.

He, however, urged media organisations to resist the temptation to give prominent coverage to individuals promoting ethnic and religious hostility at the expense of voices advocating peace and national cohesion.

Adesina said that responsible journalism required a balance between reporting the country's challenges and recognising areas of progress, adding that persistent negative narratives could discourage national development.

He added that Nigeria had considerable economic, political and social potential, insisting that the media had an important role in helping the country realise its ambitions.

According to him, the media should inform and educate citizens honestly while using its influence to promote peace, security, conflict resolution and national development.

To illustrate the consequences of irresponsible broadcasting, Adesina, who cited the 1994 Rwandan genocide, during which Radio Rwanda and the privately owned Radio Télévision des Mille Collines broadcast messages that fuelled ethnic hatred and violence, said the experience demonstrated how media platforms could be turned into instruments of destruction when journalists abandoned professional and ethical responsibilities.

Adesina questioned why attacks by Boko Haram and other security threats often received extensive publicity while the successes and sacrifices of security personnel attracted comparatively less attention.

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

2027 polls: CCII warns Oyo politicians against violence

From **Rotimi Agboluaje**, Ibadan

Secures peace accord from candidates, representatives of parties

THE Central Council of Ibadan Indigenes (CCII) has warned politicians in Oyo State against violence ahead of the 2027 general elections, even as it secured a peace, non-violence and democratic conduct accord from governorship candidates and representatives of various political parties.

The accord, signed yesterday, aimed at promoting peaceful campaigns and ensuring democratic conduct before, during and after the elections.

Among those present were governorship candidates of the National Democratic Party (NDP), Taiwo Ibiyemi Otegbeye; African Action Congress (AAC), Saheed Oladele; Peoples Redemption Party (PRP), Kazeem Ayandoye; and Accord Party (AP), Oriyomi Hamzat.

Deputy governorship candidate of the All Progressives Congress (APC), Adesoji Adedeji, represented Senator Sharafadeen Alli, while Aderoju Salako represented the African Democratic Congress (ADC) governorship candidate, Adegboyega Adegoke.

Also, Prof. Daud Kehinde Sangodoyin represented the Allied People's Movement (APM) candidate, Bimbo Adekanmbi, while the Oyo State PDP Chairman, Prof. Abdulrahman Akinoso, represented the party's governorship candidate, Hazeem Gbolarumi.

Adedeji, while speaking at the event, lauded the CCII leadership and the initiators of the accord, describing the initiative as a welcome development.

He promised that his party would abide by the agreement.

Sangodoyin described the accord as a positive step towards protecting voters and residents of Ibadan, noting that peace is fundamental to democracy.

He, however, called for a mechanism to monitor compliance, stressing that signing the agreement would not be sufficient without ensuring that political parties and their supporters adhere to its provisions.

In his remarks, the President-General of CCII, Sulaimon Ajeniyi Ajewole, expressed satisfaction with the response of political parties to the Council's invitation, commending the candidates and their representatives for participating in the exercise.

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

Mimiko seeks AI, digital technology for inclusive, participatory governance

- Warns against system that leaves vulnerable citizens behind
- Cites 3i initiatives, 640 community projects as citizen-driven innovation

From **Adewale Momoh**, Akure

ONDO State former governor, Dr Olusegun Mimiko, has called for the deployment of digital technology and Artificial Intelligence (AI) to strengthen participatory governance, improve service delivery, and ensure inclusive development.

In his introductory remarks as Chairman of the third Development Communication International Hybrid conference and workshop, yesterday, tagged "Communicating Development and Citizen Participation in a Fast-Changing Digital and AI World," and jointly organised by the Development Communication Research Association of Nigeria (DECRAN) and Elizade University, Ilara-Mokin, Ondo State, Mimiko warned against a system that leaves vulnerable citizens behind.

Mimiko, who reminisced on his administration's governance model between 2009 and 2017, emphasised the 3i initiative of his administration, which encompassed Infrastructure, Institution, and Industry, as a practical demonstration of community-driven development.

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

OAU ex-Registrar, Ayo Ogunruku, to deliver EPCOSA AGM/reunion lecture tomorrow

THE Annual General Meeting (AGM) and Reunion of Ekiti Parapo College Old Students Association (EPCOSA) will be held tomorrow, November 21, 2026, at the College Hall in Ido-Ekiti.

According to the National Public Relations Officer/Social Secretary of the Association, Mr Ayo Ajiboye, programmes lined up for the reunion include a lecture themed, "EKPACO, To Make A Dream Come True."

The lecture will be delivered by a former Registrar of Obafemi Awolowo University (OAU), Ile-Ife, Osun State, who is also a former National President of EKPOSA, Dr Ayo Ogunruku.

The reunion will also feature a parade by different sets and the four Houses in the College, with the Set having the highest attendance winning an award.

Some distinguished alumni and Sets would equally be honoured during the AGM/Reunion.

National President of the Association, Dr Lanre Arogundade, urged members to turn up in large numbers "to encourage the 1996 Hosting Set who have made an elaborate arrangement for the reunion."

FG insists on new job creation model for youth competitiveness

From **Collins Olayinka** (Abuja) and **Victoria Nwachukwu** (Lagos)

THE Federal Government has called for a new approach to job creation, urging Nigerians to explore opportunities in environmental management, security, and social care to create millions of jobs and address growing socioeconomic challenges.

