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Conscience, Nurtured by Truth

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Nigerians need better living conditions, not name-calling, APM tells Tinubu NEWS PAGE 5

Daura Emirate probes 92-year-old Emir for alleged sexual assault NEWS PAGE 3

COP31 ends in deadlock as inflation, energy shocks stall agreement PAGE 6



Atiku's presidential ambition faces fresh challenge as supporters back Obi NEWS PAGE 6



Bayelsa boat tragedy: More bodies recovered as Tinubu approves N250m for victims' families NEWS PAGE 7



Group Managing Director/CEO, Zenith Bank Plc, Dame Dr. Adaora Umeoji, OON (right); Governor of Lagos State, Mr Babajide Sanwo-Olu; Wife of the Founder of Zenith Bank Plc, Mrs Kay Ovia; Celebrant and Founder of Zenith Bank Plc, Jim Ovia, CFR; Vice President Kashim Shettima, GCON; President of Ghana, John Dramani Mahama; former President Olusegun Obasanjo, GCFR; Founder/President of Dangote Group, Alhaji Aliko Dangote, and former Governor of Akwa Ibom State, Mr Udom Emmanuel, during the Zenith Bank 2026 Founder's Dinner held in honour of Jim Ovia's 75th birthday anniversary and retirement as Chairman of Zenith Bank in Lagos, recently.

Anxiety as subscribers get disconnection notice over unverified mobile devices NEWS PAGE 4

HURIWA, Dalung seek probe of bandits' access to military uniforms NEWS PAGE 30



Chairman, All Progressives Congress, Ogun State, Chief Yemi Sanusi (left); Deputy Governor, Ogun State, Engr. Noimot Salako-Oyedele; former Governor, Ogun State, Chief Segun Osoba; Wife of the Governor, Ogun State, Mrs Bamidele Abiodun; Executive Governor, Ogun State, Prince Dapo Abiodun; All Progressives Congress Governorship Candidate, Ogun State, Senator Solomon Olamilekan Adeola (Yayi); his wife, Mrs. Temitope Adeola; Deputy Governorship Candidate, APC, Ogun State, Alhaja Kudirat Adegunwa-Balogun and her husband, Mr.Abdul Razak Balogun during the unveiling of Senator Adeola's manifesto for Ogun State development held at the Cultural Centre,Abeokuta, Ogun State on Friday.

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Panorama

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SPOTLIGHT

2027: EU warns of online attacks against female candidates

THE European Union has raised concerns over 'growing digital attacks, disinformation and coordinated smear campaigns targeting women seeking elective offices ahead of 2027 general elections'.

The EU, through its Support to Democratic Governance in Nigeria Programme, in a statement yesterday said it is supporting an initiative to equip "female candidates with practical skills to identify, prevent and respond to online harassment and politically motivated attacks."

The initiative brought together declared women candidates from seven political parties across Nigeria's six geopolitical zones for a two-day Digital Clinic for Women in the Race for 2027 Elections in Abuja.

Speaking at the opening, Executive Director, Centre for Media and Society, Dr Akin Akingbulu warned that digital attacks could extend beyond social media, threatening women's safety, political participation and chances of securing elective positions.

Meanwhile, Archbishop Emeritus of Abuja Catholic Archdiocese, John Cardinal Onaiyekan, has urged credible, free and fair elections in 2027, insisting that every vote must count. Onaiyekan made the call on Sunday during a homily at the Church of the Assumption, Asokoro, Abuja, to mark the Feast of Christ the King.

Tinubu orders Masari, Badaru to reconcile aggrieved APC leaders

From **Terhemba Daka** (Abuja)

PRESIDENT Bola Tinubu has directed his Special Adviser on Political Matters, Ibrahim Kabiru Masari, and ex-Minister of Defence, Abubakar Badaru, to spearhead reconciliation efforts among aggrieved members of the All Progressives Congress (APC), warning that lingering divisions could undermine the party's chances in the 2027 polls.

The President gave the directive on Sunday at a prayer session organised in his honour by his extended family at the Yoruba Tennis Club, Lagos, where he urged party leaders to bury their differences and strengthen internal cohesion ahead of the next electoral contest.

He addressed Masari against the backdrop of political disagreements between him and Katsina State Governor, Dikko Umar Radda.

CISLAC, others call for confidential SGBV complaint in security agencies

From **Sodiq Omolaoye** (Abuja)

CIVIL Society Legislative Advocacy Centre (CISLAC), and stakeholders have called for confidential reporting channels to curb Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV) within Nigeria's defence and security institutions.

The call was contained in a communiqué issued in Abuja on Sunday after a capacity-building workshop by CISLAC)/ Transparency International in Nigeria (TI-Nigeria). The workshop, supported by the Government of Ireland, focused on human rights, gender sensitivity, and SGBV prevention and response in security operations across Nigeria.

The communiqué was jointly signed by CISLAC Executive Director, Auwal Rafsanjani and Amnesty International Nigeria Researcher, Maurice Chukwu.

Participants observed that women still faced barriers to equal participation, leadership opportunities, appointments, and promotions in defence, security agencies due to gender stereotypes.



Little flower girls of St. Linus Catholic Church, Chika/Aleita on a road walk to celebrate the Solemnity of Christ the King in Abuja, yesterday.

Igbo community pledges support for Tinubu's re-election in Kano

From **Murtala Adewale** (Kano)

KANO State Governor, Abba Kabir Yusuf, has received assurances of political support from leaders of the Igbo community in the state for President Bola Tinubu ahead of the 2027 elections.

The assurance was given during a high-level meeting between the governor and representatives of the Igbo community at the Government House, Kano, led by Igwe Boniface Igweke, Eze Dioramma IV, Sarkin Igbo Kano.

The delegation comprised prominent Igbo traditional, political and community leaders, including Chukuma Innocent Ogbu, Special Adviser on Igbo Community Affairs to the Kano State Government; Donatus Nwago, immediate past President-General of the Igbo Community Association in Kano; and Raphael Ngbidi, the newly elected President-General of the association.

Speaking on behalf of the community, the leaders declared their readiness to unite and work together, assuring the governor that previous divisions among members during the 2023 elections had been addressed.

They reaffirmed their commitment to peaceful coexistence and acknowledged the administration's efforts in providing security and an enabling environment for residents and businesses across the state.

... DAY 4593

OUR GIRLS STILL MISSING

Tope Templer Olaiya, News Editor
@TopeTempler

RANDOM FACTS

- Nigeria's largest indoor arena, 12,000 capacity Lagos Arena in Victoria Island is set to be completed at a cost of $100 million in 2028.
- Burkina Faso is hottest country in Africa.
- Israel is offering African migrants $3,500 to leave voluntarily to reduce number of those receiving assistance. The offer is for migrants who have lived in Israel for over 2 years without a valid visa.

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

- The prices of all goods and services must be displayed clearly so a consumer can take notice of it. An undertaking must also not require a consumer to pay a price higher than that displayed for the good or service.

TODAY'S QUOTE

"If your dreams do not scare you, they are not big enough.

Ethnicity should enrich us; it should make us a unique people in our diversity and not be used to divide us.

ELLEN JOHNSON SIRLEAF

Let us stop justifying every shortcomings with that unacceptable phrase 'the Nigerian factor' as if to be a Nigerian is to settle for less.

UMARU MUSA YAR'ADUA"

TODAY IN HISTORY

• 2025 - Nigeria
Pres. Bola Tinubu directed immediate withdrawal of police officers attached to Very Important Persons across the country, in a shake-up of security deployment. Under the new arrangement, VIPs seeking security escorts must apply to the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC)

• 2015 - Nigeria
Following the death of APC candidate, Abubakar Audu after the inconclusive poll, the Independent National Electoral Commission said it awaited formal notification and a medical death certificate from the APC before announcing next steps, while Attorney General Abubakar Malami noted the party would substitute its candidate.

• 2011 - Yemen
Arab Spring: After 11 months of protests in Yemen, Yemeni president Ali Abdullah Saleh signed a deal to transfer power to the vice president, in exchange for legal immunity.

• 2009 - Nigeria
Pres. Umaru Yar'Adua traveled to Saudi Arabia. He was admitted to a hospital in Jeddah for heart inflammation (pericarditis) and related illnesses. That was the last time he would be seen publicly. On February 24, 2010, he returned to Nigeria after three months of treatment and died on May 5, 2010 at Aso Villa in Abuja, without having made a public appearance since his illness began.

• 2005 - Liberia
Ellen Johnson Sirleaf was elected president of Liberia and became the first woman to lead an African country.

• 1992 - USA
The first smartphone, the IBM Simon, was introduced at COMDEX in Las Vegas, Nevada.

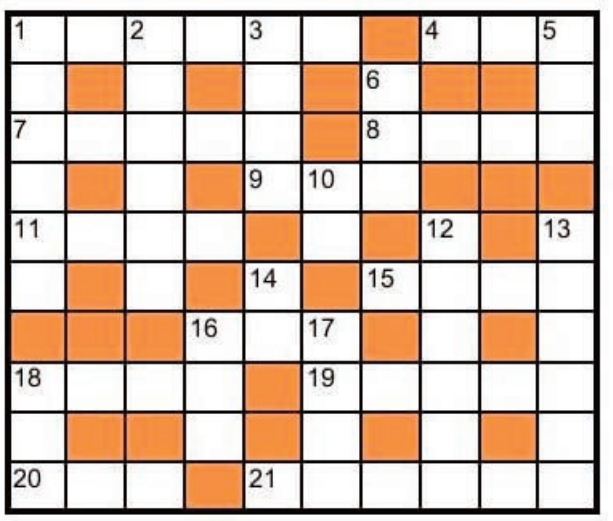
• 1990 - Antarctica
The first all-woman expedition to the South Pole (3 Americans, 1 Japanese and 12 Russians), sets off from Antarctica on the 1st leg of a 70-day, 1287-kilometre ski trek.

• 1980 - Italy
The 6.9 Mw Irpinia earthquake shook southern Italy with a maximum Mercalli intensity of X (Extreme), killing 4,900, and injuring 8,934 others.

• 1974 - Ethiopia
60 Ethiopian politicians, aristocrats, military officers and other persons were executed by the provisional military government.

• 1971 - China
Representatives of the People's Republic of China attended the United Nations, including the United Nations Security Council, for the first time.

CROSS WORD PUZZLE



• ACROSS

I. Gov. Siminalayi Fubara state, (6).
4. Young man, (3).
7. Chocolate base, (5).
8. Gov. Abiodun state, (4).
9. Permit, (3).
11. Not any, (4).
15. Indian coin, (4).
16. Beverage drink, (3).
18. 'Nine' in Hausa language, (4).
19. Sports FM radio station, (5).
20. Keep criticizing, (3).
21. LGA in Bauchi state, (6).

• DOWN

1. Modern, (6).
2. Without an occupant, (6).
3. Physically existing, (4).
5. Spanish man of rank, (3).
6. Small amount, (3).
10. Indicates 'former', (2).
12. LGA in Imo state, (6).
13. South American fish, (6).
14. Exist, (2).
16. Label, (3).
17. Car accessories maker, (4).
18. Container, (3).

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Check page 31 for solution to the puzzle

News

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Tinubu commits N1.5tr to agric bank, targets two million farmers

Farmers raise concerns over insecurity, cost of input, others

From **Adamu Abuh** and **Joke Falaju**, Abuja

PRESIDENT Bola Tinubu has approved N1.5 trillion for the recapitalisation of the Bank of Agriculture (BOA) as part of efforts to expand agricultural financing and increase food production, with the administration targeting two million smallholder farmers nationwide.

This was as farmers at the recent National Agricultural Show raised concerns over the rising cost of farm inputs, insecurity, poor access to credit facilities, among other challenges.

Tinubu also committed N450 billion to agricultural financing programmes, which have so far reached more than 500,000 smallholder farmers, particularly in Northern Nigeria, where agriculture remains a major source of livelihood and economic activity.

Spokesperson of the All Progressives Congress Presidential Campaign Council (APC-PCC), Dele Alake, disclosed this in a statement yesterday, saying the interventions were designed to strengthen food security, expand domestic production and improve farmers' productivity under the Renewed Hope Agenda.

According to him, the recapitalisation would enhance the financial capacity of (BoA) to provide affordable and accessible funding to farmers, agricultural cooperatives, processors, aggregators and other businesses operating across the agricultural value chain.

He said the administration's agricultural interventions went beyond providing loans to farmers to include access to quality seeds, fertilisers, mechanisation, irrigation, storage facilities, commodity markets and other essential components of the agricultural value chain.

Alake explained that through the N250 billion Renewed Hope Smallholder Support and Value Chain Fund, the bank was financing farmers through Farmer Aggregation Companies responsible for coordinating farmer registration, input distribution, extension services and market linkages.

The programme, he said, had reached more than 500,000 smallholder farmers in 16 states, including over 70,000 women. It had also supported the distribution of approximately 2.5 million bags of fertiliser and 300,000 bags of certified seeds.

He added that the initiative was targeting two million farmers, with plans to distribute more than 10 million bags of fertiliser as implementation expanded.

MEANWHILE, the farmers called on financial institutions and private investors to urgently address the high cost of farming, limited access to affordable loans, insecurity, and inadequate market opportunities that threaten food production in the country.

The stakeholders also demanded increased investment in agricultural mechanisation, irrigation, modern technology and processing facilities, insisting that Nigerian farmers need practical support to increase productivity and strengthen the country's food security.

The resolutions were adopted at the High-Level Multi-Stakeholder Seminar of the 2026 National Agricultural Show, organised by the National Agricultural Foundation of Nigeria.

The seminar, themed Building a Resilient Nigerian Agrifood System: Empowering Farmers, Mobilising Investment and Driving Innovation for Food Security and Shared Prosperity, brought together government agencies, financial institutions, development partners, private sector operators, researchers, farmers' organisations, women and youth agripreneurs.

Read the remaining story on www.guardian.ng



Kwara State Governor, AbdulRahman AbdulRazaq (left); Lagos State Governor, Babajide Sanwo-Olu; President Bola Tinubu; Head of the Family/Compound Head of the Tinubu Descendants in Lagos, Kayode Tinubu; Bintu-Fatima Tinubu; Chief of Staff to the President, Femi Gbajabiamila; and National Security Adviser (NSA), Nuhu Ribadu, during the Tinubu family of Lagos special prayers for the re-election bid of President Tinubu in Lagos, yesterday.

ADC, dons fault Tinubu's insistence on fuel subsidy removal

APC lobby Nigerians to reject return to subsidy regime, mobilise for Tinubu

From **Andrew Oota**, Abuja

THE African Democratic Congress Presidential Campaign Council (ADC-PCC) has come down heavily on President Bola Ahmed Tinubu for his insistence on sustaining the removal of fuel subsidy, describing it as the height of insensitivity.

Also, eggheads have condemned the Federal Government's handling of fuel subsidy removal, accusing the Tinubu administration of imposing severe economic hardship on Nigerians without demonstrating tangible benefits from the policy or accounting transparently for the savings generated.

But the All Progressives Congress (APC) has urged Nigerians to reject calls to return to fuel subsidy and mobilise support for Tinubu's re-election in 2027, insisting the country cannot afford to reverse the administration's economic reforms.

The ADC-PCC described the President's position as insensitive, dismissive and completely out of touch with the economic realities confronting Nigerians.

Tinubu had, at a rally held at Mapo Hall, Ibadan, Oyo State, declared that Nigerians should forget about fuel subsidy, insisting that the policy belongs to the country's past.

Reacting to the President's remarks during an interaction with youths in Lokoja, ahead of the ADC presidential campaign rally in Kogi State, scheduled for tomorrow, the ADC-PCC Director of Media and Publicity, Kola Ologbondiyan, accused the President of displaying a disturbing lack of empathy for Nigerians struggling daily with hunger, poverty and an unbearable cost of living.

Read the remaining story on www.guardian.ng

Daura Emirate probes 92-year-old Emir for alleged sexual assault

Gumi urges dethronement of errant emirs

DAURA Emirate Council in Katsina State said it had launched a probe of a viral video in which a foreign female tourist accused the 92-year-old Emir of Daura, Faruk Umar Faruk, of allegedly touching her inappropriately during a visit to his palace.

Amnesty International Nigeria had called on the authorities to immediately investigate allegations of sexual assault against the nonagenarian.

For his part, Islamic cleric Sheikh Ahmad Gumi called for the removal of any Emir found guilty of immorality.

Reacting to the allegations, the Sarkin Labaran Daura, Ibrahim Daura, confirmed that the emirate was aware of the video circulating on social media.

He said the emirate was examining the footage to establish its authenticity and determine whether it had been manipulated or artificially generated.

"We are examining the video to ascertain its authenticity and establish that it has not been created or altered using technology," he said, adding that the emirate would issue an official statement after concluding its review of the matter.

As of the time of filing this report, the Daura Emirate Council had not issued a detailed statement addressing the allegations, while the Emir of Daura had not personally responded to the claims.

Amnesty International called for a probe in a statement published on its X platform yesterday.

The human rights organisation said viral videos shared by the alleged survivor showed what it described as attempts by the emir to sexually violate the visitor despite her resistance.

It said the tourist alleged that the emir touched her inappropriately during her visit to the Daura Emir's Palace.

Condemning the alleged conduct, Amnesty International urged the Katsina State Government and the Nigeria Police Force to immediately commence a transparent and independent investigation into the incident.

It urged them to ensure that the emir is held accountable for the alleged attempted rape through a fair trial, while ruling out the death penalty.