Making the call yesterday at the National Growth and Development Forum 2026 in Abuja, the Special Assistant to the President on Economic Affairs, Dr Tope Fasua, said Nigeria could generate up to two million jobs in environmental services and another one million in security-related activities if the country develops deliberate strategies to harness opportunities in these sectors.

Dwelling on the theme, "The Nigeria We Want," Fasua also identified the care economy as an emerging employment opportunity, arguing that structured services for older persons, vulnerable children and people with mental health challenges could create jobs while addressing critical gaps in social protection.

He said Nigeria needed to move beyond conventional employment-generation strategies and develop new economic models that turn social challenges into productive ventures.

For her part, the Presenter of Moneyline with Nancy on *AIT*, Nancy Illoh-Naji, argued that the economy was not just about figures, policies and projections, but about the price of food, school fees, the cost of borrowing, the jobs available to young people and the opportunities people have to build a better life.

Similarly, President of the Nigerian Economic Society (NES), Dr Baba Yusuf Musa, called for an employment-oriented growth strategy that prioritises poverty reduction, domestic production, human capital development and improved household incomes.

IN another development, the federal government said Nigeria's challenge was not a lack of youth talent but ensuring that young people have the skills, opportunities and support to compete globally.

The Permanent Secretary, Federal Ministry of Youth Development, Dr Maryam Keshinro, spoke in Lagos at the Young Managers' Summit of the Nigerian Institute of Management (Chartered), held under the theme, "Global Competitiveness and Cross-Cultural Management: Preparing Young Managers for Success in International Markets

Urging young Nigerians to develop innovative, adaptive and digital skills, Keshinro, who represented the Minister of Youth Development, Ayodele Olawande, insisted that academic certificates or professional qualifications are no longer enough to succeed in an increasingly competitive global economy.

According to her, technology, international trade and growing connections between countries have created opportunities for young professionals to compete and collaborate beyond their immediate environments, but have also increased competition.



Established Opinion Leaders Exchange Coordinator, United States (U.S.) Embassy, Chioma Azionu (left); former Commissioner, Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), Festus Okafor; Chairperson, 2026 Annual Seminar Planning Committee, Titi Ojo; U.S. Embassy, USGEAAN President Development Partner, Dr Nosayaba Tukura; Founder, School of Politics, Policy and Governance/former Minister of Education, Dr Obiageli Ezekwesili; President, Hubert H. Humphrey Fellowship Alumni Association of Nigeria (HHHFAAN), Rebecca Sako-John; and former Managing Director and Editor-in-chief of *The Guardian*, Martins Oloja, during the HHHFAAN Annual Seminar on rebuilding Public Trust in Nigerian Democracy: Citizens, Stakeholders and the Quest for Credible Elections, held in Abuja yesterday. PHOTO: LUCY LADIDI ATEKO

Tinubu secures deal for 300 Yutong buses, assembly plant

- Chinese manufacturer to revive Ibadan Leyland facility
- TOAN to import 2,000 electric tricycles

From **Terhemba Daka** (Abuja) and **Silver Nwokoro** (Lagos)

PRESIDENT Bola Tinubu has secured an investment commitment from Chinese automotive giant, Yutong, for the supply of 300 compressed natural gas (CNG)-powered buses and the establishment of a local assembly plant in Nigeria.

The agreement, as part of the National Affordable CNG Transit Programme (NACTP) to reduce transportation costs by 40 per cent on the participating routes, will see the first batch of 100 buses arrive in Lagos by the end of December 2026 and subsequent units assembled locally.

In another development, Chairman of the Tricycle Owners and Operators Association of Nigeria (TOAN), Azeez Abiola, said the association plans to import 2,000 electric-powered tricycles, particularly to Lagos State, as part of efforts to ease transportation and improve operators' living conditions.

MEANWHILE, the proposed assembly facility, to be operated through YP Automobiles Bus Assembly at the former Leyland Automotive plant in Ibadan, Oyo State, is also expected to revive local automotive manufacturing, create skilled employment and reduce Nigeria's dependence on imported commercial vehicles.

Edo State's legal framework, reform to replace old Bendel enactments

From **Joseph Kanjo**, Benin

EDO State Law Reform Commission has submitted a consolidated compilation of the state's laws to the state Chief Judge, Justice Daniel Okungbowa, ending the state's reliance on outdated laws inherited from the defunct Bendel State.

Receiving the document titled *Compendium of Laws of Edo State 2026* from the chairman of the commission, the Chief Judge said previous administrations had made efforts to reform the old Bendel State laws but were unsuccessful.

He expressed optimism that the consolidated laws had captured all relevant legislation in the state.

Okungbowa, who commended the commission for what he described as a job well done, said the reform of the old Bendel State laws was long overdue, describing the presentation as a historic event.

Earlier, Chairman of the commission, Donald Osikhena-Boih, said the consolidated laws would make governance in the state seamless, adding that they would simplify the work of both the bench and the bar.

According to him, the consolidated laws would provide the legislature, judiciary and executive arms of government with an accessible and reliable legal framework for carrying out their day-to-day responsibilities.