The revered Islamic scholar said this amid the sexual harassment allegation levelled against the Emir of Daura.

The allegation, which has sparked widespread reactions on social media, followed the circulation of a video purportedly showing the Emir interacting with a tourist during the tourist's visit to the palace.

The tourist said the incident was particularly disturbing because she had travelled through different parts of Nigeria without experiencing sexual assault in public spaces.

She added that she had not encountered such treatment while walking through crowded streets or other public places but alleged that the experience occurred in a palace, where she expected a traditional leader to demonstrate dignity and exemplary conduct.

Describing the experience, the tourist said she found it disgusting and had continued to think about what happened.

She explained that although the incident allegedly occurred on November 14, she chose not to make it public until she had completed her tour in Nigeria and left the country.

SERAP sues NDPC, INEC over alleged manipulation of voters' register

Jega, Kukah urge Nigerians to demand accountability from politicians

By **Silver Nwokoro**

SOCIO-ECONOMIC Rights and Accountability Project (SERAP) has sued the National Data Protection Commission (NDPC) and the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) at the Federal High Court in Abuja over alleged manipulation of the preliminary Register of Voters through the use of artificial intelligence (AI)-generated photographs by some electoral officials.

Meanwhile, former Chairman of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), Prof. Attahiru Jega, and Catholic Bishop of Sokoto, Matthew Kukah, have called for greater public accountability, institutional transparency and responsible political communication ahead of the 2027 general elections.

SERAP is asking the court to compel the NDPC to independently investigate suspected AI-generated photographs, alterations to personal data and unverifiable records allegedly discovered in INEC's preliminary voters' register.

The suit, marked FHC/ABJ/CS/2863/2026, was filed last week following INEC's acknowledgement of questionable registration records and suspected AI-generated photographs in the preliminary register.

In the suit filed on behalf of SERAP by its lawyers, Oluwakemi Agunbiade, Kehinde Oyewumi, Andrew Nwankwo and Valentina Adegoke, the organisation is seeking an order of mandamus compelling the NDPC to obtain and examine relevant documents, records and electronic data held by INEC to establish the nature and extent of the alleged irregularities and determine whether the Nigeria Data Protection Act 2023 was violated.

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Dons rally lawmakers on legislative oversight, accountability

From **Azimazi Momoh Jimoh**, Abuja

LEADING political scientists have warned Nigerian lawmakers against excessive hostility towards the executive arm of government and uncritical cooperation with it, saying both tendencies undermine good governance and weaken democratic accountability.

The scholars: Prof. John Ayoade, Prof. Emmanuel Ojo and Dr Babatola Akinsanmi, said effective governance depended on a delicate balance between cooperation and constructive opposition among the three arms of government.

They observed in a joint statement issued yesterday to announce the publication of The Handbook of Legislative Oversight, a new book examining the horizontal and vertical dimensions of legislative oversight.

The scholars described legislative oversight as a critical component of democratic governance and an essential mechanism for maintaining checks and balances, accountability and quality control among the arms of government.

They noted the legislature had a fundamental responsibility to enforce, protect and sustain the oversight mechanism, stressing that the function was central to its constitutional mandate and representational obligation to the electorate.

According to them, lawmaking without effective oversight effectively renders the legislature redundant by allowing the executive to operate without adequate scrutiny or institutional restraint.

"Legislation without oversight essentially nullifies the legislature because it practically lets loose the executive. Oversight, in reality, is a control mechanism that guides the behaviour of public institutions," they said.

The scholars warned that abandoning legislative oversight would undermine the philosophy of separation of powers, create a vacuum in democratic representation and weaken the connection between the electorate and governance.

They noted that the absence of oversight was not the only threat to good governance, adding that poor, inefficient or collusive oversight could be equally damaging to democratic institutions.

Drawing on empirical evidence from democracies across Africa, the political scientists explained that the relationship between the legislature and executive required what they described as "cooperative antagonism" — a delicate balance between cordial engagement and constructive opposition.

They cited the strained relationship between former Speaker of the House of Representatives, Ghali Na'Abba, and former President, Olusegun Obasanjo, as an example of how excessive antagonism could turn legislative oversight into an adversarial political contest.

Conversely, they warned that an overly cosy relationship between the two arms could reduce the legislature to a rubber stamp, compromising its constitutional responsibility to hold the executive accountable.

Ekeh warns against replacing common sense with AI

NAG urges Nigeria to embrace AI, use of geospatial intelligence

From **Adeyemi Adepetun** (Lagos) and **Cornelius Essen** (Abuja)

CHAIRMAN of Zinox Group, Leo Stan Ekeh, has challenged African entrepreneurs and tech professionals to embrace artificial intelligence without allowing it to weaken their capacity for independent thought, sound judgement and common sense.

Ekeh, who recently returned from a visit to SpaceX's main Intelligence Station in Seattle, Washington, launched by Elon Musk, made the remarks during an interaction with young entrepreneurs and IT experts over the weekend in Lagos.

The visit, at the invitation of SpaceX, included his wife, Mrs Chioma Ekeh, the CEO of TD Africa Distributions, the authorised distributor of Starlink in West Africa.

Nigeria, five other countries produce 38 women science awardees

- As researchers advance innovations in disease detection, clean energy, others
- Only 33.6% of Sub-Saharan African researchers are women – UNESCO

By **Ijeoma Nwanosike**

NIGERIA and five other African countries have produced 38 women scientists recognised at the 2026 L'Oréal-UNESCO for Women in Science Awards in Sub-Saharan Africa, following their contributions to research addressing critical challenges across the continent.

The awardees, comprising 30 doctoral and eight postdoctoral researchers, are from Nigeria, Botswana, Tanzania, Guinea, Cameroon and South Africa. They were selected from more than 1,000 applications for research spanning health, energy, water, agriculture, technology and environmental sciences.

Their projects include low-cost water filters made from clay and cassava peels, batteries and supercapacitors developed from agricultural waste.



Governor of Bayelsa State, Douye Diri (left); Vice President, Kashim Shettima, and a survivor of the boat mishap in Southern Ijaw Local Government Area of Bayelsa State during the Vice President's sympathy visit to the Bayelsa Medical University Teaching Hospital, Yenagoa, yesterday.

FG, employers shouldn't confuse unemployment with unemployability, CPPE cautions

By **Tobi Awodipe**

CHIEF Executive Officer of Centre for the Promotion of Private Enterprise (CPPE), Dr Muda Yusuf, has cautioned against the growing tendency to describe Nigerian graduates as unemployable.

According to him, the country's graduate employment crisis is driven more by inadequate job creation, weak labour market absorption and declining employer investment in training as by deficiencies in the education system.

In a policy commentary titled Graduate Employability in Nigeria: Beyond the Narrative of a Skills Crisis, made available to *The Guardian* yesterday, he said although concerns over the disconnect between tertiary education and workplace requirements were legitimate, portraying Nigerian graduates as generally unemployable was an oversimplification that failed to reflect differences in academic disciplines, institutions and individual capabilities.

He noted that graduate unemployment should not be confused with graduate unemployability, stressing that many qualified individuals remain without jobs because the economy is not generating sufficient opportunities to absorb them.

He added that Nigeria's formal private sector remains constrained by high borrowing costs, energy expenses, inadequate infrastructure, logistics bottlenecks, taxation and regulatory burdens, which continue to undermine business expansion, investment, and companies' capacity to create quality employment.

Anxiety as subscribers get disconnection notice over unverified mobile devices

By **Adeyemi Adepetun**

NCC says verification designed to rid market of substandard, counterfeit, cloned devices

ANXIETY is mounting among Nigerian telecommunications consumers and device vendors following automated SMS alerts from the Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC) warning that unverified mobile devices will be disconnected from local networks within 30 cumulative days.

The notices, sent under the sender ID "NCC-Checker" inform affected users that their handsets were not type-approved for Nigerian mobile networks.

Speaking with *The Guardian* yesterday, a newly admitted University of Benin student said he got a notification from NCC, reading that his particular brand of phone is not verified for use on Nigerian mobile networks.

"You have 30 cumulative days before disconnection. Contact your seller or dial *315#," the message read.

Also, a teller with a customer from one of the new generation banks on the Island, who simply gave her name as Kafilat, said she got a similar message from NCC Checker on Friday, November 20, informing her that her smartphone, a Chinese brand, has been flagged and found not to be type-approved. She was also asked to get across to her vendor or visit *315#.

While devices active on Nigerian networks prior to October 7, 2026, when the Commission announced its Device Management System (DMS) initiative, were automatically verified, newly connected smartphones, tablets, routers, and Point-of-Sale (POS) terminals imported through unofficial channels or bought abroad are being flagged.

According to the NCC, roughly 231 million devices already active on Nigerian networks prior to the October rollout were automatically captured in the system without requiring subscriber action.

While NCC-type-approved phones are nearing 3000, the policy primarily targets newly imported, counterfeit, cloned, or unapproved devices entering the market.

Grounded in Section 132 (2) of the Nigerian Communications Act 2003 and the Type Approval Regulations 2024, the system checks hardware IMEI numbers in collaboration with the Nigeria Customs Service.

The NCC has clarified that it only verifies device compliance and does not track user locations or access personal messages, photos, or financial data.

Reports claimed that many consumers said they were unaware of the verification requirement at the point of purchase and now fear losing access to voice calls.

Utomi urges church to advocate good governance as FEEP partners PFN

By **Isaac Taiwo**

POLITICAL economist and public affairs analyst, Prof. Pat Utomi, has challenged the Nigerian church to move beyond its growing emphasis on wealth creation and embrace its responsibility to promote ethical leadership, good governance and economic transformation.

Utomi, who was the Guest Speaker at the FEEP (Faith, Entrepreneurship, Employment, Prosperity) in collaboration with Pentecostal Fellowship of Nigeria (PFN) National Inaugural launch, lamented that Nigeria's widespread poverty was largely a consequence of poor leadership, corruption and the failure to translate the country's abundant human and natural resources into shared prosperity.

FG defends borrowing, says funds invested in infrastructure

FEDERAL Government has said that money it borrowed is being meaningfully invested in infrastructure.

The Minister of Works, Sen. Dave Umahi, emphasised yesterday, in Lagos, while inspecting the Lagos-Calabar Coastal Highway project.

"They are being used for investment in infrastructure," he said.

The minister said that the coastal highway was an innovation and a beauty to behold.

Umahi said that the Federal Government's construction of the 1,068km Sokoto-Badagry Superhighway was technically about 30 per cent completed, while the 465km Trans-Sahara Road was about 20 per cent done.

He added that work was progressing on the Akwanga-Jos-Bauchi-Gombe-Biu-Maiduguri Road.

According to Umahi, some bidders are already asking to be given the opportunity to refund fully, money spent on the Lagos-Calabar Coastal Highway project so they could toll the road.

ABUAD allays concern over safety of its three herbal drugs

Production of local herbal medicines will reduce fake drugs, says APPMAN

From **Ayodele Afolabi**, Ado-Ekiti

THE management of Afe Babalola University, Ado-Ekiti (ABUAD), has allayed fears about the safety of its herbal drugs, insisting that they are the result of rigorous medical research by scientists led by a renowned professor of Pharmacology.

The management, while dismissing fears that the herbal medicines, especially the ABUAD Virucidine, could affect the kidney and the liver, said that all the toxic effects had been removed, making it safe for human consumption.

Deputy Director of AB Pharmaceutical Services, Afolabi Oluwatoyin, who spoke during a parley with the Association of Pharmaceutical Products Marketers of Nigeria (APPMAN), at the weekend in Ado-Ekiti, assured the people that Virucidine was the result of rigorous research that saw a professor of pharmacology and therapeutics and a team of world-class researchers working day and night to produce the medicine.

She, however, lamented Nigeria's continued reliance on foreign herbal products, saying that it amounted to a form of economic and medical dependence that must be urgently addressed.

NAFDAC arrests 52 suspects, destroys substandard, fake products valued at N22.73 billion

By **Ijeoma Nwanosike**

THE National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control (NAFDAC) has said that it arrested 52 suspects and destroyed substandard, falsified and other unwholesome products valued at approximately N22.73 billion between January and August 2026, as part of efforts to strengthen the regulation of medicines and other regulated products in Nigeria.

The agency also said it recorded 5,542 enforcement activities, conducted 213 raids, seized 821 products, closed 179 premises and imposed 221 sanctions within the eight-month period.

It further carried out 22 destruction exercises to remove unwholesome products from circulation.

NAFDAC disclosed these achievements during its regulatory update presentation at the International Pharmaceutical Regulators Programme (IPRP) Management Committee meeting held in Prague, Czech Republic.

In a statement, the agency said it had sustained its World Health Organisation (WHO) Maturity Level 3 status and was working towards attaining Level 4, the highest level under the WHO Global Benchmarking Tool for assessing national regulatory systems.

2027: Tinubu rallies families, party faithful in Lagos

By **Shakirah Adunola**

- Tasks supporters on voter turnout at elections
- Sanwo-Olu, Hamzat, Okunnu, others lead prayers for second term

PRESIDENT Bola Ahmed Tinubu has charged families, party leaders, youths and supporters in Lagos State to intensify door-to-door mobilisation and ensure eligible voters collect their Permanent Voter Cards (PVCs) ahead of the January 16, 2027 presidential election, insisting that mere victory in the state would fall short of expectations without maximum voter turnout.

The President spoke yesterday in Lagos during a special interdenominational and Islamic prayer session organised by his extended family, the Tinubu family of Kakawa Street, Lagos Island, to seek divine guidance, protection and electoral success for his second-term bid.

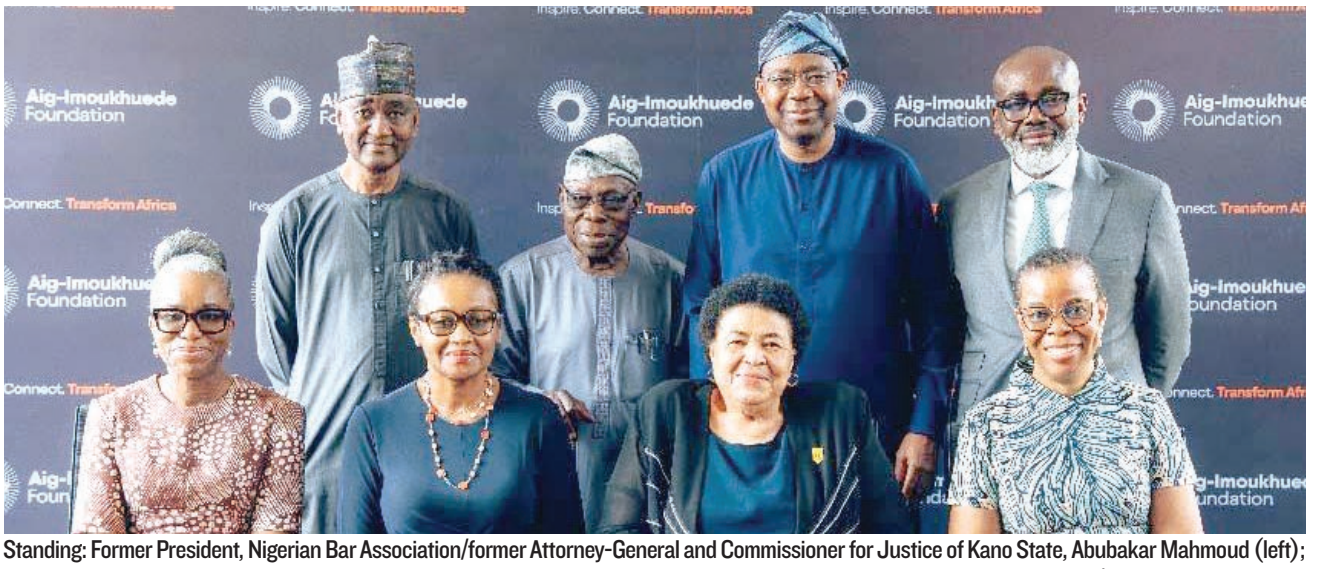
Tinubu, who arrived in Lagos on Saturday afternoon following the All Progressives Congress (APC) presidential campaign rally at Mapo Hall in Ibadan, Oyo State, recalled the political and economic hurdles that preceded the 2023 general elections, including fuel scarcity and the naira redesign crisis, noting that divine providence and the steadfastness of his supporters saw him through to the Presidency.

"In 2022, I invoked 'Emi lo kan' (It is my turn). Today, 'Eyin lo kan' (It is your turn) to exercise that right, knock on doors, and bring everybody out. The challenge of today is much easier than that of yesterday, but you cannot take it for granted. You must knock on your neighbours' door and tell them to go and collect their PVCs. If you are here and you don't have your PVC, you are just here for amala and ewedu," Tinubu said.

The President, therefore, challenged Lagos APC leaders to translate the state's roughly seven million registered voters into overwhelming ballot numbers on January 16 and during the February 6 governorship and state assembly polls.

Earlier, in his welcome address, the Head of the Tinubu family, Kayode Tinubu, said that descendants of the Kakawa Street lineage convened the gathering in gratitude to Almighty Allah and to offer supplications for the President's good health, wisdom, and re-election, as well as peace and sustainable development across Nigeria.

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



Standing: Former President, Nigerian Bar Association/former Attorney-General and Commissioner for Justice of Kano State, Abubakar Mahmoud (left); former President Olusegun Obasanjo, Chairman, Aig-Imoukhuede Foundation, Aigboje Aig-Imoukhuede, and Managing Director/Chief Executive Officer, Coronation Asset Management and President of the Fund Managers Association of Nigeria, Aigbovboise Aig-Imoukhuede and sitting: Executive Vice Chairman, Aig-Imoukhuede Foundation, Ofovwe Aig-Imoukhuede (left); Co-Founder/Chief Executive Officer, Iwosan Healthcare Systems, Dr Fola Laoye; former Chairperson of Access Bank Plc/Founder of Josephine Consulting, Dr Dere Awosika, and Vice Chancellor, Pan-Atlantic University (PAU), Prof. Enase Okonedo, during the 10th Leadership Summit Council meeting in Lagos, at the weekend.

Nigerians need better living conditions, not name-calling, APM tells Tinubu

From **Rotimi Agboluaje**, Ibadan

- Oyo govt, APC trade accusations over destruction of APM campaign posters
- Alli seeks stronger federal ties with Oyo to attract investment

THE Allied Peoples' Movement (APM) has criticised President Bola Tinubu over his remarks at the All Progressives Congress (APC) campaign rally in Ibadan, saying Nigerians need better living conditions rather than political name-calling and grandstanding.

The APM described the President's comments at Mapo Hall as a distraction from the economic hardship, insecurity, unemployment and other challenges confronting citizens.

In a statement by the Director of Communication and Spokesperson of the Oyo State APM Campaign Council, Yinka Oladoyinbo, the party said the President should focus on explaining his administration's record rather than trading verbal attacks with political opponents.

The party, therefore, urged Tinubu to apologise to Nigerians, particularly residents of Oyo State, over what it described as the hardship inflicted on them by the APC administration since assuming office in 2023.

It also expressed concern over what it described as attempts to draw traditional institutions into partisan politics in Oyo State.

The APM said the presence and engagement of the Olubadan of Ibadanland, Oba Rashidi Ladoja, and the Soun of Ogbomoso, Oba Ghandi Afolabi Olaoye, at political events should not be interpreted as endorsements of the APC or its candidates.

According to the party, traditional rulers are custodians of culture, history and communal peace and should remain fathers to all residents, irrespective of their political affiliations.

MEANWHILE, the Oyo State Government and the All Progressives Congress (APC) have traded accusations over the alleged destruction of campaign posters and billboards belonging to the APM during Tinubu's campaign rally in Ibadan at the weekend.

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

Hamzat seeks stronger private-sector role in Lagos digital economy

By **Seye Olumide** and **Kehinde Olatunji**

- CSO urges issue-based campaigns ahead of polls
- Decries APC's absence at Lagos town hall meeting

LAGOS State Deputy Governor, Dr Obafemi Hamzat, has called for stronger collaboration between government, research institutions and private-sector players to accelerate innovation, commercialise research and create jobs in the state's digital economy.

Hamzat, who is also the Lagos State gubernatorial candidate of the All Progressives Congress (APC), said the state needs to move beyond fragmented research initiatives to build an integrated innovation ecosystem that connects technology, funding, industries, and commercial opportunities.

He spoke at a Fintech Town Hall meeting convened by MyCard Global, in collaboration with the Fintech Association of Nigeria, in Lagos, titled: 'The Lagos Digital Economy Blueprint: Co-Authoring the Lagos Digital Economy Agenda'.

Hamzat said the government had continued to support science-based research by providing platforms for young innovators to present ideas for possible funding, but stressed the need to translate research outcomes into commercially viable products and services.

He said sustainable innovation requires deliberate partnerships among researchers, entrepreneurs, investors, government agencies and established industries.

IN another development, a Civil Society Organisation (CSO), Enough is Enough (EiE) Nigeria, has urged voters and political candidates to shift the focus of the 2027 general elections from personalities and financial inducement to pressing governance issues.

However, it expressed disappointment over the absence of the ruling APC at its two-day representation town hall meeting in Lagos, tagged "Moving beyond promises to accountability and action," held at the weekend.

Executive Director of EiE Nigeria, Ufuoma Nnamdi-Udeh, emphasised that citizens are the foundation of democracy rather than mere spectators.

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

IMD: Experts urge men to embrace financial, emotional intelligence

By **Opeyemi Babalola**

EXPERTS in financial management, emotional intelligence and mental health have called for greater attention to men's financial and emotional well-being, warning that economic hardship, societal expectations and the pressure to provide for families are exposing many men to psychological distress.

The call was made during the third edition of Fight for Life, organised by Mindfully with Tunmise, an initiative of Blackhemages Media Concept, where speakers examined the challenges confronting men and the need to promote financial literacy, emotional intelligence and access to mental health support.

The event, which focused on financial and emotional intelligence, was held in commemoration of International Men's Day, marked every November 19.

A Personal Development Trainer and Co-founder of Farm Edge, Adeolu Akinyemi, while speaking at the programme, challenged the belief that entrepreneurship was the only route to financial independence.

He maintained that both salary earners and business owners could achieve financial freedom through effective income management, strategic decision-making and sustainable wealth creation.

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

FG commissions CNG stations in four varsities, targets 60 institutions

By **Abigail Ikhaghu**

THE Federal Government, through the Midstream and Downstream Gas Infrastructure Fund (MDGIF), has begun expanding its Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) infrastructure across public tertiary institutions, with plans to cover 60 universities.

This aims to reduce transportation costs for both students and staff in Nigeria's tertiary institutions.

Minister of Education, Dr Tunji Alausa, disclosed this during the commissioning of CNG refuelling stations and vehicle conversion centres at the University of Lagos (UNILAG), the University of Ibadan (UI), the Federal University of Technology, Akure (FUTA), and the Federal University, Oye-Ekiti (FUOYE).

Alausa said the intervention was aimed at reducing the financial pressure on students who spend a significant portion of their daily expenses on moving between their hostels, lecture halls, and other university facilities.

He, however, urged university authorities and transport operators to ensure that the lower operating costs associated with CNG are reflected in student fares.

COP31 ends in deadlock as inflation, energy shocks stall agreement

From **Chinedum Uwaegbulam** (Lagos) and **Kingsley Jeremiah** (Abuja)

- Climate negotiators fail to agree on text over fossil fuels, finance row
- "This was the worst COP summit ever," say campaigners
- Nigerian delegation with 1,453 participants, third largest in Antalya, Türkiye

RISING inflation, worsening poverty and energy shortages are forcing governments to prioritise immediate economic pressures over climate commitments, weakening global efforts to cut greenhouse gas emissions and accelerate the transition to cleaner energy.

Indeed, these competing priorities shaped negotiations at the UN Climate Change Conference in Antalya, Türkiye, where nearly 200 countries failed to agree on measures to accelerate climate action.

In both developing and industrialised economies, the need to contain energy prices, protect households and sustain growth is competing with pledges to phase out fossil fuels, expand renewables and meet emissions targets.

The pressure is most acute in developing countries, where governments must provide electricity, create jobs, subsidise essentials and finance infrastructure while addressing climate change. For many households, affordable food, transport, electricity and cooking fuel come before climate policies that could raise living costs.

The climate talks, initially scheduled to end on November 20, ran over time as countries sought consensus on a revised draft. COP31 President Murat Kurum submitted a revised proposal early Sunday to bridge divisions between co-hosts Türkiye and Australia and participating countries.

Earlier drafts drew objections from Europe, Africa, Latin America and the Pacific after explicit calls to phase out fossil fuels were removed. The revised text referenced the 2023 Dubai commitment to transition away from fossil fuels and included carbon capture and storage, but did not explicitly name fossil fuels.

A central proposal sought to raise electricity's share of global final energy consumption from about 23 per cent to 35 per cent by 2035. Other initiatives addressed methane reduction, zero waste and energy-efficient buildings.

Developing and climate-vulnerable countries demanded predictable adaptation finance and implementation of existing commitments. Their priorities included science, fossil fuels, climate finance, clean electrification, methane reduction and international cooperation.

They called for climate decisions to reflect scientific evidence, an orderly transition away from fossil fuels, fair climate-finance contributions from major emitters, faster renewable-energy deployment and stronger coordination among the Rio Conventions on climate, biodiversity and desertification.

By the close of COP31, negotiators had failed to reach a climate pact amid divisions over fossil fuels. Kurum acknowledged the impasse, saying: "I understand that there is no agreement on this text. For that reason, these decisions have not been adopted."

The deadlock reflected differences between climate-vulnerable nations and countries seeking a stronger move away from coal, oil and gas, and those protecting fossil-fuel-dependent economies.

Compromise drafts acknowledged that global warming is on course to exceed 1.5°C and called for expanded carbon-removal technologies. Critics said the texts weakened earlier commitments and fell short of the action needed.

UN Secretary-General António Guterres expressed disappointment. "There may be no consensus in the negotiating room, but there is no ambiguity in the science. The take-home message from COP31 is clear: The world must do much more to confront the climate crisis. And it must do it now," he said.

The International Energy Agency's World Energy Outlook 2026 shows how energy insecurity can undermine climate ambitions. It said disruptions through the Strait of Hormuz in 2026 triggered the largest energy supply shock on record, with cumulative losses of 2.8 billion barrels of oil and 60 billion cubic metres of gas. Diesel prices rose above $200 per barrel, with African and Asian importers among the worst affected.

Higher energy costs feed into electricity tariffs, transport fares and production costs, increasing pressure on households and businesses. Governments are therefore under pressure to cushion consumers rather than pursue costly transitions away from fossil fuels.

Supply disruptions and rising prices may also push households back to firewood and charcoal, worsening health risks, deforestation and household emissions.

Poverty deepens the dilemma. The World Bank estimates that 811 million people—one in 10 globally—live on less than $3 daily, while about 3.7 billion survive on less than $8.30. Such households are especially vulnerable to increases in food and energy prices.

Fossil-fuel subsidy reform illustrates the conflict. Removing subsidies can free funds for social services and clean-energy investment, but reforms that raise household costs face resistance without adequate protection for vulnerable groups.

For Africa, the tension between energy security, poverty reduction and climate action is particularly stark. Although the continent contributes a small share of historical global emissions, it faces rising temperatures, changing rainfall, droughts, floods, coastal erosion and declining agricultural productivity.

Nigeria exemplifies the challenge. Expanding electricity generation, improving grid reliability, increasing access to clean cooking and supporting industrialisation require major investment. Renewable energy also depends on financing, storage, transmission infrastructure and stable regulation.

NIGERIA'S rising energy prices and interest in alternative sources

Rising energy prices have increased interest in electric ve-

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Minister of Finance and Coordinating Minister of the Economy, Taiwo Oyedele (left); Managing Director, Moniepoint Microfinance Bank, Babatunde Olofin; Managing Director/Chief Executive Officer, Shared Agent Network Expansion Facilities Limited (SANFF), Uche Uzoebo, and Director, Payments System Supervision Department, Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), Dr Rakiya Opemi Yusuf, during the official launch of the Moniepoint Microfinance Bank in Abuja, at the weekend. PHOTO: LUCY LADIDI ATEKO

Atiku's presidential ambition faces fresh challenge as supporters back Obi

From **John Akubo, Ernest Nzor** and **Andrew Oota** (Abuja)

- Coalition of former VP's support groups endorses Obi-Kwankwaso joint ticket
- Youth group tells ex-VP to quit politics, accuses him of pursuing personal ambition
- ADC candidate dismisses withdrawal reports, insists he remains in race to win
- Makinde resists pressure to step aside for opposition consensus
- NDC chairman declares Obi best option to replace Tinubu
- Cleopas faults president over insecurity, economic hardship

FORMER Vice-President Atiku Abubakar's 2027 presidential ambition is facing fresh challenges, with a coalition of his support groups shifting allegiance to Peter Obi, while a youth organisation has urged him to retire from politics, even as he insists he remains in the race to challenge President Bola Tinubu.

The developments have further complicated efforts by opposition leaders to forge a consensus candidate against the ruling All Progressives Congress (APC), with Oyo State Governor Seyi Makinde also reportedly unwilling to abandon his presidential ambition for another contender.

Atiku, the African Democratic Congress (ADC) presidential candidate, yesterday dismissed reports that he had withdrawn from the contest, describing them as fabricated attempts to undermine his political momentum. He maintained that he was determined to win the January 16, 2027 election.

The National Chairman of the Nigeria Democratic Congress (NDC), Senator Moses Cleopas, has also declared Obi the country's best hope, urging Nigerians to reject Tinubu's re-election bid.

The Coalition of Atiku Support Groups Initiative announced its decision to support Obi and former Kano State governor Rabiu Kwankwaso ahead of the January 16 election during a press conference in Abuja on Saturday.

The coalition said its decision followed a review of the regional power rotation principle and the need for opposition parties to unite against the APC.

It added that the prevailing political situation favoured the NDC presidential candidate and warranted a restructuring of the opposition to rescue the country.

"The coalition of Atiku support groups has officially announced its decision to support the joint presidential ticket of Peter Obi and Rabiu Kwankwaso," the group said.

The endorsement comes amid mounting difficulties in reconciling the interests of opposition politicians seeking to challenge Tinubu, with several contenders maintaining their determination to pursue the presidency.

Atiku dismisses withdrawal reports

IN a statement issued by his Director of Strategic Communication, Phrank Shaibu, Atiku described reports of his withdrawal from the presidential race as a "brazen, malicious and desperate falsehood".

He warned that no individual or group had the authority to speak on his behalf or announce his withdrawal, adding that the use of his name on campaign materials did not confer such authority on those involved.

"Putting my name on a placard does not make someone my supporter. Putting a lie in that person's mouth does not make it my decision," he said.

The former vice-president accused those promoting the withdrawal claim of attempting to create confusion within the opposition and weaken rival candidates. He also alleged that political parties circulating the reports were indirectly working in favour of Tinubu and the APC.

"Any party promoting the lie that I have stepped down is doing Tinubu's work. Every false withdrawal story tries to clear his strongest opponent from the field.

"If I am not on the ballot, Bola Tinubu might as well wait for a coronation. But I am in this race to win, and Nigerians will have their choice," he said.

Atiku also rejected suggestions that he would step aside for another opposition aspirant, insisting that he neither needed anyone to withdraw for him nor intended to surrender his ambition.

"I do not need anyone to step down for me, and I am stepping down for no one," he said.

He maintained that his Affordable Life campaign was focused on the economic difficulties confronting Nigerians, particularly rising food and transportation costs.

"Hunger and poverty are not on social media. They are in our markets, our homes and every community where families struggle to afford food and transport," he said.

Atiku urged his supporters to intensify grassroots mobilisation and ensure they had their Permanent Voter Cards (PVCs) ready, expressing confidence that he would defeat Tinubu at the polls.

Makinde insists on presidential ambition

THE opposition's consensus arrangement has also encountered difficulties over Makinde's reported unwillingness to abandon his presidential ambition.

A party source, who spoke on condition of anonymity following the party's emergency National Executive Committee (NEC) meeting in Abuja last week, said the Oyo governor, who is the Allied Peoples Movement (APM) presidential candidate, remained determined to contest.

His position, alongside Atiku's insistence on remaining in the race, has further complicated efforts to persuade major opposition figures to prioritise a common platform against Tinubu.

Atiku has maintained that opposition parties seeking to defeat the APC should concentrate on persuading voters rather than circulating withdrawal reports or attempting to manufacture support for a consensus arrangement.

"Anyone serious about defeating the APC should take their case to voters. Manufacturing supporters and circulating false declarations will not defeat Tinubu. It only serves him," he said.

Cleopas declares Obi Nigeria's best hope

MEANWHILE, the NDC National Chairman, Cleopas, has urged Nigerians to reject Tinubu's re-election bid and allow Obi to lead the country out of its economic and security crises.

He spoke on Friday in Yenagoa, Bayelsa State, during celebrations marking his 57th birthday.

Cleopas accused the Tinubu administration of failing to protect citizens, tackle insecurity and provide relief to millions struggling with rising living costs.

He described Obi, the NDC presidential candidate, as the only hope for Nigeria at the critical moment, insisting that the 2027 election should pro-

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Bayelsa boat tragedy: More bodies recovered as Tinubu approves N250m for victims' families

From **Adaku Onyenucheya** (Lagos), **Julius Osahon** (Yenagoa) and **Andrew Oota** (Abuja)

• FG, Diri, Atiku urge probe as IYC demands waterways reforms

THE search for victims of Friday's fatal boat mishap in Bayelsa State continued yesterday, with more than 30 bodies reportedly recovered, as fears mounted that over 100 people, including children, might have lost their lives in the tragedy.

The incident, which occurred along the waterways of Southern Ijaw Local Council, involved a passenger boat popularly known as 'Love Boat' conveying mourners from Ayama community to Ukubie for a burial ceremony.

Although the exact number of casualties remained uncertain, local sources, including rescued passengers and volunteers involved in the search, put the death toll at more than 100. The state government, however, said 23 bodies had so far been recovered, while 24 survivors were receiving treatment in hospitals.

Witness accounts indicated that the boat was heavily loaded, with some passengers reportedly expressing concerns about overcrowding before it departed. The vessel was said to have developed mechanical problems before capsizing, emptying passengers into the river.

A woman, who survived by swimming to the riverbank, recounted how passengers realised something was wrong shortly before the boat broke apart and overturned.

She said five members of her family and neighbours, including a young boy, were still missing.

The tragedy has triggered reactions from the Bayelsa State Government, the Federal Government and the Ijaw Youth Council (IYC), with calls for accountability and urgent reforms to prevent further loss of life on the waterways.