On the executive arm, Osikhena-Boih said the consolidated laws would enable government officials to conduct proper legal audits before forwarding bills to the State House of Assembly.

Speaking on the judiciary, the commission's chairman noted that one of the biggest challenges facing the bench had been accessing and determining the applicability of existing laws.

He further said the availability of the consolidated laws would eliminate the excuse by members of the public that they were unaware of what the law provided.

HURIWA demands probe of $4.5m lobbying deal, deleted posts

By **Eniola Daniel**

THE Human Rights Writers Association of Nigeria (HURIWA) has urged the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) to investigate the reported $4.5 million payment to American political strategist, Diana London, who authorised the deal, what services she rendered and how the money was spent.

This was as London denied receiving $4.5 million from the Nigerian Government or anyone in Nigeria.

Meanwhile, former spokesman for ex-Vice-President Yemi Osinbajo, Laolu Akande, has described the engagement with London as an insult, urging the Presidency to engage Nigerian journalists for such deals.

HURIWA said London's deletion of social media posts detailing her engagement with President Bola Tinubu and Nigeria-United States security cooperation raised further questions about the reported lobbying arrangement and reinforced the need for transparency.

London had earlier posted photographs on X showing her with President Tinubu and his Chief of Staff, Femi Gbajabiamila, at the Presidential Villa, Abuja.

She also published a post, which she has since deleted, describing the Nigeria-U.S. security partnership as delivering results and crediting Tinubu and U.S. President Donald Trump with driving efforts to combat terrorism and deepen bilateral cooperation.

FG seeks N70b to complete library project as Tinubu raises N25.6b

From **Owede Agbajileke**, Abuja

NEARLY two decades after the project was initially awarded, the federal government said it requires an additional N70 billion to complete the National Library headquarters in Abuja, as construction formally resumes following years of abandonment.

Disclosing this yesterday, President Bola Tinubu's wife, Oluremi, revealed that her 65th birthday fundraising initiative generated N25.6 billion towards the project, leaving a substantial funding gap.

The project, conceived in 1981 and awarded in 2006, suffered repeated interruptions before construction eventually stopped at 48 per cent completion, leaving the 11-storey complex abandoned for 16 years.

However, Mrs Tinubu, at the formal return-to-site ceremony, appealed to Nigerians, corporate organisations and wealthy individuals to contribute towards completing the facility, insisting that it should be regarded as a collective national investment rather than a government project alone.

Stressing that every contribution counts, Mrs Tinubu said her passion for the project was informed by her background as a teacher and her belief that access to knowledge and education remains critical to breaking the cycle of poverty.

She recalled visiting the Qatar National Library in Doha in October 2025, saying the experience strengthened her determination to see Nigeria develop a modern knowledge institution that would serve beyond the traditional function of storing books.

According to her, the facility should become a hub for research, technology, innovation, cultural preservation and lifelong learning.

Meanwhile, the Minister of Education, Dr Tunji Alausa, assured Nigerians of transparency, quality execution and adherence to approved project standards.

Group urges journalists to promote peaceful elections, reject divisive campaigns

By **Tunde Bodunrin**

AS Nigeria prepares for the 2027 general elections, a group, Journalists Monitoring Performance for Democratic Governance (JMPDG), has urged newsmen to promote peaceful campaigns, reject hate speech, ethnic and religious divisions, and hold political actors accountable.

Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of JMPDG, Mr Orido Akpomefure, gave the charge in Lagos yesterday while announcing a forthcoming book in honour of former President Goodluck Jonathan, which highlights his contributions to democratic governance and the peaceful transfer of power in 2015.

Citing the alleged attacks on the Chairman of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), Prof. Joash Amupitan, during his recent visit to London, and the violence at political campaigns across the country, Akpomefure expressed concern at what he described as growing political intolerance, warning that the media must not allow political differences to degenerate into violence.

Soludo canvasses support for Tinubu

- Explains removal of billboard featuring Peter Obi

From **Lawrence Njoku**, Enugu

ANAMBRA State Governor, Chukwuma Soludo, has urged the Igbo to support President Bola Tinubu so as not to waste their votes in the 2027 general elections.

Soludo, who spoke yesterday during the All Progressives Congress (APC) presidential campaign rally in Anambra, said it is not wise for the South-East to stay outside the ruling party.

According to him, backing Tinubu will bring security and development to the region, adding that the election is already looking good for Tinubu.

He claimed Tinubu does not need to rig to win, describing him as the biggest political force in the country at the moment.

"Let's not kid ourselves. You don't change a winning team. The Tinubu-Shettima ticket is the winning team, and the Igbo will need to stand with the winning team. We will join this moving train," he said.

The governor further stated that supporting the President will help Anambra and the South-East get more projects.

Pate tasks states on healthcare reforms, warns of huge funding gap

From **Nkechi Onyedika-Ugoeze, Abuja**

• Nasarawa unveils healthcare investments, expands specialist services

MINISTER of Health and Social Welfare, Prof. Muhammad Ali Pate, has called on state governments to translate healthcare policies and reforms into measurable results, declaring that 12 of Nigeria's 13 key health indicators have improved over the last three years.

He noted that state health budgets increased from N1.97 trillion in 2023 to over N3.3 trillion in 2026, urging governors to ensure that approved allocations were actually released for service delivery.