ALREADY, President Bola Tinubu has approved N250 million to support families of victims.

As of Sunday, the casualty figure had risen to 29 following the November 20 accident near Oweikorogha community.

Vice President Kashim Shettima announced the intervention on Sunday during a condolence visit to Bayelsa on the President's directive.

Speaking at the Government House in Yenagoa after visiting hospitalised victims at the Bayelsa Medical University Teaching Hospital (BMUTH) in Yenagoa, Shettima said the President directed relevant federal agencies to work with the state government in the search and rescue operation and provide support for those affected by the tragedy.

He described the incident as a national loss, noting that behind the casualty figures were individuals with families, relationships and responsibilities to their communities and society.

"Each person involved has a name, an identity, a history, relationships and responsibilities. Family members cannot come to terms with the fact that someone who left home for a funeral will never return," he said.

Coastal, creek communities seek special development plan

Insist on Lagos-Calabar Coastal Highway completion

From **Ann Godwin**, Port Harcourt

STAKEHOLDERS from creek and coastal communities across Nigeria have demanded special development planning for greater investment in the blue economy, and a new philosophy of unity.

Also commending the governors for their efforts to build a safer water transportation infrastructure, and the federal government for the 750-kilometre Lagos-Calabar Coastal Highway, they insisted it should be delivered as originally planned, alongside the 415-kilometre East-West Road.

In a communique issued at the end of the 2026 Creek to Creek Movement Summit held in Port Harcourt over the weekend, the stakeholders said that coastal communities were not simply remote settlements along the Atlantic coastline, creeks, estuaries, and waterways, but important foundations of Nigeria's economic development.

Signed by the Founder/Director-General of the Creek To Creek Movement, Mike Ayapaye, and Deputy Director-General, Okiemute Onovughakpo, the communique noted that under the Exclusive Economic Zone Act, creeks connect to the Atlantic economy and are an important foundation of the country's blue-economy pursuits.

Falana urges media to task political parties, candidates on ending child Illiteracy

By **Yetunde Ayobami Ojo**

HUMAN rights lawyer, Femi Falana, SAN, has urged the media to challenge political parties and their candidates to make concrete commitments towards ending child illiteracy and addressing the growing number of out-of-school children in Nigeria.

Falana said the ongoing political campaigns provide an opportunity for the media to demand clear programmes and commitments from candidates on how they intended to guarantee every Nigerian child's right to free and compulsory basic education.

He lamented that despite the existing constitutional provisions, legislation and court judgments guaranteeing access to basic education, successive governments had failed to demonstrate sufficient commitment to addressing the crisis.



Group Chief Executive Officer of Oando Plc, Wale Tinubu (right); President of Sierra Leone, Julius Maada Bio, and other dignitaries, during the West Africa Integration and Investment Summit (WAIIS) in Freetown, Sierra Leone. PHOTO:NAN

Adesina urges Nigeria to prioritise healthcare investments

By **Bertram Nwannekanma**

• PSHAN says private sector has reached 12m Nigerians, adopted 251 primary healthcare centres
• Experts seek stronger partnerships to address poor access, maternal mortality, inadequate financing

FORMER President of the African Development Bank (AfDB) Group, Dr Akinwumi Adesina, has urged Nigeria's organised private sector to move beyond philanthropy and corporate social responsibility initiatives to strategic healthcare investments, warning that the country cannot achieve sustainable economic growth without a healthy population.

Adesina, who spoke virtually during the 2026 yearly gala and awards night of the Private Sector Health Alliance of Nigeria (PSHAN), themed "Health as Wealth: Mobilising African Leadership and Capital to Build Sustainable Health Systems," and hosted in Lagos, identified inadequate healthcare financing, dependence on imported medical products and limited access to quality services as major obstacles to Nigeria's development.

The AfDB former President, who described healthcare as an investment in human capital and essential economic infrastructure rather than merely social sector expenditure, said a healthy population was essential for productivity, innovation, business growth and national competitiveness, adding that universal health coverage was an economic imperative and a foundation for inclusive growth.

According to him, Nigeria cannot aspire to become a major economic force in Africa while depending heavily on other countries for essential medicines, vaccines, diagnostics and critical medical technologies.

He, therefore, called for increased investments in local pharmaceutical manufacturing, domestic production of medical supplies, health innovation and resilient healthcare supply chains.

Adesina, while acknowledging the government's responsibility for healthcare policy, regulation and equitable access, said the public sector could not shoulder the responsibility alone.

He maintained that private businesses had the financial resources, technology, managerial expertise and entrepreneurial capacity to complement public investments and accelerate healthcare transformation.

"The question should no longer be whether businesses can afford to invest in health, but whether they can afford not to," he said.

Adesina urged businesses to support primary healthcare, workforce development, local production of essential medicines and vaccines, digital health infrastructure, reliable diagnostics and sustainable health financing.

Enugu miners' massacre: NDC chief condemns FG's appeal against £420m UK compensation ruling

From **Lawrence Njoku**, Enugu

ENUGU-BASED senior lawyer and chieftain of the Nigeria Democratic Congress (NDC), Okenna Peter Agubuzu, has condemned the appeal filed by the Federal Government, challenging the court judgment, ordering the United Kingdom to pay £420million compensation to the relatives of the 21 coal miners who were gunned down by the colonial police during the 1949 Iva Valley Massacre.

The judgment delivered by Justice Anthony Onovo of the Enugu High Court on February 5, 2026, held the British Government liable for the killing of the 21 coal miners while they were protesting harsh working conditions and racial discrimination at the Iva Valley Coal Mines in Enugu.

Ruling on suit number E/909/2024 brought by an activist, Mazi Greg Onoh, against the Secretary of State for the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO), the British Government and four other respondents, Justice Onovo ordered the Government of the United Kingdom to pay £20 million to each of the 21 families (totalling £420million) and issue a formal apology for the massacre.

The judge further held that the Federal Government and the Attorney General of the Federation and Minister of Justice (AGF), both joined as 3rd and 4th respondents in the matter, had a constitutional responsibility under Section 19 (d) and 150 (1) of the 1999 Constitution, to pursue justice and diplomatic engagement for the families of victims.

Reacting to the appeal filed by the Federal Government against the landmark judgment, Agubuzu accused the President Bola Tinubu-led All Progressives Congress (APC) government of demonstrating insensitivity to the unprecedented hardship that the generations of coal miners had passed through since they lost their breadwinners almost eight decades ago.

According to the NDC Chief, the appeal filed by the Federal Government through the AGF equally raises the broader question of the poor treatment of Nigerians by the Tinubu administration from its inception in May 2023.

"The appeal filed by the AGF is quite curious and regrettable. Whose interest is the AGF protecting? Is he protecting the interest of Nigerians or the United Kingdom? Is it the duty of the Nigerian Government to appeal against a judgment awarded in favour of Nigerians, against ill-mannered colonialists?

"It is unfortunate and regrettable that the Tinubu Government chose to protect the interest of the United Kingdom, rather than allow them to honour the judgment or appeal", he said

Agubuzu wondered why the FG cried more than the bereaved instead of complying, especially when the 1999 Constitution mandate the President to defend and pursue justice and secure recompense for relatives of the protesting 21 coal miners killed by the British colonial administration.

Yuletide: NATOP tasks operators to prioritise service delivery, tourists' safety

By **Olusegun Koiki**

NIGERIA Association of Tour Operators (NATOP) has charged tour operators, guides and tourism service providers to prioritise tourists' safety, privacy and professional conduct as travel activities increase ahead of the Christmas and New Year festivities.

The association, in a Seasonal Tourism Safety, Security, Privacy and Professional Conduct Advisory, signed by its President, Bolaji Mustapha, yesterday, warned practitioners against exposing tourists to avoidable security risks, privacy violations, medical emergencies and unprofessional conduct during tours.

The advisory outlined measures operators should adopt to ensure safe, responsible and enjoyable tourism experiences across the country.

NATOP specifically cautioned tour operators and guides against publishing tourists' photographs, videos, and identifiable location details in real time, stressing that participating in a tour did not automatically consent to the promotional use of images.

Diri hails traditional institution as Okpe celebrates Orodje's coronation anniversary

From **Chido Okafor**, Warri

GOVERNOR Douye Diri of Bayelsa State has described traditional rulers as important pillars of society, saying the traditional institution deserves recognition and respect for its role in maintaining peace, resolving disputes, and promoting harmony at the grassroots.

Diri, who spoke as chairman of the occasion at the grand finale of the 20th coronation anniversary of the Orodje of Okpe, *Orhue 1*, Maj.-Gen. Felix Mujakperuo (rtd), over the weekend, noted that their influence extends beyond their immediate communities.

This comes as eminent personalities, including Governors Ahmed Ododo of Kogi State, Agbu Kefas of Taraba State, and Monday Okpebholo of Edo State, respectively, were also received at the Orodje's palace by Delta State Governor, Sheriff Oborevwori.

Commending the Orodje for providing purposeful leadership in Okpe Kingdom, Diri noted that the peace and stability maintained in traditional domains also create an enabling environment for government to implement development programmes.

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FoLC crisis: Okonkwo urges members on neutrality as Odukoya awaits court papers

By **Eniola Daniel**

PRESIDING Bishop of The Redeemed Evangelical Mission (TREM), Mike Okonkwo, has urged members of The Fountain of Life Church to remain neutral amid the ongoing leadership crisis, calling on them to allow God to resolve the dispute.

Okonkwo made the appeal yesterday, June 22, 2026, while delivering a sermon titled 'The Glory of the Church' at the church's headquarters in Ilupeju, Lagos.

The crisis followed the church board's decision to strip Jimmy Odukoya of his position as senior pastor, citing his appointment as contrary to the wishes of his late father, Taiwo Odukoya, the church's founder.

Addressing the congregation, Okonkwo said he felt compelled by the Holy Spirit to visit the church and offer prayers and encouragement at a difficult time.

He urged members not to take sides in the dispute involving Jimmy Odukoya and Tolu, but to remain committed to God and the church.

"Like the new generation say, 'chill'. Fountainians should chill this time. Let God perfect what He has started.

"We are so used to seeing the wind, the adversary, and analysing the devil. Who told you that you need to analyse the devil? We cast out the devil and look up to God," he said.

Quoting Apostle Paul's words in the Bible, Okonkwo reminded the congregation that Christians could face adversity without losing hope or faith.

He added: "I have not slept since 1:30 a.m. The Holy Spirit said to me, 'Son, go to the Fountain and bless them.' That is why I am here.

"You cannot separate me from Fountain. It is impossible because it is a covenant that God Himself created. Whatever happens to Fountain affects me.

"You are not for Tolu or for Jimmy. You are for God. None of them died for you."

Meanwhile, Jimmy Odukoya denied receiving any court injunction reportedly restraining him from performing certain functions in the church.

"I heard that there was an injunction against me. I have not seen it, I have not been served, and they said there was no substituted service," he told the congregation.

Reassuring members of his commitment to the church, Odukoya said the congregation remained central to its existence and promised to continue standing with them.

"There is no Fountain without you. You are Fountain of Life, and I will continue to speak for you as long as you have me. I will continue to stand with you," he said.

He also expressed confidence in the future of the church, invoking the biblical assurance that Jesus Christ would build His church and that the gates of hell would not prevail against it.



Bishop Okonkwo (left) and Pastor Jimmy Odukoya

NDLEA arrests S'African golfer, Kenyan chef over 50kg cannabis shipment

Intercepts 160 explosives, 4.6 tonnes of cannabis hidden in granite truck

By **Bertram Nwannekanma**

A South African professional golfer and a Kenyan chef have been arrested by operatives of the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) for allegedly attempting to smuggle 50.40 kilogrammes of Loud, a potent strain of cannabis, into Nigeria through the Murtala Muhammed International Airport (MMIA), Lagos.

The suspects, 37-year-old Grobler Henlo and 25-year-old Abubakar Faiza Njambi, were arrested following the discovery of the illicit drug in a luggage-swapping operation allegedly organised by an international drug trafficking syndicate.

The NDLEA said Henlo was arrested on Sunday, October 11, 2026, exactly one month before the interception of an American professional basketballer, Greene Da'monte Khiree, at the same airport on November 11, over the importation of 33.95kg of the same psychoactive substance.

According to the agency, Henlo arrived in Lagos from South Africa aboard a South African Airways flight and was intercepted at the Terminal 2 arrival hall. A search of the two travelling boxes in his possession uncovered 46 parcels of Loud weighing 50.40kg.



Suspects with drugs.

Bandits kill five in Niger community, set houses ablaze

Abiodun condemns attack on Odegbami

From **Bala Yahaya** (Minna) and **Segun Ayinde** (Abeokuta)

Armed bandits have killed five persons, including the village head of Lumma Ba'are community in Borgu Local Council of Niger State, and set several houses ablaze in an attack that forced residents to flee for safety.

The attack, which occurred at about 5:00 a.m. on Saturday, November 21, reportedly followed the early morning prayers.

Five other residents sustained injuries and were evacuated to the General Hospital, New-Bussa, where they are receiving medical attention.

A source from the area said the attackers killed the village head, Bawa Muhammad, and reportedly beheaded him before setting his body ablaze.

The assailants also reportedly burnt down a building after a woman fled, leaving her baby behind. The baby reportedly died in the fire.

The attackers subsequently set several houses in the community ablaze before fleeing towards the forest, forcing residents to abandon their homes and seek refuge in neighbouring locations.

The source alleged that some of the attackers were Fulani youths who allegedly formed an alliance with the armed bandits.

Meanwhile, the Niger State Government has condemned the attack, describing it as unfortunate and unacceptable, particularly because of its devastating impact on innocent residents and the traditional institution.

In a statement issued in Minna by the Commissioner for Information and Orientation, Obed Nuhu Nana, the government expressed condolences to the families of the deceased and the entire community, while wishing the injured residents a speedy recovery.

One dies in Lagos-Ibadan Expressway crash

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

• Fire service rescues 70-year-old woman from well in Lagos

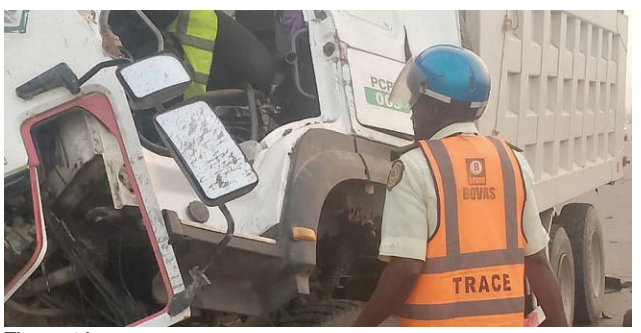
ONE person has died in a multiple-truck collision on the Lagos-Ibadan Expressway in Ogun State, while a 70-year-old woman has been rescued alive after falling into a 60-foot-deep well in Lagos.

The fatal crash involved three trucks and occurred in the early hours of yesterday around the BNX axis, inward Lagos, in front of Ashabi Police Station.

The vehicles involved were a red FAW container truck with registration number AAA 150 YM, a white Howo granite truck with registration number LSR 59 YN, and another truck whose identity could not be immediately established.

The spokesperson for the Traffic Compliance and Enforcement Agency (TRACE), Babatunde Akinbiyi, confirmed the accident in a statement issued to journalists in Abeokuta.

According to him, four people were involved in the crash, which claimed the life of one occupant. He attributed the death to the impact of the collision, adding that no other person sustained injuries.



The accident scene.

Lagos-Calabar Coastal Highway: Commuters await Dec opening as FG completes 100.47km

By **Ayonote Clement**

Umahi promises improved connectivity along Lekki corridor, says bridges, drainage, streetlights nearing completion

COMMUTERS, residents and businesses along the Lekki corridor may soon experience some relief from persistent traffic congestion as the Federal Government targets late November to early December 2026 for the commissioning of completed sections of the Lagos-Calabar Coastal Highway.

The planned opening of Sections 1 and 2, covering 100.47 kilometres of dualised concrete carriageway is expected to improve connectivity, ease movement and open up access to residential estates and commercial centres along the rapidly expanding Lekki axis.

Minister of Works, Dave Umahi, gave the assurance yesterday, during an inspection of ongoing construction works on the highway, particularly around Chainage 9+500, near Mayegun and Jakande Estates, Lagos.

He said 47.47 kilometres of Section 1 and 53 kilometres of Section 2 had been completed, bringing the total length of finished carriageway to 100.47 kilometres.

However, the minister explained that the commissioning would initially exclude outstanding bridges and that work was still ongoing on essential road infrastructure, including drainage systems, solar-powered streetlights and other road furniture.

Customs, NAFDAC intensify crackdown on pharmaceutical smuggling, expired products

By **Adaku Onyenucheya** and **Glory Sunday**

THE Nigeria Customs Service (NCS) and the National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control (NAFDAC) have strengthened collaboration to combat the smuggling and circulation of illicit pharmaceutical and other regulated products, following growing concerns over threats to public health and national security.

The renewed partnership comes amid NAFDAC's discovery of expired baby diapers, methylated balms and other regulated products in a store at Idumota, Lagos, some of which had been expired since 2022.

The discovery also exposed alleged violations of product registration requirements, including the use of identical NAFDAC registration numbers on different products, as well as the presence of unregistered baby wipes, disposable pants and other medical products.

The development underscored the need for stronger regulatory surveillance, intelligence sharing and coordinated enforcement to prevent dangerous and substandard products from reaching consumers.