Pate, who spoke at the 67th National Council on Health in Lafia, Nasarawa State, emphasised that the federal government and states must move beyond policy formulation to ensure that investments and resolutions yield tangible improvements in Nigerians' lives.

He also called for greater investment in primary healthcare, health insurance, medical infrastructure, local pharmaceutical production and the recruitment and retention of health workers, particularly in rural communities.

The minister warned that Nigeria risks a huge funding gap in its health sector if it fails to increase domestic investment and emphasised the need for federal and state governments to take greater responsibility for financing healthcare delivery.

According to Pate, transitioning away from dependence on external development assistance would require increased domestic funding, as Nigeria could lose significant ground in its health sector reforms if the government failed to bridge the anticipated funding gap.

He said the United States Government's memorandum of understanding on health provides an opportunity for Nigeria to move towards greater self-reliance, but only if federal and state governments increase their financial commitments.

Providing an update on the Nigeria Health Sector Renewal Investment Initiative, Pate said the federal government and participating states had recorded progress in several areas since the launch of the reform programme in December 2023.

He disclosed that health insurance coverage had increased from 16 million Nigerians to nearly 24 million within three years, while skilled deliveries in facilities supported by the Basic Health Care Provision Fund rose from 4.8 million in 2023 to nearly eight million by mid-2026.

Pate stated that skilled birth deliveries in health facilities supported by the Basic Health Care Provision Fund (BHCPF) increased from 4.8 million in 2023 to nearly eight million by mid-2026, while fourth antenatal care visits rose from six million to 8.7 million within the same period.

Earlier, Governor Abdullahi Sule of Nasarawa State, represented by his deputy, Dr Emmanuel Akabe, said healthcare investment should be regarded as a strategic investment in human capital and national development rather than mere expenditure.

Sule said the administration remained committed to strengthening primary healthcare, improving health infrastructure, developing the health workforce and expanding access to affordable medical services.

Among other things, he disclosed that the state had expanded facilities at Dalhatu Araf Specialist Hospital in Lafia before handing over the institution to the Federal Government to facilitate its full take-off.

AU recovers FMBN land, commends inter-agency partnership

From **Cornelius Essen, Abuja**

THE African Union (AU), through the African Asset Recovery Practitioners' Forum, has recovered a plot of land in the Kaba District of Abuja belonging to the Federal Mortgage Bank of Nigeria (FMBN) to facilitate the development of 1,358 housing units. The project was originally to deliver 962 houses.

This followed the AU General Assembly, convened in collaboration with the Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC) and German development agency, GIZ, to showcase Nigeria's experience in asset recovery and the value of inter-agency partnership.

Speaking in Abuja, the Chairperson of the AU Advisory Board Against Corruption (AUABC), Kwami Senanu, commended FMBN and ICPC for their strong understanding and for the collaboration among public institutions that produced tangible development outcomes.

He noted that the ICPC played a significant role in promoting the Common African Position on Asset Recovery (CAPAR) at the AU and advancing the establishment of the African Asset Recovery Practitioners' Forum in Nigeria.

Gusau urges military to document senior officers' experiences

From **Johnson Eyiangho, Abuja**

A FORMER National Security Adviser, Lt.-Gen. Mohammed Gusau (rtd) has proposed establishing a structured military oral history and professional experience documentation programme through existing military educational institutions for future generations.

Gusau spoke yesterday in Abuja during the unveiling of a memoir, *In The Line of Duty*, written by a former General Officer Commanding (GOC), 3 Armoured Division, Maj.-Gen. Mohammed Aliyu (rtd).

The former Chief of Army Staff emphasised the need for serving and retired military officers to document their professional experiences, leadership lessons and operational knowledge to strengthen military education, institutional memory and leadership development.



Chairman, Nigerian Automobile Technicians Association (NATA), Morufu Egberongbe (left); Brand Manager, Wines and Bitters, Intercontinental Distillers Limited, Celestine Anyanwu; and Managing Director, Global Sight Services Limited, Dayo Bello; at the 2026 NATA Day Celebration in Lagos yesterday, sponsored by Action Bitters.

Zulum builds auditorium for Cameroon over IDP support

From **Njadvara Musa, Maiduguri**

• EU, Germany invests €1.2m in Borno, Adamawa post-insurgency recovery

BORNO State Governor, Babagana Zulum, has disclosed that his administration constructed a 500-seat auditorium at the University of Maroua in Cameroon to express appreciation for the country's hospitality in sheltering thousands of insurgency-displaced Borno residents and to strengthen ties between Borno and Cameroon's Far North Region.

Similarly, the European Union (EU) and the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) have invested €1.2 million in community development projects in Borno and Adamawa states to support recovery in communities affected by the terrorism.

ZULUM, who spoke on Wednesday during the facility's inauguration, said the project partly fulfilled a pledge he made at the fifth Lake Chad Basin Governors' Forum in Maiduguri in January 2025.

The pledge was to undertake projects in the Far North Region of Cameroon, Diffa Region in Niger, and the Lac Region in Chad in appreciation of their support for displaced Borno residents, he explained.

Zulum noted that many displaced residents spent over a decade in Cameroon, particularly at the Minawao Refugee Camp, where they received shelter, healthcare, education, and access to farmland.