Speaking during an official courtesy visit to the NAFDAC office in Apapa, Lagos, the Customs Area Controller, Western Marine Area Command, Thomas Jonah, said no government security agency could effectively discharge its responsibilities in isolation without the support and cooperation of sister agencies.

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TheMetroSection

Kwara jailbreak: 20 officers queried as probe uncovers months-long escape plot

From **Mansur Aramide**, Ilorin

ABOUT 20 personnel of the Medium Security Custodial Centre, Oke-Kura, Ilorin, Kwara State, have been issued queries over the escape of two condemned inmates last Wednesday, following preliminary findings that the jailbreak was part of a coordinated operation planned over several months.

Those facing disciplinary scrutiny reportedly include members of the armed squad and officers responsible for the round-the-clock supervision of inmates at the facility.

The development followed a full-scale investigation ordered by the Controller-General of the Nigerian Correctional Service (NCoS), Sylvester Nwakuche, who visited the facility last Thursday to assess the circumstances surrounding the security breach.

During the visit, Nwakuche reportedly attributed the incident to staff negligence and warned that personnel found culpable would face appropriate sanctions.

Sources familiar with the investigation, who spoke on condition of anonymity, disclosed that the escape attempt involved seven inmates, although only two succeeded in scaling the facility's security perimeter and fleeing.



Kwara Correctional Centre

According to the sources, the inmates had allegedly spent several months secretly chiselling through the wall of their cell without detection by the prison authorities. They reportedly concealed the opening with a poster to prevent officers from discovering their activities.

On the morning of the jailbreak, the inmates allegedly tied blankets together to fashion a makeshift rope, which they threw towards the high perimeter fence in an attempt to hook its broken-glass barriers and climb over.

While the first two inmates reportedly succeeded in scaling the wall and escaping, the rope snapped under the weight of the remaining five, causing them to fall back into the facility.

Meanwhile, the Kwara State Command of the Correctional Service has released the identities and descriptions of the two fleeing inmates and appealed to members of the public to assist in their recapture.



Minister of Interior, Dr Olubunmi Tunji-Ojo, alongside the Senator representing Ondo Central Senatorial District, Adeniyi Adegbonmire, among other distinguished guests, at the wedding of the Minister of Youth Development, Ayodele Olawande, and his bride, Stella Ifeoluwa Elegbe, in Akure, recently.

Oyo warns residents against phone use during gas refilling

From **Rotimi Agboluaje**, Ibadan

THE Oyo State Fire Services Agency has cautioned residents against using mobile phones in restricted areas, particularly during the refilling of Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) cylinders, following a fire outbreak at a gas retail shop in the state.

The agency issued the warning after its firefighters successfully contained a fire at an LPG retail and refilling shop on Saturday, preventing it from spreading to adjoining properties.

In a statement, the agency said it received a distress call at about 7:28 a.m. through the Special Adviser on Fire Services Reform and Chairman of the agency, Moroof Akinwande, who immediately directed firefighters to the scene.

The firefighting team, led by an Assistant Chief Fire Superintendent, promptly mobilised to the location and found the shop engulfed in flames, with thick smoke billowing from the premises.

The firefighters launched a coordinated operation to contain the blaze, successfully preventing it from spreading beyond the affected shop.

According to the agency, the operation helped avert extensive damage, saving properties estimated to be worth millions of naira.

One male victim was rescued from the scene and taken to Molly Hospital for medical attention.

Although the exact cause of the fire had yet to be established, the agency said preliminary indications suggested that the incident might have been triggered by the use of a mobile phone during gas refilling.

Akinwande urged residents to take fire safety precautions seriously and avoid using mobile phones in areas where they are prohibited, particularly around LPG storage and refilling facilities.

He also advised owners of commercial buildings, shops and households to install functional fire extinguishers and ensure they are regularly maintained to enable occupants to tackle fires before they escalate.

The agency added that its firefighting appliance returned safely to the station at 8:42 a.m., after which the crew remained on standby for further emergency response.

Chuks Nwanne: Friends, colleagues celebrate journalist's life at his 'second home'

By **Eniola Daniel**

FOR the late Chuks Nwanne, the General Manager, Abuja and Northern Operations of *The Guardian*, OJEZ Restaurant and Bar, located within the National Stadium, Surulere, Lagos, was more than a relaxation spot. It was a place where his love for entertainment, music and cultural performances found expression.

It was, therefore, fitting that friends, colleagues and stakeholders in the entertainment industry gathered at the venue on Friday, November 20, 2026, to celebrate his life and pay tribute to a journalist whose passion for the industry extended beyond his professional responsibilities.

Nwanne, who died on Saturday, October 3, 2026, after an illness, was honoured alongside veteran entertainment journalist, Austin Nwulu, who also died after a prolonged illness, during a candlelight procession organised by leaders of Entertainment Writers, Chief Ben Njoku of *Vanguard* and Gbenga Bada of *The Nation*.

The gathering came ahead of Nwanne's service of songs scheduled for November 26, 2026.

Although an ardent member of the Catholic Church, Nwanne was equally devoted to Nigeria's entertainment scene.

He was a familiar face at OJEZ, where he regularly watched cultural troupes perform on weekends. His presence at the venue and his enthusiasm for the arts earned it a special place in his life, making it something of a second worship centre.

At the event, both Nwanne and Nwulu were remembered as pillars of the Nigerian entertainment industry who devoted their professional lives to promoting Nollywood, music and other creative expressions, often treating the industry's growth as a personal mission.

Founder of Abuja Film Festival, Fidelis Duker, described the deceased journalists as significant contributors to the growth and successes recorded by Nollywood over the years.

"For some of us in the Nollywood industry, Austin and Chuks were big factors in whatever the industry has become today. I met Austin over 30 years ago and, as a young journalist, he and other young reporters walked around Nollywood. They worked tirelessly for the success many are enjoying today, including the box-office successes being recorded," he said.

Duker noted that journalists played a crucial role in giving Nigerian filmmakers international visibility, adding that foreign reporters often relied on stories published by Nigerian newspapers to develop their reports on Nollywood.

"Journalists give us international attention. Foreign journalists who came to write about Nollywood first saw articles from *The Guardian*, The Nation, The Punch, Vanguard, The Sun and others before building their reports."


Chuks Nwanne

Associates and friends during the event at OJEZ, Surulere, Lagos.

Sanwo-Olu pledges more projects for Ajah residents, commissions Treasure Estate

By **Ayonote Clement**

LAGOS State Governor, Babajide Sanwo-Olu, has assured residents of Ajiwe, Ajah, of improved road access and drainage infrastructure, saying his administration remains committed to addressing infrastructure challenges in the area.

The governor gave the assurance on Friday, November 20, 2026, at the commissioning of the 165-unit Treasure Estate, located at Plot A2, Chief Chuks Ikokwu Street, off Ogombo Road, Ajah, where he said housing development must be complemented by adequate infrastructure to improve residents' quality of life.

Sanwo-Olu acknowledged concerns over external road access and drainage around the estate, assuring residents that the issues would receive government attention.

He also appealed to homeowners and neighbouring communities to maintain peaceful coexistence and contribute to building a conducive residential environment.

The governor said the commissioning of the estate demonstrated his administration's determination to sustain infrastructure and housing delivery despite the approaching political campaign season.

"We know we are in a season, but the campaigning season we have must not stop the work that we do," he said, stressing that political activities would not distract the government from its development commitments.

The development, which followed years of land ownership disputes that threatened its execution, was delivered through a joint venture agreement signed in 2023 between the Lagos State Development and Property Corporation (LSDPC) and AKF Properties Limited.

Treasure Estate occupies approximately 28,674 square metres of land covered by a Certificate of Occupancy issued by the Lagos State Government in favour of LSDPC.

Beyond the infrastructure assurance, Sanwo-Olu said the estate was designed to provide housing options for different income groups, particularly young professionals seeking their first homes and growing families.

Fire destroys traders' goods, livestock in Yobe cattle market

From **Njadvara Musa**, Potiskum

TRADERS in Potiskum, Yobe State, have been counting their losses after a midnight fire destroyed shops, livestock and animal feeds at parts of the cattle market and Potiskum Central Market (PCM) on Sunday.

The fire, which broke out at about 2:00 a.m., triggered panic in the community as flames swept through sections of the markets, destroying traders' goods and leaving several livestock dead.

The inferno reportedly started in the section of the market occupied by traditional medicine sellers before spreading rapidly to adjoining shops.

.The combustible materials stored in the affected stalls were believed to have fuelled the blaze.

By the time the alarm was raised, several shops had already been engulfed, leaving traders and nearby residents struggling to salvage their belongings.

Some traders rushed to the scene in a desperate attempt to rescue their goods and livestock, but the intensity of the flames and heat made it difficult to approach the affected areas.

The timely intervention of personnel of the Yobe State Fire Service, however, prevented the fire from spreading to other densely populated sections of the markets.

Traders and community leaders commended the firefighters for their swift response, saying their intervention helped avert what could have been a more devastating disaster.

One eyewitness, who arrived shortly after the outbreak, expressed gratitude for the firefighters' intervention, saying the entire market could have been destroyed if the blaze had not been contained promptly.

Although no loss of human life was reported, the fire is expected to leave affected traders with substantial financial losses.

Preliminary estimates indicate that property and goods worth millions of naira were destroyed.

KANO STATE
THE CENTER OF COMMERCE

Kano in Focus

Kano Govt Pledges ₦100m, Donates New Bus to Legal Aid Council

KANO State Governor, Alhaji Abba Kabir Yusuf, has pledged ₦100 million in financial support and a brand-new operational bus to the Legal Aid Council of Nigeria to strengthen its activities and enhance access to justice for indigent and vulnerable citizens.

The Governor announced the support when he received the Chairman of the Governing Board of the Legal Aid Council of Nigeria, Justice Sulaiman Durosinlorun Kawu, alongside the Director-General, management team and other members of the Council during a courtesy visit to the Government House, Kano.

Governor Yusuf commended the Council for its significant contributions to the administration of justice in Nigeria, particularly its efforts in providing free legal representation and assistance to citizens who cannot afford the services of private legal practitioners.

He emphasised that poverty should never deprive any Nigerian of the right to justice, stressing that no indigent or vulnerable person should remain in detention without legal representation simply because of a lack of financial resources.

The Governor reaffirmed his administration's commitment to strengthening collaboration with the Council, assuring the delegation of the necessary logistical, administrative and financial support within available resources.

As part of efforts to improve the Council's operational capacity in Kano, Governor Yusuf directed the State Commissioners for Justice and Works to assess its office facilities, with a view to upgrading the infrastructure, providing adequate furniture and improving electricity supply to create a more conducive working environment.

He also announced a donation of ₦100 million to the Council's national headquarters and assured the Kano State office of continued financial assistance. In addition, he pledged a brand-new bus to facilitate the Council's operations and improve its outreach across the state.

Governor Yusuf called on relevant government institutions, particularly agencies within the justice sector, to extend maximum cooperation to the Council to enable it discharge its responsibilities effectively.

He further urged Nigerians to sustain peaceful coexistence, support national development and pray for the country's leaders, while calling for collective commitment towards ensuring free, fair and peaceful conduct of the 2027 general elections.

Earlier, the Chairman of the Governing Board of the Legal Aid Council of Nigeria, Justice Sulaiman Durosinlorun Kawu, commended Governor Yusuf for his commitment to the welfare and development of the people of Kano State.

Justice Kawu explained that the visit was part of the Council's working tour of the North-West geopolitical zone, aimed at strengthening partnerships with state governments, assessing the delivery of legal aid services and promoting wider access to justice.

He disclosed that between 2021 and 2023, the Council provided legal assistance to approximately 2,500 people in Kano State.

He further revealed that the Council had facilitated the release of about 20 inmates by paying fines and court-ordered compensation on behalf of individuals who were unable to meet such financial obligations.

The Chairman noted that Kano occupies a strategic position in the administration of justice in the North-West, particularly given the state's large custodial facilities and the significant number of awaiting-trial inmates who require legal representation.

He appealed to the Kano State Government to strengthen its support for the Council through the provision of operational vehicles, improved office facilities, information technology equipment and annual financial subventions to enhance the delivery of legal aid services across the state.

Justice Kawu stressed that access to justice should not be determined by an individual's financial circumstances, maintaining that poor and vulnerable citizens deserve equal protection and treatment under the law.

He reaffirmed the Council's commitment to safeguarding the constitutional rights of indigent Nigerians and ensuring that poverty does not become an obstacle to accessing justice.



Gov. Abba Kabir Yusuf exchanged pleasantries with a traditional chief at the convocation ceremony of Baba Ahmad University, Kano.



Gov. Abba Kabir Yusuf interacting with the Dr. Datti Baba Ahmad during the convocation ceremony of Baba Ahmad University, Kano

Gov Yusuf Reaffirms Commitment to Pensioners' Welfare, Assures of Continued Payment of Entitlements

KANO State Governor, Alhaji Abba Kabir Yusuf, has reaffirmed his administration's commitment to the welfare of pensioners, assuring them that the prompt and regular payment of pensions and gratuities, as well as the gradual clearance of outstanding entitlements, remain top priorities of his government.

The Governor, gave the assurance while receiving a delegation of pensioners who paid him a solidarity visit in Kano.

Speaking on behalf of the Governor, the SSG described the pensioners as the true builders of Kano State, acknowledging their years of dedicated service, sacrifices and contributions to the development of the state.

He noted that the present administration would not forget those who devoted their productive years to serving Kano State, stressing that every worker deserves to retire with dignity and enjoy the benefits of their service.

The SSG described Governor Yusuf as a courageous, disciplined and compassionate leader with a genuine commitment to transforming Kano State and improving the welfare of its citizens, particularly senior citizens and retired public servants.

He further commended the pensioners for their patience, prayers, understanding and continued confidence in the administration, describing their solidarity visit as a strong demonstration of trust and support.

The SSG also expressed confidence that the Governor's continued leadership would enable the administration to sustain its efforts towards addressing pensioners' concerns and improving their living conditions.

He assured the delegation that the government would continue to work in their interest, adding that their concerns and voices would always receive attention.

Igbo Community Pledges Support for Tinubu, Gov. Yusuf's Re-election

KANO State Governor, Alhaji Abba Kabir Yusuf, has received assurances of political support from leaders of the Igbo community in Kano State for President Bola Ahmed Tinubu ahead of the 2027 general elections.

The assurance was given during a high-level meeting between the Governor and representatives of the Igbo community at the Government House, Kano, led by His Highness, Igwe Boniface Igweke, Eze Dioramma IV, Sarkin Igbo Kano.

The delegation comprised prominent Igbo traditional, political and community leaders, including Chief Hon. Chukuma Innocent Ogbu, PhD, Special Adviser on Igbo Community Affairs to the Kano State Government; Hon. Chief Donatus Nwago, Immediate Past President-General of the Igbo Community Association in Kano; and Chief Raphael Ngbidi, the newly elected President-General of the association.

Speaking on behalf of the community, the leaders declared their readiness to unite and work together, assuring the Governor that previous divisions among members during the 2023 elections had been addressed.

They reaffirmed their commitment to peaceful coexistence and acknowledged the administration's efforts in providing security and an enabling environment for residents and businesses across the state.

The Igwe of Igbo in Kano appealed to the Governor to sustain infrastructure development in Sabon Gari, particularly the New Road project, Zungeru Road and Sarkin Yaki Road. He also requested government assistance towards completing the Igbo House project.

Responding, Governor Yusuf described the Igbo community as an integral part of Kano State, recognising its long-standing contributions to commerce, investment and economic development.

He emphasised that every Nigerian has the constitutional right to live and conduct business in any part of the country, adding that ethnicity and religion should never constitute barriers to unity and peaceful coexistence.

On infrastructure, the Governor announced that the state government had earmarked ₦8 billion for the dualisation and installation of streetlights along Igbo Road and Hausa Road.

Kano Constitutes Panel to Investigate Misconduct at College of Nursing Science

THE Kano State Government has constituted an investigation Committee into the General Administration of the College of Nursing Sciences, with a mandate to investigate allegations of misconduct against the institution's Provost and its management.

The committee is primarily charged with investigating allegations against the College's Provost examine, assess the allegations and determine whether they border on misconduct. The Committee is to accordingly, make appropriate recommendations.

The committee is chaired by the Honourable Commissioner for Information and Internal Affairs, Alhaji Sanusi Bature Dawakin Tofa, while the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Health, Alhaji Abdulkadir Shehu, serves as a member.

Other members include the Permanent Secretary, Establishment, Office of the Head of Civil Service, Alhaji Abba Adamu Danguguwa; Special Adviser on Health Services, Dr. Ibrahim Musa; Deputy Director/Assistant General Secretary, Ministry of Health, Alhaji Rabilu Hamisu Garun Danga; Director of Medical Services, Ministry of Health, Dr. Shehu Abdullahi Usman; and Director of Nursing Services, Ministry of Health, Dr. Binta Ahmed.

Also serving on the committee are representatives of the Public Complaints and Anti-Corruption Commission, Aminu Sani Mamman; the Academic Staff Union of College of Nursing Sciences (ASUCON), Abubakar Aminu Abdullahi; and the Nigerian Association of Nurses and Midwives.

The Director of Political Affairs, REPA, SSG's office, Aminu Baba Tafida, serves as Member/Secretary, while Kabiru Habibu Kyauta, Principal Assistant Secretary, REPA/SSG, serves as Co-Secretary.

The committee is expected to conduct the assignment with great sense of responsibility and with objectivity and fairness that will anchor an impartial examination of the allegations and other relevant issues surrounding the administration of the institution.

The exercise underscores the government's commitment at entrenching accountability, transparency, institutional discipline and the promotion of effective administration across its establishments.

The committee is scheduled to be formally inaugurated by the Secretary to the State Government, Alhaji Umar Farouk Ibrahim, on Friday, 20th November 2026, at 11:00 a.m.



Deputy Governor Alh Murtala Sule Garo hosted Federal political appointees from Kano to Roundtable discussion on achievements of APC government in Kano



Gov. Abba Kabir Yusuf hosted Sarkin Igbo Kano, Igwe Boniface Ibekwe at Government house Kano.



Deputy Governor Alh. Murtala Sule Garo joined Secretary to the Government of the Federation SGF Dr. George Akume during the passing out parade of Regular Cadet Course 8th of Nigeria Police Academy Wudil Kano.

North-East Development Commission (NEDC)

NORTH-EAST SET FOR MAJOR DEVELOPMENT BOOST AS NEDC LAUNCHES ELECTRIC MOBILITY, 50MW MINI-GRIDS TUESDAY

> ***Vice President Kashim Shettima GCON is to unveil comprehensive development initiatives covering energy, healthcare, education, transportation and economic empowerment***

The North East Development Commission (NEDC) is set to formally launch the deployment of Electric Mobility and associated facilities across the North-East Region in a major event that will also showcase a broad range of Federal Government development interventions aimed at accelerating reconstruction, improving livelihoods and promoting sustainable growth in the region.

The event, which will have Vice President Kashim Shettima , GCON , as Special Guest of Honour, represents another significant milestone in the Commission's commitment to addressing the developmental challenges of the North-East through strategic investments in infrastructure, human capital development, economic empowerment and essential social services.

Beyond the formal launch of the electric mobility initiative, the occasion will feature the unveiling and presentation of several development interventions designed to improve the quality of life of residents across the six states of the North-East.

A major highlight will be the pronouncement on the planned deployment of 50MW Mini-Power Grids across the region. The initiative is expected to improve electricity access, support small businesses, stimulate economic activities and enhance the delivery of essential services in beneficiary communities.

The Commission will also undertake the symbolic presentation of medical equipment to selected tertiary health institutions across the six North-Eastern states as part of efforts to strengthen healthcare infrastructure and improve service delivery. In the education sector, indigent students will benefit from scholarship and bursary awards, reinforcing the Commission's commitment to expanding educational opportunities and investing in the future of young people in the region.

The event will equally feature the distribution of food and essential non-food items to vulnerable persons, alongside youth and women empowerment initiatives through support for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in partnership with the Bank of Industry, BOI. These interventions are designed to promote entrepreneurship, strengthen household livelihoods and expand economic inclusion.

Another important aspect of the programme will be updates and pronouncements on major strategic projects being considered for the region, particularly in rail transportation, aviation and other critical infrastructure expected to improve connectivity and stimulate regional economic development.

The Commission will also present an overview of its completed and ongoing projects across the North-East, covering roads and bridges, solar-powered streetlights, boreholes and water supply schemes, educational infrastructure, healthcare facilities and other critical development interventions.

The planned launch of electric mobility and associated facilities is particularly significant as it introduces a sustainable mobility component into the region's development agenda, complementing broader investments in infrastructure, energy and environmental sustainability. Borno State Governor and Chairman of the North-East Governors' Forum, Professor Babagana Umara Zulum, will serve as Chief Host, while the Managing Director/Chief Executive Officer of NEDC, Mohammed G. Alkali, will host the occasion.

The Shehu of Borno, His Eminence, Dr. Abubakar Ibn Umar Garbai El-Kanemi, will be the Royal Father of the Day.



One of the three reconstructed bridges along Bauchi-Gombe road





Some of the newly built mega schools across 18 senatorial districts in North-East



Reconstruction of Collapsed Bridge in Dilichim and Tashan Tsamiya, Madagali LGA. Capacity: Dilichim (6 span 15metres), Tashan Tsamiya (6 span 15metres

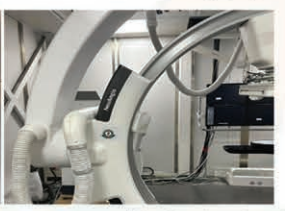






Electric Mobility: Metro buses, taxis and tricycles







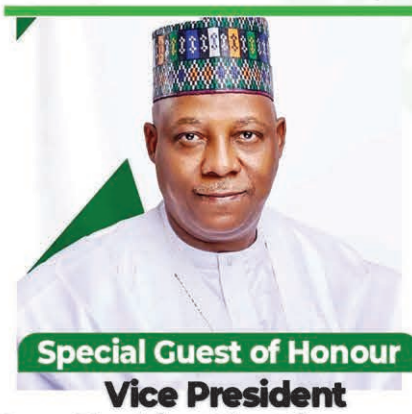
Some of the medical equipment procured for Tertiary Institutions across the region





50MW Mini Power Grids

Tuesday 24th November, 2026 | **Muhammadu Indimi Conference Centre, University of Maiduguri** | **10:00 am prompt**



Special Guest of Honour
Vice President
Sen. Kashim Shettima (GCON)

Chief Host



Prof Babagana Umara Zulum
Borno State Governor and Chairman, North East Governors' Forum

Royal Father of the Day



His Eminence,
Dr. Abubakar Ibn Umar Garbai El-Kanemi
Shehu of Borno

Host



Mohammed Goni Alkali
CEO/MD, NEDC

Co-Hosts



Rt. Hon. Ahmadu Umaru Fintiri
Executive Governor of Adamawa State



Sen. Bala A. Mohammed
Executive Governor of Bauchi State



Muhammadu Inuwa Yahaya
Executive Governor of Gombe State



Lt. Col. Agbu Kefas, (rtd.)
Executive Governor of Taraba State



Hon. Mai Mala Buni
Executive Governor of Yobe State

Supervising Ministers



Engr. Abubakar Momoh
Hon. Minister, Ministry of Regional Development



H.E. Uba Maigari Ahmadu
Hon. Minister of State, Ministry of Regional Development

FOUNDER: ALEX U. IBRU (1945 – 2011)
Conscience is an open wound; only truth can heal it. Uthman dan Fodio 1754-1816

Editorial

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U.S. midterm polls: Lessons for Nigeria's democracy

THE outcome of the United States midterm elections offers an important reminder that democracy is ultimately about the people's power to reward or punish those entrusted with public office. Beyond the political fortunes of the Democratic and Republican parties, the elections have demonstrated the value of credible institutions, accountable leadership and the sanctity of the ballot. These are lessons Nigeria cannot afford to ignore as it prepares for another electoral cycle.

The Democratic Party's sweeping victory in both chambers of Congress represents a significant setback for President Donald Trump and his Republican Party. More importantly, it is a verdict on the performance of an administration whose policies on trade, immigration and foreign relations have generated considerable controversy at home and abroad. The result suggests that Americans are increasingly uncomfortable with the direction of the country under Trump and have chosen to use their votes to demand a course correction.

The victory has also raised expectations that Democratic control of Congress could restrain some of Trump's more contentious policies, subject his decisions to greater scrutiny and encourage a more measured approach to governance. Professor of International Relations Femi Otubanjo aptly observed that Trump's actions would now face more rigorous scrutiny after Democrats took control of the two chambers. Muda Yusuf, Director of the Centre for the Promotion of Private Enterprise, however, cautioned against expecting an immediate and complete reversal of the administration's policies. Elements of Trump's economic and political philosophy are likely to remain influential.

Nevertheless, the prospect of a more restrained Washington is welcome, particularly for America's traditional allies and developing countries such as Nigeria. A less confrontational approach to international relations could create opportunities for renewed diplomatic engagement, trade cooperation and constructive partnerships. However, Nigeria must not mistake a possible change in America's political direction for a substitute for its own strategic economic and diplomatic planning.

The elections also offer a compelling lesson in democratic conduct. The impressive voter participation, absence of violence and rancour, and acceptance of electoral outcomes underscore what is possible when political institutions command public confidence. Even Trump, despite the scale of his party's defeat, indicated his willingness to work with the Democrats. This spirit of democratic accommodation is particularly instructive for Nigeria, where elections are too often characterised by intimidation, distrust, litigation and avoidable bloodshed.

Indeed, the Nigerian electoral system has much to learn from the American experience. The most important lesson is that elections must reflect the genuine wishes of the electorate, not the influence of incumbency, political intimidation or financial inducements. Elections should be a competition of ideas, policies and credible candidates, with voters free to make their choices without fear or manipulation.

The recurring practice of distributing money and palliatives shortly before elections, for instance, raises serious questions about the sincerity of political leadership. Governance should be a continuous responsibility, not an emergency activity activated whenever politicians seek another mandate. Citizens should enjoy the dividends of democracy throughout an administration's tenure, rather than being treated to hurried gestures of generosity on the eve of an election.

Nigeria should also reconsider sequencing its elections. Consistently, conducting presidential elections first creates a bandwagon effect that can influence subsequent legislative and governorship contests. The experience of off-cycle elections suggests that voters can make different choices when political contests are separated from the overwhelming influence of a presidential election. A review of the sequence, including the possibility of holding all elections on the same day or adopting a staggered arrangement, deserves serious consideration. The overriding objective should be to strengthen voter independence and ensure that every election is determined by its own merits.

The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) must, meanwhile, intensify preparations and demonstrate that it can conduct credible, transparent and technologically secure elections. It is troubling that some political parties are still embroiled in litigation over their leadership and candidates. Such disputes, if unresolved before ballot production, could result in the cancellation or reprinting of ballot papers, with enormous financial and logistical implications. Political parties should put their houses in order, while the courts should accord time-sensitive electoral disputes the urgency they deserve.

The electoral commission must also strengthen the electronic transmission of results, ensure the integrity of its technological infrastructure and guard against manipulation, including the emerging risks associated with artificial intelligence and digitally fabricated information. Technology should make elections more transparent, not introduce new avenues for interference.

For the Democrats in America, the greater challenge begins after the celebration. Control of Congress is an opportunity to demonstrate that political victory can translate into better governance. They must address the economic anxieties, social divisions and institutional concerns that contributed to public dissatisfaction. They must also resist the temptation to turn legislative control into an instrument of partisan revenge. If they can offer constructive alternatives, rebuild public confidence and pursue policies that improve ordinary Americans' lives, they would have justified the mandate entrusted to them.

Ultimately, the American midterm elections reaffirm that no political leader or party is permanently entitled to the people's mandate. Democracy thrives when voters are empowered, institutions are independent and electoral outcomes are respected. The ballot must remain more powerful than money, incumbency and political intimidation. That is the foundation upon which a credible democracy and legitimate government can be built.

LETTER

How Kano redefines healthcare access for vulnerable

SIR In an era when access to affordable healthcare remains one of the greatest challenges facing millions of Nigerians, Kano State is emerging as a model of innovation, inclusion and political commitment through the ABBACARE Initiative, a pioneering state-led social health insurance programme designed to protect vulnerable populations from the devastating effects of healthcare costs.

Far more than a conventional health insurance scheme, ABBACARE represents a bold healthcare delivery innovation that places equity, access and financial protection at the centre of public policy. Implemented through the Kano State Contributory Healthcare Management Agency (KSCHMA), the initiative specifically targets vulnerable groups, including pregnant women, persons living with sickle cell disorder and emergency patients who have historically faced significant barriers to accessing quality healthcare.

The results are already remarkable. To date, ABBACARE has enrolled 28,721 beneficiaries and expanded service delivery to 13 hospitals spread across all senatorial zones of Kano State, ensuring that thousands of residents who might otherwise be excluded from healthcare can now access needed services without suffering financial hardship.

What makes ABBACARE particularly significant is that it demonstrates how sub-national governments can deploy social health insurance as a practical vehicle for accelerating Universal Health Coverage. The initiative aligns with national priorities on healthcare equity and primary healthcare revitalisation while operating within the existing legal framework governing health insurance in the state.

The success of ABBACARE does not stand alone. It is part of a broader healthcare transformation agenda being championed by Governor Abba Kabir Yusuf, whose administration has consistently demonstrated a commitment to people-centred healthcare reforms. Under his leadership, Kano has increasingly positioned health as a strategic investment in human capital development rather than merely a social service.

This vision is also reflected in the innovative Gida-Gida Lafiya Project, another groundbreaking intervention aimed at tackling the growing burden of hypertension and other non-communicable diseases. Through the procurement and distribution of customised digital blood pressure monitors, Kano State has empowered beneficiaries to monitor their health proactively, promoting early detection, improved self-management and timely health-seeking behaviour. The devices, customised to provide guidance in local languages, represent a practical example of technology being adapted to local realities and needs.

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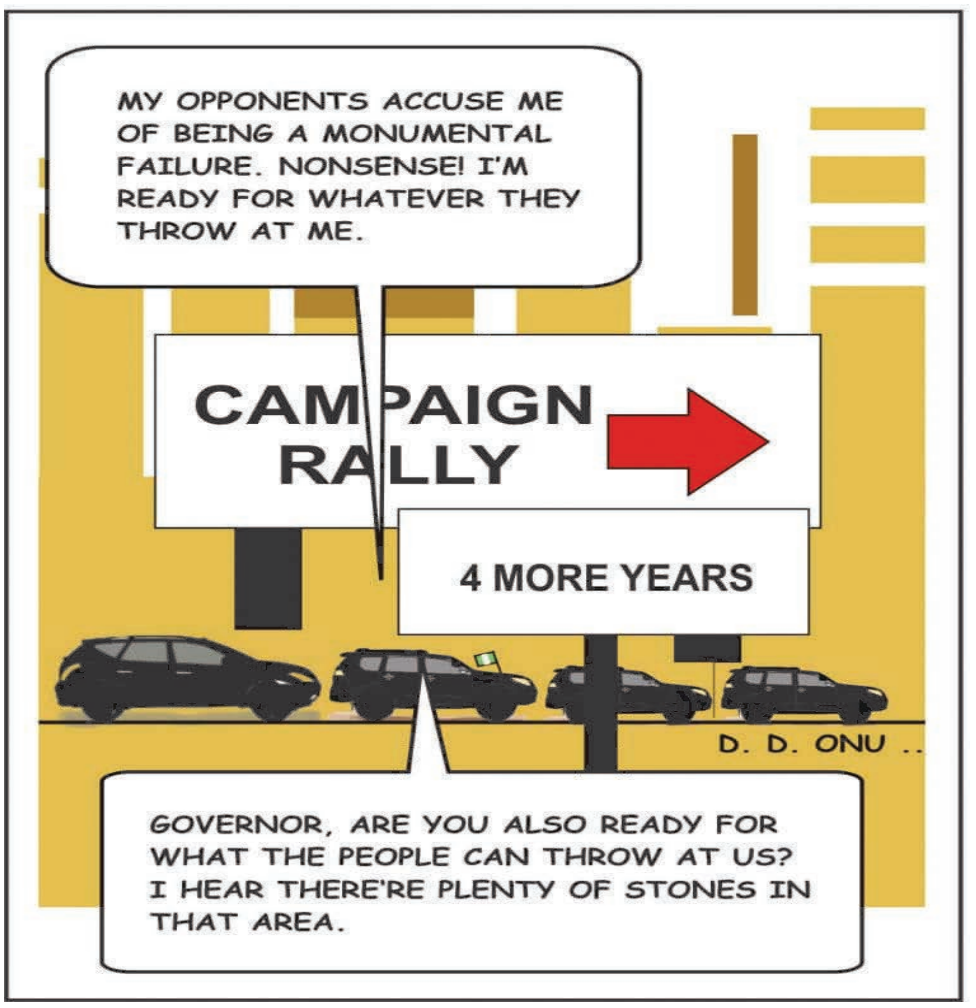

Opinion

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Presidential monologue (101): BAT, delusion trap and 2027 elections

By **Sylvester Odion Akhaine**

GREETINGS, Mr President. I am back from my two-month recess. I did not get the break I sought from cerebral exertions. Indeed, I was still neck-deep in it, delivering several lectures here and there as a public intellectual and an academic. Mr President, I want to bring you up to speed on my thoughts on events over the last two months. I relate to three main events: the Presidential Campaign Council (PCC), the apparent resentment of your policies and the quest for a second term by sections of the population, and the growing climate of intolerance among partisans of the three leading political parties in the build-up to the January polls.

First, the PCC should not have included the Minister of Defence and the Minister of Justice and Attorney-General of the Federation. Institutions of state need relative autonomy for public trust. Believe it or not, public trust is important for regime survival. The aforementioned public officers can still rally support for the party behind the scenes. Retired General Christopher Musa, the Minister of Defence, comes from a constituency with huge electoral value that you certainly need for electoral victory. But the social capital is better harnessed covertly. Prince Lateef Olasunkanmi Fagbemi, SAN, the Minister of Justice and Attorney-General of the Federation comes from your primary constituency, the South-West; he need not be in the PCC because there are enough foot soldiers to work in the zone. This error of judgment means two things: desperation for power and personalisation of power in a democratic administration. Hegemony is better built through astuteness and concrete popular policy output.