He thanked the country's authorities, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the United Nations Development Programme, and other partners for their support, adding that the voluntary and dignified return of displaced residents became a priority for his administration after his first official visit to the Far North Region in September 2019.

Expressing hope that the auditorium would deepen academic collaboration and expand learning opportunities for Borno students, the governor, among others, announced that his administration would sponsor 50 students from the state to study French at the University of Maroua.

For his part, the Governor of the Far North Region, Midjiyawa Bakari, thanked Zulum for the auditorium and pledged to protect and maintain the auditorium. He also expressed hope that it would bring students and researchers from Cameroon, Chad and Nigeria together to work on shared challenges, including climate change, cross-border trade and security.

Tinubu tasks MDAs, states on mining investment delivery as revenue hits N100b in 2026

From **Ernest Nzor, Abuja**

• Insists reforms must improve lives, create jobs

PRESIDENT Bola Tinubu has directed ministries, departments and agencies (MDAs), as well as state governments, to remove investment bottlenecks, develop bankable projects and ensure that economic reforms translate into tangible benefits for Nigerians.

The President, who spoke yesterday in Abuja at the Nigeria NOW! 2026 Investing in Energy, Infrastructure and Mining Summit, said his administration would measure its performance by functioning infrastructure, expanding businesses, decent jobs and stronger communities rather than policy announcements and promises.

Tinubu, represented by the Secretary to the Government of the Federation (SGF), George Akume, said the declaration of 2026 as the Year of Delivery reflected the administration's determination to move beyond policy announcements and expressions of interest to actual investment decisions, financial close, construction, commissioning and measurable public benefits.

The summit, themed "United Nigeria, New Horizons, One Investment Destination," brought together government leaders, international investors, Nigerian businesses and industry executives to explore investment opportunities across the country's energy, mining and infrastructure sectors.

Tinubu said Nigeria's vast domestic market, enterprising population, significant energy and mineral resources, and access to the wider African market offered enormous investment opportunities.

Earlier, the Minister of Solid Minerals Development, Dele Alake, disclosed that Nigeria's solid minerals revenue had crossed N100 billion in 2026, up from about N6 billion annually when he assumed office.

Alake attributed the increase to reforms, local value-addition policies, digitisation of mining processes and efforts to sanitise operations in the sector.

He also disclosed that the Mining Marshals had apprehended over 300 illegal mining operators and recovered over 100 mining sites from illegal operators in the last two and a half years.

According to Alake, the establishment of the specialised security outfit was part of the seven-point agenda designed to reposition the mining sector and combat illegal exploitation of mineral resources.

Also speaking, the Director-General of the Presidential Enabling Business Environment Council (PEBEC), Zahrah Mustapha-Audu, said the council was working to remove legislative and bureaucratic barriers to doing business in the country.

Dangote Cement records 60% reduction in road accidents

• Trains 3,000 drivers, deploys telematics for safer driving

DANGOTE Cement Plc said it has recorded a remarkable 60 per cent reduction in road traffic accidents following the implementation of a comprehensive driver safety programme to protect lives and promote road safety across its transportation operations.

The company disclosed this at the 2026 Customer Truck Scheme (CTS) Annual Driver Safety Award and Recognition Programme, themed "Rewarding Safety Excellence for Safer Roads," where the company celebrated drivers who demonstrated exemplary safety performance and maintained accident-free records throughout the assessment period.

The achievement builds on an earlier 30 per cent reduction in road traffic accidents recorded in 2023, following the introduction of the company's Safety Improvement Plan. As part of the initiative, approximately 3,000 drivers were trained in defensive driving techniques and safe road-use practices, the company said.

Saraki group faults Kwara governor's summon of monarchs

PIQUED by what it considers a desperate and unproductive move, the Abubakar Saraki Media Office has condemned Governor Abdulrahman Abdulrazaq's summons to Kwara North Senatorial District monarchs to Ilorin, the state capital, on the eve of the former Senate President's visit to the district.

A statement from Yusuph Olaniyonu of the Abubakar Saraki Media Office alleged that the royal fathers were compelled on a journey of about nine hours on bad roads, and have been in the state capital since Wednesday without any specific assignment except that Governor Abdulrazaq does not want them to be in their palaces during Saraki's visits for political engagement with the people.

"For a democratically elected governor to adopt this authoritarian method of coercing royal fathers and depriving them of the opportunity to listen to all sides of the political divide only demonstrates how unpopular the Abdulrahman Abdulrazaq administration has become," the statement partly read.

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Third Abia Governor's Secondary Schools Unity Games begins Dec. 15

From **Gordi Udeajah**, Umuahia

ABIA State Youth and Sports Development Commissioner, Nwobilo Ananaba, has announced that following the approval of Governor Alex Otti, the 2026 edition of the state's Governor's Secondary Schools Unity Games will be held from December 15 to 18 at the Umuahia Township Stadium.

He said that about 1,300 athletes will compete in the 37 events at the Games organised by his ministry and the Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education.

According to Ananaba, there is no age limit for the participating bona fide secondary students, adding that the Games were aimed at discovering and developing talents for national and international competitions.

The commissioner said that over 70 students have so far been discovered from the games that feature only students in the state's secondary schools.

Accompanied by the state's Director of Sports, Comrade Obioma George and the Adviser to Governor Otti on Sports, Mr Raymond Ukwa, Ananaba said that the preparation for the games will begin at the local council level, with the lighting of the Games' Torch of Peace, Unity and Sports Excellence by Governor Otti, before the movement of the Torch to the 17 local councils of the State.



Football is part of the events listed for the Abia State Secondary Schools Unity Games next month.

Lagos set for 2026 Capital City race

By **Gowon Akpodonor**

OVER 3000 runners will participate in the third edition of Capital City Race tomorrow.

Convener of the event, Dapo Ajayi, said yesterday in Lagos that the race will start at Ikeja City Mall at 7 am and end at Ikeja GRA.

According to him, the first edition in 2024 was attended by just 1,000 participants, while the second edition in 2025 increased to 1,500 runners. "This 2026 edition will be attended by 3000 participants, and we intend to take the Capital City race to other state capitals in the near future," Ajayi said.

Also speaking at the event, co-convener Mrs Folashade Falokun said that one of the main purposes of organising the event is for Nigerians to remain healthy.

According to the organisers, winners in this year's Capital Race will go home with N500,000, N300,000 and N200,000 (first, second and third) in both male and female categories.

The Director General of Lagos Sports Commission, Lekan Fatodu, said that the Capital City Race has contributed greatly to the healthy living standard of Lagosians, adding: "Apart from the runners breaking records since the event started in 2024, we have also seen the organisers improve on every aspect of the race. Through this Capital City Race, we have seen a lot of people moved from 2km race to 3km, and from 3km to 5km. To achieve this, one needs consistency.

Joshua won't meet newborn daughter until after Fury fight

ANTHONY Joshua will not meet his newborn daughter until after his heavyweight fight against Tyson Fury on Dec. 11, according to the boxer.

Joshua spoke from a training camp in Spain, stating that the decision was a sacrifice made to focus on the mission for the fight at Cardiff's Principality Stadium, reports independent.co.uk.

Joshua's second child arrived this week, 11 years after the boxer's son JJ was born – and three weeks before "AJ" boxes Fury at Cardiff's Principality Stadium.

Ahead of the heavyweight clash on December 11, Joshua spoke to *The Sun* from his training camp in Marbella, Spain, saying: "I knew the sacrifice I had to make for this fight nine months ago; I made the commitment.

"We are on a mission. It's not ideal, but my little girl is in good hands. There'll be many, many more birthdays I'll be at, for sure."

The former world heavyweight champion is no longer in a romantic relationship with Nicole Osbourne, who is the mother of Joshua's daughter as well as JJ. However, Joshua and Osbourne plan to co-parent their youngest child, according to the boxer.

"We haven't given her a name yet, but she's my princess," said AJ. "Nicole said it was an amazing experience. She said it was easier than JJ and she's much prettier than JJ! So, she's happy; she's already deeply in love with her. She's an amazing mum.

EWOTGT: Shobowale, Akinya-Obi call for more events at Smokin Hills Golf Resort

By **Eniola Daniel**

NIGERIAN golf stands to gain a lot if more top events are held at the Smokin Hills Golf Resort, Ilara-Mokin, Ondo State, stakeholders have said.

Describing the facility as one of Africa's finest but underutilised golf courses, Funmi Ade-Ojo Shobowale and Dr Akinya-Obi Chika Esther are calling for greater patronage and publicity for the resort, which hosts the yearly Elizabeth Wuraola Ojo Golf Tournament.

Speaking at the end of the 2026 edition of the event, at the weekend, the duo urged more golfers, particularly those from outside Nigeria, to discover the resort's 18-hole course and its facilities.

Shobowale, daughter of the resort's investor and also the Chairman of Toyota (Nigeria) Limited, Chief Michael Ade-Ojo, described Smokin Hills as a magnificent and challenging course deserving of greater international recognition.

She lamented that despite its quality, the facility remained relatively unknown among international and sub-Saharan African golfers, stressing the need for more aggressive publicity to attract wider patronage.

"It is a stunning course. We believe it is one of the best in Africa. I feel we need to put it out more to the world. It is still a well-kept secret among international golfers, and we need more people to come here and see it for what it is," she said.

Walking Football Alliance begins referee training workshop

By **Adaku Onyenucheya**

THE Global Walking Football Alliance (GWFA) will hold a referee training workshop tomorrow at the Eagle Club, Lagos.

The workshop will be led by International Referee and GWFA Instructor, Mr Ricky Weir, who will oversee the training programme designed to strengthen officiating standards in walking football in Nigeria.

The one-day session will combine classroom theory with practical, on-field learning, giving trainees both the knowledge and the experience required to officiate to GWFA standards.

The programme will open with classroom theory focused on pre-match preparation and the Laws of the Game (LOTG).

Trainees will then observe four league matches, each officiated by an international match official.

Each match observation will be followed by a question-and-answer session, allowing participants to discuss referee decisions and laws of the game, as well as talking points arising from the game.

After a lunch break, participants will return to the classroom for a second theory session focused on post-match review of the laws of the game. This will be followed by a classroom theory examination to assess their level of knowledge.