I now turn to the Delusion Trap. This phenomenon is my conception. It is a situation in which the population, not citizens, of a society is exposed to long betrayal and intense immiserisation by those who rule, not govern. Their discontentment builds up along a curve that reaches a climax under a particular regime; the latter becomes the bogeyman responsible for all that has happened to them and is therefore held accountable. Note that I did not use the word citizens because citizenship means the enjoyment of a certain irreducible cluster of freedoms and a corresponding extension of what David Easton calls support, in other words, obligations to the state. Note that I also use the word rule, not govern, because the latter means order and abidance by the rule of law. These are prohibitive currencies in the Nigerian political landscape.

The Fourth Republic began in May 1999 under the People's Democratic Party (PDP), a party that had boasted it would rule the country for 60 years or so. Under the party's watch, electricity supply was inefficient; the refinery was not working, and elite perfidy ran freely. To its credit, the party managed to take the country out of the debt loop at a cost. The party did not build an accountable regime; rather, it escalated the cost of governance, while governors became emperors at the subnational level, accountable to none but themselves.

Between 2015 and 2023, General Buhari ran this country. He succeeded to power but never really governed. His famous misquote "from top to bottom" became policy. Insecurity never abated; the oil subsidy became a monumental skullduggery. The section of the country where he came from never saw anything wrong with his maladministration.

His appointment of public officers was underlined by nepotism and neopatrimonialism. Fulani herdsmen shut down thriving farming communities with their indiscriminate killings and kidnapping for ransom, while the administration engaged in land grabbing to establish so-called cattle colonies for his kinsmen across the country, and was vehemently resisted in its several iterations. Activities in tertiary institutions were halted due to industrial actions by academic staff who had continuously demanded an increase in funding for education. The administration demonstrated a disdain for the judiciary, as underlined by Justice Walter Onnoghen's removal as Chief Justice of the federation. He never shirked the binge of loans from both Sukkuk and from the main actors in the development set, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. The nation's crude oil was used as collateral in some cases. By the time Buhari left office in 2023, discontentment with his administration was such that statecraft was required to clean up the mess he left for his successor. Things were in dire straits.

The manifestation of the crisis created by the Buhari administration is now to be ascribed to you, Mr President. In some sense, they may be right. You helped cobble APC together to upstage the Jonathan administration under the PDP. To cut the umbilical cord and deny paternity would be dishonest. The ingenuity ought to lie in remediating and distinguishing policies from the more clueless Buhari administration. But you missed it. The oil subsidy and the devaluation of the naira did not help matters. The oil subsidy is a mathematical fiction; it is a swindle. It requires surgery, but not without anesthesia. You should have been front-loaded with safety nets to cushion the effect while ensuring a minimum domestic refining capacity to stabilise the prices of petroleum products. While these policies have eaten into the purchasing power of the population, you have not, through personal example, cut the cost of governance.

The perception of the miserable population is one of "poor man dey suffer, monkey dey work, baboon dey chop". This is what has steeped you in the delusion trap and is seeking to undermine your second-term ambition. The population suffers from "intransitive consciousness", not comprehending causality in the skewed state structure that you are gradually addressing and could be swayed by bread and butter on the table to meet their biological needs.

Ahead of the January 2027 elections, this is my policy brief for you. Instruct all agencies under the executive to ensure a level playing field for the opposition parties.

As I have noted in this column, opposition is a tonic for democracy, and you exemplified that while you held forth in Lagos as governor. There is the perception that the present cycle of elections will be violent, and there is a death toll to boot. Do not play into the hands of the nation's bashers. Nigeria needs peace; a failed Nigeria is a failed Africa. Concentrate your energies in your catchment areas, South-West and Midwest; Vice President Shettima should man the North-East, especially Borno and Yobe. Reach out to the strongman of Taraba State, the respected Retired General Theophilus Danjuma; you will have at least 25 per cent of the votes.

The Middle-Belt, having been shortchanged by the skewed Nigerian federation, is exacting their autonomy. The re-federalisation policy is in their interest and should be drummed in, unless they want to be dominated in perpetuity. Let your minions sort the North-West. The unwritten principle of power rotation between the North and South in the polity must be respected. This should be a major message to the core north. Next, I shall advise you on a list of popular policies to undertake. Enjoy your day, Mr President.

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vPASS: A biometric gate cannot replace a governance compass

By **Chiwuike Uba**

EVERY few years, Nigeria discovers a new gadget and mistakes it for a new government. The latest is vPASS, the Airport Passenger Verification System unveiled on 16 November 2026 by the Minister of Aviation and Aerospace Development, Festus Keyamo. The Federal Airports Authority of Nigeria (FAAN) is implementing it with VERXID Technologies Limited. It will link passengers' National Identification Numbers (NIN) and dates of birth to facial and iris biometrics, with QR codes completing the handshake at designated access points and boarding gates. Passengers will register through a mobile application or airport kiosks, and foreign nationals travelling domestically will use their passports.

Scheduled domestic airlines have been directed to integrate with the platform by 31 December 2026. Those that fail will not be permitted to board passengers from 1 January 2027. Lagos and Abuja come first, and the rest of the country is expected to follow.

The stated objectives are stronger aviation security, an end to identity fraud, the defeat of ticket racketeering and touting, cleaner manifests and smoother operations. They are entirely respectable, and nobody sensible wants impostors boarding aircraft. But a policy is not wise merely because its goals are noble. The question is not whether Nigeria needs modern passenger identification. It does. The question is whether we have built the legal, institutional, financial and accountability scaffolding to carry it, or whether we are fitting a state-of-the-art lock to a door that has no frame.

The promise, and its limits

Let us give the technology its due. Biometric verification can reduce impersonation, tighten access to restricted areas, improve the accuracy of manifests and cut the drudgery of repetitive manual checks. Accurate passenger records matter for emergency response and security investigations. Reducing human discretion at critical access points could also shrink the space in which touts, informal payments and petty administrative abuses thrive.

These are real benefits. But technological sophistication is not institutional effectiveness. A biometric scanner is a very expensive mirror: it reflects the institution holding it, flaws included. Where supervision is weak, enforcement selective and accountability optional, a digital platform does not cure the disease. It merely moves the patient to a cleaner ward.

Consider the claim that vPASS will banish airport touting and ticket racketeering. Touting is not a software bug. It is the product of lax airport administration, poor enforcement, unaccountable staff and unmanaged access to facilities. Racketeering in tickets thrives where airline ticketing controls are porous, pricing is opaque and fraud goes unpunished. Does anyone seriously believe a tout will surrender his trade because an iris scanner has been installed? He will simply find the next gap, and there will be one, because we have a remarkable talent for leaving gaps.

Nigeria has a long habit of treating institutional failure as an app-shaped problem. Install the system, cut the ribbon, issue the press release, and the underlying rot is presumed to dissolve on contact with software. It never does. Technology should strengthen accountability, not serve as a costume that lets weak institutions pass for reformed ones.

When a gate becomes a wall

The most consequential feature of vPASS is not the technology but the compulsion behind it.

There is a world of difference between requiring airlines to verify who is boarding and requiring every citizen to enrol in one particular biometric platform as the price of a seat. The first is a legitimate security requirement. The second raises far wider questions about rights, State power and access to essential services.

The official position needs clarifying here. The Minister's directive expressly obliges airlines to integrate by 31 December. Yet other reports of the announcement suggest that passengers without valid NIN-linked registration could be denied boarding from 1 January. An airline integration deadline and an individual passenger's eligibility to travel are related, but they are not the same policy. Government and FAAN owe the public a precise statement of what passengers must do, and when alternative identification will be accepted.

Now consider the traveller who has bought a valid ticket, presented acceptable identification and met every existing airline requirement, but cannot complete registration. Perhaps the NIN does not match, the biometric capture fails or the platform is down. Should that citizen forfeit the journey?

What of the elderly, whose faces and fingerprints have been rearranged by time? What of persons with disabilities, or those whose biometrics resist reliable capture? What of the airport where the power flickers and the network sulks? Facial recognition systems misidentify legitimate users, and connectivity fails regardless of anyone's good intentions. The QR-code alternative offers some flexibility, but it does not cure a NIN mismatch or an unavailable platform.

These are not trivial inconveniences to be waved away as teething problems. They are foreseeable failures in an environment where digital infrastructure varies enormously from airport to airport. A passenger who misses a medical appointment, a funeral or a business deal because a server somewhere declined to recognise his face does not care that the technology was "world-class".

The remedy is simple. Before vPASS becomes compulsory, there must be a dependable alternative verification route, subject to proportionate security checks. No passenger should lose a flight, incur extra cost or suffer avoidable hardship solely because a government-approved platform has failed to recognise him. A system that cannot say "let us try another way" is not a security system. It is a turnstile with delusions of grandeur.

Your face, their database

Then there is the matter of data, where the stakes are highest. vPASS reportedly links NINs and dates of birth with facial and iris biometrics, and with verification and travel records. That is a rich concentration of the most intimate personal information a citizen possesses, gathered in one platform that spans the domestic aviation network. A leaked password can be changed. A compromised iris cannot be reissued. When biometric data escapes, the damage is permanent. You cannot exchange your face at the customer service desk.

Nigeria's Data Protection Act 2023 is the statutory guardian here, and it is not shy. Section 28 requires a data privacy impact assessment where processing is likely to pose high risks to the rights and freedoms of individuals. That assessment must weigh necessity and proportionality, identify the risks and specify the safeguards. If high risks remain, the Nigeria Data Protection Commission must be consulted before processing begins. Section 30 regulates sensitive personal data, expressly including biometric data used to identify individuals uniquely. Sections 39 and 40 address security, integrity, confidentiality and breach obligations.

Against this, we are offered the assurance by VERXID that the platform complies with applicable requirements. Forgive the scepticism, but in matters of public trust, "trust us" is not an audit. An assurance of compliance is not independently verifiable evidence of compliance. Citizens are entitled to ask a plain list of questions, and to receive plain answers.

Who is the data controller, and what responsibilities does FAAN retain? Where will biometric information be stored, and who may access it? What will the private partner collect, process or retain? For how long? Under what legal authority may it be shared with security agencies? What happens to the data when the concession ends? Has a comprehensive Data Protection Impact Assessment been conducted, independently reviewed and published in an appropriate form? Can a passenger challenge an inaccurate record, correct an error or obtain redress when his information is misused?

To be continued tomorrow.

Prof. Uba is an economist and public policy practitioner specialising in economic governance and public finance.

Opinion

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Nigeria and fuzzy political landscape

By **Ighodalo Clement Eromosele**

AHEAD of 2027 general elections, in particular the presidential election, the Nigerian political landscape is frenetic as political actors are embroiled in strategic maneuvers to outwit one another in the power game, characterised by outpouring of vituperations and threats. There is palpable fear that 2027 elections may be marked by violence as politicians express loss of confidence in the electoral processes and more disturbingly, on the judiciary.

The disclosure by INEC of infiltration of voter register by some criminal elements in its rank and file raises questions about sanctity of records and its readiness to conduct credible elections in 2027. The overarching question arising from the conduct of politicians is: to what end and of what benefit to ordinary citizens who daily face existential challenges from a very hostile economy characterised by unaffordability of basic necessities of life?

Regrettably the citizen who, in the instance, have the powers to decide the fate of politicians in free, fair and credible elections, are largely uninformed about their inalienable rights and responsibilities and, the nature and dimensions of the problems of Nigeria and who is best suited to deal with them amongst those seeking endorsement for service. They also do not know that the desperation by many politicians for their endorsement is not altruistic but to be prebendal on the Nigerian State.

Many are poor, indeed multi-dimensionally so, but sadly, the weapons the politicians deploy in tokenistic palliatives to them, in cash and kind, to demonstrate empathy and concern for their wellbeing. In all of this, there is an uncanny feeling that Nigeria is not working, on the wrong trajectory, in governance and leadership, to arouse hope in the citizens.

It is instructive to continually interrogate Nigeria's historical trajectory to appreciate the enormity of the headwinds confronting it and to evaluate the sincerity or otherwise of promises being bandied by politicians in their manifestoes and at rallies. The 1960 Independence Constitution and the 1963 Republican version were products of a settled agreement of the founding fathers to run a governance system anchored on the principle of federalism by which each region was autonomous to deal with subsidiary matters of local concern exclusive of the other regions cognizant of the plurality of its peoples in language, cultures, religions, values and idiosyncrasies.

The regional governments had tools to enforce laws in accordance with their status as government properly defined. The Independence National Anthem aptly captured the realities of Nigeria as a plural State. The regions were competitive in their development strides and priorities which were largely beneficial to citizens. However, not unexpected of a budding nation State, there were inter-party and intra-party conflicts exacerbated by underpinning domineering external influences and conspiracies evident in the Western region. Notwithstanding this development the verdict of history is that it could have been managed within the ambit of democratic principles and praxis without recourse to military intervention as it happened on January 15, 1966.

The series of military interregna, the 30-month civil war and the Constitutions – 1979 and 1999 - have combined to set Nigeria on a trajectory characterised by failure of leadership and of governance and attendant headwinds on the path of sustainable development amid huge resources, human and material.

Specifically, the Constitutions defined a new political order in centralized governance system with powers, resources and responsibility rolled to the Central government with very limited residual powers for the sub-nationals, the States. Even in matters on the concurrent legislative list of the Constitution, the Central government has an overriding power once it legislates on any of the items which de facto make it Unitary, in contradistinction to its declaratory provision in section 2(2), stating inter alia: "Nigeria shall be a Federation consisting of states and a Federal Capital Territory".

As expected the Constitution is crafted with rigorous provisions to forestall frivolous amendment. But even for justifiable matters it has been largely futile especially where the Central government is ill-disposed to such amendments. The fact of several attempts to amend the 1999 Constitution is a testament to the inherent flaws in it and of its perception as an albatross on the wheel of progress. In the circumstance, the compelling question is: Nigeria, *quo vadis*? This question is compelling because the 1979 or 1999 Constitution as grundnorm is the foundational structure of extant governance system and the source of systemic challenges and a fuzzy political landscape. Thus, advocates for a new Constitution, nay a federalist Constitution, to restore the spirit of our national consensus at Independence in 1960 are justified a posteriori on this ground.

It is discernible that beyond the twin economic reform policies on fuel subsidy removal and unification of foreign exchange market, President Bola Ahmed Tinubu is attempting some political reforms which require amendment of the extant Constitution. Although perceived as immaterial, the restoration of the Independence National Anthem was a pointer to the workings of his mind on federalism.

It is against this backdrop that the Electricity Act now operational and the on-going processes for amendment of the Constitution for creation of State police with the imprimatur of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu should be appreciated as a step in the right direction, albeit modicum. It is gratifying that all the States have assented to a constitutional amendment to decentralize the system of policing in Nigeria in line with the principles of federalism. Decentralisation of electricity supply chains is salutary because at the moment Nigeria is literally in darkness distributing about 2% (4000 MW) for a population of about 200 million people requiring not less than 200,000 MW. When will this be achieved if the electricity sector is not decentralised? Sustainable development of the economy in all ramifications is unarguably dependent on access to uninterrupted adequate power supply.

Admittedly, much more needs to be done to re-set Nigeria on the path of fiscal federalism to allay the fears and reservations on creation of State police and this includes devolution of many of the powers, resources and responsibilities of the Central government enshrined in the Exclusive Legislative List to States to ensure their fiscal viability. Clearly this is near impossible through piece-meal amendment of the 1999 Constitution as mentioned supra in which case it is equally compelling to ask President Tinubu as pertaining to his political reforms: quo vadis? Confronting the headwinds of systemic corruption and vested interest, national and international, in the status quo, is unquestionably a herculean task demanding an unswerving political will and determination from the President. The National Conference 2014 whose 899-page report was set aside by the administration of President Muhammadu Buhari should be revisited as template to fashion out a new Constitution. In it is contained well considered recommendation on every subject matter – constitutional and administrative - to reset Nigeria on the path of fiscal federalism.

As concerning economic reform, it is glaring that notwithstanding the successes at the macro-economy, the attendant experience at the micro-economic level is not salutary. The bulk of Nigerians are suffering. I can appreciate the parlous state of the economy by the Q1 of 2023 which Tinubu's administration inherited. Debt burden as at Q1 2023 was $108.30 billion (DMO) and net foreign reserve was about $4. The Buhari's government was demonstrably a failure. But as at June 30, 2026 total debt was $120.93 billion (DMO) under the present administration. Unofficially the figure has increased significantly raising concerns on the future of Nigeria and its capacity for repayment in the absence of infrastructure to stimulate economic growth and employment of teeming youth. It is delusional to think that there will be another debt cancellation in the future. Of more concern is that the economic burden of reform is disproportionately hard on the ordinary Nigerians. It is a hard sell, on one hand, to demand austerity and sacrifices from ordinary Nigerians while on the other hand, the political class, across levels of government live in palpable opulence, displaying obscene affluence with impunity.

It is befuddling that amid economic hardship confronting Nigerians, members of the political class ride exotic cars and Suvs in long convoys at public expense. The costs of vehicles are beyond the means of many Nigerians and, I dare say, even beyond the legitimate earnings of those who use them and give them as gifts. Effective mobilisation of Nigerians for hardship as aftermath of economic reform must be anchored on the principle of shared burden by all.

This was demonstrated in 1976 when General Olusegun Obasanjo made Peugeot 504 as official state car. On his second coming as President in 1999, he again demonstrated austerity through monetisation policy which de facto abolished official cars even for Ministers and allocation of official houses. But because his policies in this regard were administrative, they were reversed by succeeding administrations and the attendant high costs of governance at all levels.