Dikko lead sports stakeholders' 8.9m votes campaign for Tinubu's re-election

From **Adamu Abuh**, Abuja

SPORTS stakeholders across Nigeria have unveiled plans to mobilise about 8.9 million people in support of President Bola Tinubu's re-election bid in 2027, leveraging the country's grassroots sporting structures to build a nationwide political mobilisation network.

The initiative, spearheaded by the Sports Sector Mobilisation Directorate of the All Progressives Congress Presidential Campaign Council (APC PCC), is targeting an average of 1,000 sports enthusiasts and stakeholders in each of the country's 8,809 electoral wards.

The Chairman of the National Sports Commission (NSC) and director of the mobilisation directorate, Shehu Dikko, disclosed the plan yesterday, while briefing journalists after a strategy meeting with commissioners for sports and youth development from the 36 states and the Federal Capital Territory.

The proposed mobilisation will involve state sports commissioners, chairmen of sports commissions, sports administrators, former athletes, coaches, referees, sports associations and other stakeholders, who are expected to serve as grassroots campaigners and canvass support for Tinubu's second-term ambition.

Dikko said the initiative was informed by the extensive grassroots reach of sports and its capacity to bring Nigerians together across ethnic, religious and political divides.



Director General, Lagos Sports Commission Lekan Fatodu (third right), flanked by convener of Capital City Race, Dapo Ajayi and Mrs. Folashade Falokun, during the unveiling of the kits for the third edition of race holding tomorrow in Lagos.

Bogey-free Torgah extends lead at Alpha Bravo Golf Classic

By **Eniola Daniel**

GHANA'S Vincent Torgah has extended his lead at the Alpha Bravo Golf Classic after carding a bogey-free three-under-par 69 in the second round to take his tournament total to six-under-par heading into today's final round at Lakowe Lakes Golf Estate.

Torgah, who shared the opening-day lead with Nigeria's Bulus Izang, produced a composed round featuring birdies on the eighth, 12th and 17th holes without dropping a shot.

His performance opened up a two-shot advantage at the top of the leaderboard as he targets another Sunshine Development Tour (SDT) title.

"I'm pleased with how I managed my game today. Making three birdies without dropping a shot is always encouraging, especially at this stage of the tournament. I have put myself in a good position, but I know I will need to stay focused and play my best golf in the final round to secure the title," Torgah said.

Nigeria's Godwin Okoko moved into contention after an impressive second-round performance that saw him card six birdies on the sixth, eighth, 10th, 11th, 13th and 15th holes. Despite dropping shots on the fifth and 14th, he returned a four-under-par round to take his tournament total to four-under-par, just two shots behind Torgah.

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Friday, November 20, 2026



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Mixed feelings trail FIFA's normalisation committee

By **Gowon Akpodonor**

THE lingering crisis in Nigerian football may not end any time soon if a declaration by the Advocacy for Nigeria Football Reform Initiative (ANFRI), led by former international, Harrison Jalla, is anything to go by.

The world football governing body, FIFA, on Wednesday, named Sampson Ebomhe, a lawyer, as head of the NFF Normalisation Committee for the Nigeria Football Federation (NFF), with four others, including former Super Eagles striker Daniel Amokachi, Joe Abah, Godwin Enakhena and Amina Yerima, as members.

Their appointment to oversee the affairs of the NFF, according to FIFA, followed consultations with the Confederation of African Football (CAF).

But less than 12 hours after the appointment, the ANFRI has rejected the FIFA Normalisation Committee Chairman, Sampson Ebomhe, "on the grounds of conflict of interest and lack of neutrality."

The group said that "FIFA certainly has not conducted a proper background check on the purported chairman of the normalisation committee," adding: "We are collating the details at the moment exclusively for FIFA first before we release it to the public."

According to the group, one of the reasons for kicking against the choice of Ebomhe is that such a position is supposed to be occupied by an independent person who has not been involved in the administration of the nation's football in the past.

"Mr Ebomhe cannot be the chairman of the NFF Normalisation Committee because of conflict of interest. He is a personal lawyer to a top official of the NSC, and that is just one of the reasons," the group said.

Meanwhile, United States-based former Flying Eagles and Super Eagles player, Paul Okoku, yesterday threw more light on the role played by Ebomhe as chairman during the NFF elections in Warri, Delta State, in 2014.

In his article titled: "Sampson Ebomhe, chairman of Nigeria's NFF Normalisation Committee: From Warri's 2014 Election controversy to FIFA's 2026 Reform Mandate, wrote: "Twelve years ago, Barrister Sampson Ebomhe chaired one of the most disputed elections in Nigerian football history. Today, he chairs FIFA's five-member Normalisation Committee for the Nigeria Football Federation (NFF). His final confirmation remains subject to eligibility checks by FIFA's Review Committee.

"I wish him and his normalisation colleagues success. But his electoral history merits examination, precisely because the structure he once administered is now theirs to reform."

Okoku: 'Independence must not simply be assumed'

On what happened in Warri in 2014, Okoku said: "On September 30, 2014, Ebomhe chaired the election in Warri, Delta State, that brought Amaju Pinnick to the NFF presidency. The record includes that Ebomhe was detained and questioned by security officials before returning to oversee voting; presidential candidate Shehu Dikko was excluded, and Ebomhe attributed the decision to Dikko's absence.

"Pinnick won the second ballot with 32 of 44 votes. On October 23, 2014, the Federal High Court in Jos set aside the Warri proceedings for contravening earlier orders.

"In December, Electoral Appeals Committee Chairman Okey Ajunwa announced the nullification of four election outcomes; other committee members disputed his position.

"The wider conflict reached the Court of Arbitration for Sport. These events document a contested process, not a finding that Ebomhe personally committed an offence," Okoku stated.

Speaking further, Okoku said: "The circumstances surrounding that election in Warri, including the exclusion of a leading presidential candidate and subsequent legal challenges, remain part of his electoral record.

"Given that history, Nigerians are entitled to question the nature of his relationship with Pinnick, the independence of the electoral decisions taken in Warri, and whether any past football alliances could influence his present responsibilities.

"His independence must not simply be assumed because FIFA and CAF have selected him. The Normalisation Committee cannot credibly promise a new beginning if its chairman allows old relationships, personal loyalties or established power blocs to determine the direction of reform.

"Barrister Ebomhe, Warri is part of your electoral history. What happens next will become part of your legacy," Okoku, now a FIFA Football analyst,



Former Super Eagles Captain, Daniel Amokachi, is a member of the NFF Normalisation Committee.



New NJF President, IGP Tunji Disu

IGP Disu elected judo federation president

By **Christian Okpara**

BAUCHI 1990 National Sports Festival gold medallist, Olatunji Disu, who is now the Inspector-General of Police, has been unanimously elected president of the Nigeria Judo Federation (NJF).

At the federation's National Elective Congress held in Abuja yesterday, Disu, an accomplished judoka and third-Dan black belt holder, was unanimously elected by the 13 eligible voters present at the congress organised by the Sheriff Hammed-led Caretaker Committee.

Since beginning his judo career in 1986, he has won several medals, including gold at the 1990 National Sports Festival, the Nigerian Police Games, and various veterans' championships.

In July 2022, he won a silver medal in the veterans' -100kg category at the 33rd U.S. Open Judo Championship. He previously served as Chairman of the Lagos State Judo Association and is currently the patron of the Nigerian Police Judo Association.

In his acceptance speech, Disu called for reconciliation and unity within the judo community.

"This is a very important day in my life. For the first time, I have both voted and been voted for in an election, and I am deeply honoured by the confidence reposed in me.

"There is no individual winner today. The real winner is judo because the sport is bigger than all of us. It is time for reconciliation and for us to reunite everyone who has been divided. Many people contributed to the growth of this sport, and we must bring them back into the fold.

"We will reach out to our great judokas, both within and outside the country, to foster reconciliation and strengthen our federation. I sincerely thank everyone for the trust and support you have shown me."

Also elected alongside the new president were Nwaobilor Ananaba as vice president and Emmanuel Ghahabo as second vice president.

Other members of the newly elected NJF board include Catherine Ewa-Ekuta, Bassey Ekanem Ekwere (paramilitary representative), Ika Bassey Odo (technical representative), Ezeri Agahata (athletes' representative), Chijioke Okechukwu (NAPHER-SD Representative), David Jesuorobo Osaghae (international representative), Dr Lawrence Ezeudu (South-East representative), Osahon Eke (South-South representative), Tokunbo Ajanaku (South-West representative), Rosa Collins (NAWIS representative), Salisu Mahmuda (North-West representative), and Sunday Ewa (North-East Representative).

Published by The Guardian Group, Rutam House, Isolo, Lagos Tel: 01-4489600
Abuja Office: Plot 415 Olu Awotesu Street, Off Idris Ibrahim Crescent, Off Obafemi Awolowo Way, Jabi District, Abuja. Tel: 08065290744
Advert Hotlines: 01-4489619, 08023015115 08031930899, advert@guardian.ng; Circulation Hotline: 07038746449
All correspondence to Guardian Newspapers Limited, P.M.B. 1217, Oshodi, Lagos, Nigeria.
E-mail:Letters@guardian.ng; www.guardian.ng
Editor:
OLUWAFEMI F. ADEKOYA
ABC (ISSN NO 0189-5125)

Infantino faces new challenge in re-election bid

FIFA's presidential election is set to become a three-way contest after the world football governing body confirmed that Gianni Infantino will face two challengers when delegates gather in Morocco next year, reports *thesouthafrican.com*.

The FIFA president will be challenged by French Football Federation President, Philippe Diallo, and Japan Football Association honorary president Kohzo Tashima. All three nominations were submitted before the deadline on 18 November.

The election is scheduled for March 18, 2027, at the 77th FIFA Congress in Rabat, Morocco. The winner will secure a four-year mandate running until 2031.

Infantino, who has led FIFA since February 2016, is seeking another term after winning the 2023 election unopposed. His latest bid comes amid criticism over his abandoned FIFA Forward Enterprise proposal. It sought to attract private investors by selling commercial stakes in the World Cup.

The election will take place at the 77th FIFA Congress in Rabat, Morocco, on March 18, 2027. The successful candidate will secure a four-year term until 2031.

Infantino has been in charge since February 2016. He is seeking another term after winning the previous election unopposed in 2023.

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