Political parties have begun campaigns articulating the high points in their manifestoes. For the electorate there is no doubt that economic consideration will be a matter of priority in their choices of candidates in a free and fair elections at all levels as it happened in the USA mid-term elections. But would there be free and fair elections? The algebraic equation comprising two variables – subsidy removal and flotation of the Naira – which President Tinubu has attempted to solve has yielded a stable macro-economy and a micro-economy in a state of flux. The ordinary citizen who is hungry is not impressed by the elementary economics.

Understandably the ruling party is not taking chances, seen as the source of an un-mitigating hunger in the land. The opposition parties have expectedly made hunger and insecurity the thrust of their campaigns but none so far has touched the kernel of underpinning governance dysfunction rooted in the Constitution which must be addressed to set Nigeria free. I am persuaded that President Tinubu, to the extent of some political reforms is on course in the right direction. But given the uncertainties on the 2027 elections I am persuaded also to pray adopting excerpts from prayers of the Catholic Church as follows: *"Almighty and eternal God, You are Lord of all nations and the fountain of justice.—— Raise up for us leaders after Your own heart, who will pursue justice, secure peace, and advance the welfare of all, especially the poor and forgotten.——May your kingdom come and Your will be done in our land. We ask through Christ our Lord. Amen."*

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Tinubu and Soludo: The progressives working together

By **Chike Anyaonu**

IT is always an uphill task trying to convince someone who has bought into a fallacious story, but once an opportunity to present the true picture comes, it opens the eyes to the erroneous judgements already made.

Against the present bickering about, and aversion by some to, Soludo's ardent support for President Tinubu's re-election, one thing is manifest: Soludo's consistency establishes him as a man who is trustworthy and not given to wavering or shifting ground. He is very unlike the chameleonic politicians of today, who have a tendency to change with the tide, with compromises that project and expose their infamous character.

If the meaning of the name Soludo is "follow peace," then it goes without saying that "SoluTinubu" is "follow Tinubu." That is what APGA is presently signposting everywhere, showing massive support for PBAT ahead of the January 2027 presidential election. Nobody in this country can claim not to have noticed the dance step APGA is putting forward in the upcoming election, and it is intentional, strategic and decisive. There are genuine reasons for the support, looking at the entire scenario, even though to some people, Soludo is spoiling the chances of his brother Peter Obi, without asking what Obi has done in support of Soludo's political journeys.

Politics is all about interest, and that is what it is. Soludo's actions must be examined in the context of throwing your weight behind the person who protects your interest and wishes you well, not one who is planning your extinction. President Tinubu is that person who has demonstrated unflinching support for Soludo's All Progressives Grand Alliance (APGA). One wonders why the support of such a great friend in need, who not only professed it but also showed it in his deeds, must not be reciprocated. The chicken does not forget a good Samaritan who helped in tending its plumage in time of rain. Again, it is a common saying that when the right hand washes the left hand, the left also reciprocates by washing the right hand.

Past experiences point to Obi wanting to destroy APGA completely. Yet, this is the party through which he climbed to political prominence. Only a tree will remain unresponsive on seeing someone brandishing a machete approaching it. Obi, as it seems, had demonstrated one behaviour or another at every point to ensure that APGA is dead and buried. It sounds brutal, and that is what it has been.

The circumstances surrounding the debut of the party about 25 years ago might not be necessary at this point, except to acknowledge the fact that its practice of always aligning with the party at the centre has been so much etched on the hearts of the faithful of a party who see no other reason to deviate from that tradition.

After leaving APGA in October 2014, Obi started laying charges against his successor, Willie Obiano, at every slightest opportunity. Whatever the matter was, Obi considered it resolutely irreconcilable and attempted to bring down the roof over APGA. This was despite the public apology Obiano made to him at the congregation of Christ the King College (CKC), Onitsha Old Boys Association, during the burial of the late principal of the college, Rev. Father Nicholas Tagbo, in 2016.

Whoever justifies Obi's position must therefore also justify Soludo's defensive actions aimed at saving the life of his party, APGA. And I want to add here that while the battle rages, Soludo was just being defensive so that his party would not perish.

In 2017, Obi sponsored and supported Oseloka Obaze's governorship bid on the platform of the Peoples Democratic Party against Governor Willie Obiano's re-election bid. Obi repeated the same process when he backed Valentine Ozigbo against Professor Chukwuma Soludo in the Anambra State governorship election of 2021. Obi was also campaigning for George Muoghalu during the governorship election of November 2025.

None of these behaviours by Obi was hidden, and the aim was clear: to dislodge APGA's foothold in Anambra in favour of his preferred candidates and parties at those different times. One may ask, if Obi had succeeded with those plots, would APGA have been in existence today? The answer is obviously no. So why the noise by the uninformed for Obi to be spared while he continues with his adversity and onslaught against APGA? If Obi had succeeded in those outings, there would not have been an Obiano second term, there would not have been a Soludo governorship inaugurated in March 2022. Above all, there would not have been a Soludo second term in office in 2026.

Incidentally, Obi's repeated quests to take the state from APGA, rationalised as normal by his blind supporters, continued to meet defeat by APGA. For Soludo, it has to be a matter of defend your territory, while I defend my own. *Ebe onye bi ka ona awachi*!

Finding a partner worth courting despite his abysmal 2023 electoral showing in Anambra State, Tinubu persisted with good faith. He made concessions to the party in power in Anambra State. His investment in the state is strategic and mutually rewarding, and the results are already showing, given the level of support Tinubu is enjoying now in Anambra State, courtesy of the marriage of the progressives, APC and APGA.

It is all about interest, not emotion. Nobody must blame anybody for this development because every well thought-out investment has a payback time. It is a marriage that is worth supporting by the people of the state. The catchphrase of the Tinubu campaign in the state captures and summarises it all... SoluTinubu!

Anyaonu is the founding member, International Centre for Human Development and Rule of Law.

Finance&Economy

www.guardian.ng Monday, November 23, 2026 Guardian Nigeria GuardianNigeria 08136370421 Guardiannigeria

CRUDE OIL PRICE UPDATE Brent crude: $109.9 | WTI crude: $101.4 **FOREX MARKET UPDATE** I&E Window: N1,368.33

CBN, NNPCL partnership raises hope of stronger FX inflows

The formalised relationship between the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), the Federal Ministry of Finance and the Nigerian National Petroleum Company Limited (NNPCL) aims to strengthen oil revenue management, attract energy investment and position petroleum earnings as a stronger driver of economic stability, industrial growth and job creation, ***COLLINS OLAYINKA*** *writes.*

NIGERIA'S ability to translate its petroleum resources into sustainable economic gains has become increasingly important to efforts to stabilise the foreign exchange market, improve government revenues and attract investment into the energy sector.

Financial sector experts have repeatedly expressed concern over the tendency of critical government institutions to operate in silos, creating coordination gaps that undermine policy implementation and economic outcomes.

Against this backdrop, the formalisation of a partnership involving the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), the Federal Ministry of Finance and the Nigerian National Petroleum Company Limited (NNPCL) offers an opportunity to strengthen the relationship between monetary policy, petroleum revenue management and the broader economy.

The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), signed by the institutions in Abuja, establishes a framework for improving oil and gas revenue management, facilitating foreign exchange inflows, financing hydrocarbon assets and strengthening financial transactions within the petroleum industry.

Although the agreement is essentially an institutional collaboration, its economic implications extend to external reserves, fiscal stability, investment financing, industrial development and employment generation.

For an economy where petroleum remains a major source of export earnings and foreign exchange, the efficiency with which oil revenues are generated, repatriated and managed has significant implications for macroeconomic stability.

CBN Deputy Governor for Operations, Emem Usoro, described the agreement as an opportunity to establish a more structured and sustainable relationship between the institutions.

She said the collaboration would strengthen Nigeria's resilience to external economic shocks while supporting the preservation and improvement of external reserves through increased export earnings and foreign exchange inflows.

The objective comes against the backdrop of persistent foreign exchange challenges, compounded by fluctuations in crude oil prices, production disruptions and Nigeria's inability to maximise its petroleum export earnings.

One of the major objectives of the MoU is to improve the management and settlement of oil and gas proceeds.

CBN Governor, Olayemi Cardoso, said the petroleum industry remained central to Nigeria's external reserves, fiscal revenue and foreign exchange inflows.

He noted that the CBN, as custodian of NNPCL's key operational and foreign currency accounts, played an important role in ensuring the timely, secure and transparent settlement of petroleum proceeds into the Federation Account and other designated government accounts.

This has direct implications for public finance, given the dependence of federal, state and local governments on oil revenues to fund infrastructure, provide essential services and meet other financial obligations.

Delays or inefficiencies in remitting petroleum earnings can disrupt government cash flow management and budget implementation.

Cardoso said improved coordination in account management, fund transfers and liquidity support would contribute to macroeconomic stability by ensuring the availability of revenue for fiscal obligations and more predictable foreign exchange inflows.

For businesses, particularly manufacturers that depend on imported machinery, raw materials and intermediate goods, improved foreign exchange availability could reduce transaction uncertainty and support better investment planning.

However, the extent of these benefits will depend on the volume of additional foreign exchange generated and the efficiency with which petroleum earnings are managed.

Beyond financial coordination, the partnership highlights the importance of increasing crude oil production to improve Nigeria's export earnings and fiscal capacity.

NNPCL Group Chief Financial Officer, Adedapo Segun, said the company was committed to aligning its domestic payments, contractor settlements and foreign exchange conversion activities with CBN guidelines on the use of the naira in domestic transactions.

He said the collaboration would support NNPCL's ambition to increase crude oil production from 1.8 million barrels per day to three million barrels per day while unlocking the country's gas resources.

Achieving the target would significantly improve Nigeria's capacity to generate export revenue, provided production growth is sustained and supported by effective revenue administration.

However, higher output will require substantial investment in exploration, production infrastructure, pipeline security, field development and operational efficiency.

Crude oil theft, pipeline vandalism, underinvestment and production disruptions have historically constrained the country's ability to maximise its petroleum resources.

The MoU's emphasis on energy financing and hydrocarbon asset monetisation could help mobilise capital for projects that expand production and improve the commercial value of existing assets.

Another significant dimension of the agreement is its potential to strengthen investor confidence in the petroleum industry.

NNPCL Group Chief Operating Officer, Bayo Ojulari, said the partnership would create opportunities to deepen trade and foreign exchange inflows, mobilise capital for energy projects and improve the company's financial structures by leveraging its balance sheet and assets.

This is particularly important given the substantial capital requirements of Nigeria's oil and gas industry.

A more predictable financial relationship between the national oil company and the monetary authority could reduce uncertainty surrounding payments, foreign exchange transactions and the financing of petroleum operations.

For investors, institutional clarity, transparency and predictable financial arrangements are important considerations when committing capital to long-term, capital-intensive projects.

The framework also provides for cooperation in payment automation, digital innovation, cybersecurity, regulatory alignment, operational resilience and staff capacity development.

These initiatives could improve transaction efficiency, strengthen financial accountability and reduce operational risks across the petroleum value chain.

Beyond crude oil, the partnership's commitment to unlocking Nigeria's gas resources presents opportunities for industrial development and economic diversification.

Nigeria's substantial gas reserves remain underutilised relative to their potential contribution to electricity generation, manufacturing, fertiliser production and other industrial activities.

Increased investment in gas infrastructure, processing and distribution could improve domestic energy supply, reduce production costs and strengthen the competitiveness of local industries.

For manufacturers, reliable and affordable gas supply could reduce dependence on more expensive energy sources, improve operating efficiency and support the expansion of domestic production.

Gas development could also generate employment across exploration, processing, transportation, distribution and associated services.

Consequently, the partnership's success should be measured not only by improvements in foreign exchange inflows but also by its contribution to energy security, industrial capacity and job creation.

Despite its potential, the agreement's ultimate contribution will depend on the effectiveness of its implementation.

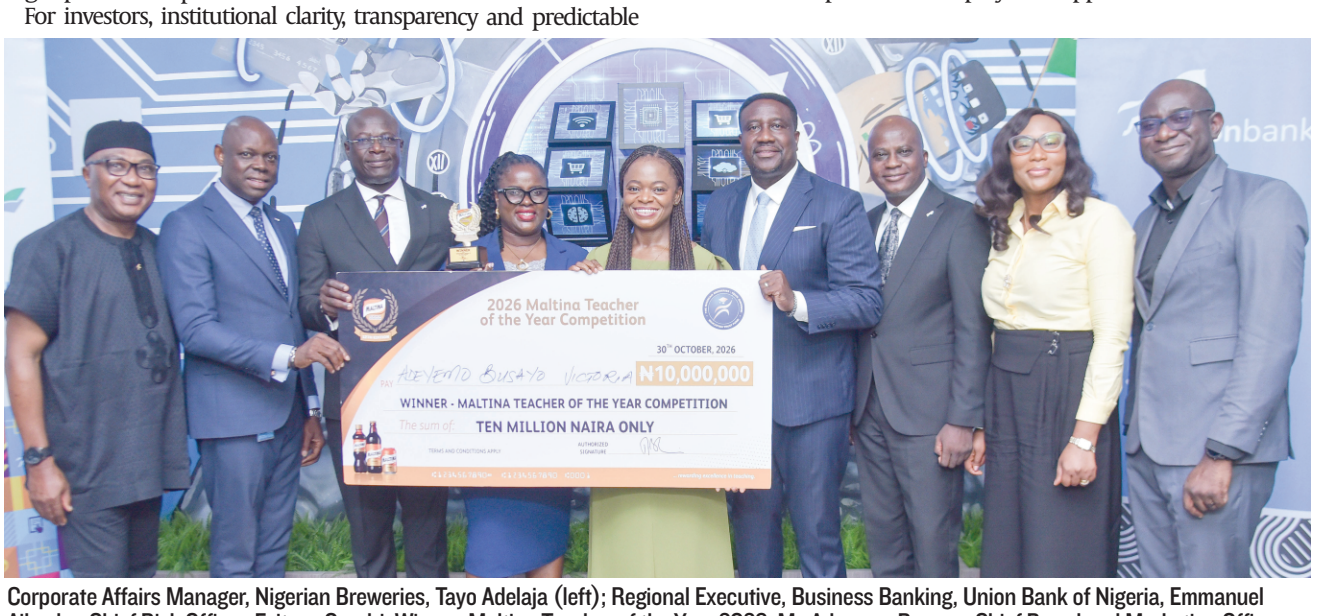
Ojulari said joint steering and working committees, co-chaired by representatives of both institutions, would monitor implementation through defined performance indicators.

He emphasised that the partnership was designed to deliver measurable outcomes rather than remain a ceremonial agreement.

This makes accountability particularly important. The institutions must translate their commitments into verifiable improvements in petroleum revenue collection, export proceeds repatriation, foreign exchange inflows, payment efficiency and investment mobilisation.

Progress towards the three-million-barrel production target and the development of commercially viable gas projects will also be important indicators of success.

Equally important is ensuring that increased petroleum earnings translate into stronger public revenues, productive investment, infrastructure development and employment opportunities.



Corporate Affairs Manager, Nigerian Breweries, Tayo Adelaja (left); Regional Executive, Business Banking, Union Bank of Nigeria, Emmanuel Aihevba; Chief Risk Officer, Eyitayo Quadri; Winner, Maltina Teacher of the Year 2026, Ms Adeyemo Busayo; Chief Brand and Marketing Officer, Union Bank of Nigeria, Mrs Olufunmilola Aluko; Head Corporate Banking, Ali Kadiri; Head Retail Operations, Sola Aliu; Legal Services Manager, Mrs Jennifer Halim-Ubahakwe and Sustainability and CSR Manager, Nigerian Breweries, Oluseye Olokun during the courtesy visit of the Nigerian Breweries delegation and the 2026 Maltina Teacher of the Year winner to the Union Bank Head Office, Stallion Plaza, Marina, Lagos.

Banks' rising exposure to govt debt creates $4tr credit gap for SMEs, says World Bank

By **Isaac Chibuife**

SMALL businesses in developing economies face a $4 trillion credit gap as banks increase their exposure to government debt, limiting funds available for private sector lending, the World Bank has said.

The bank, in its Finance and Prosperity 2026 report, said commercial banks in emerging market and developing economies (EMDEs) hold sovereign debt equivalent to a median of 15 per cent of their total assets. In the 10 per cent of banking systems with the highest exposure, government securities account for more than 28 per cent of assets.

It warned that heavy exposure to government debt could constrain banks' capacity to extend credit to businesses, particularly micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs), which already struggle to access financing.

The report estimated that the credit gap for formal MSMEs stood at $4 trillion in 2023, equivalent to about 11 per cent of the combined gross domestic product of EMDEs and 72 per cent of their estimated potential demand for credit. It noted that the financing shortfall had persisted despite decades of policy interventions aimed at improving access to credit for smaller businesses.

MSMEs account for between 80 and 90 per cent of employment in low-income and lower-middle-income economies, making their access to finance important for job creation and economic growth.

According to the World Bank, obtaining a formal loan increases a firm's employment by an average of 12 per cent, while boosting sales and profits by about 18 per cent.

The financing challenge also extends to equity investment, with formal MSMEs facing an annual equity gap of at least $1.4 trillion between 2022 and 2024. Nearly 96 per cent of businesses that could benefit from equity financing lack access to it.

The report said venture capital investment in middle-income economies remained low at 0.02 per cent of GDP, compared with 0.18 per cent in high-income economies, further limiting the ability of smaller firms to raise long-term capital.

It also warned that smaller businesses face growing debt risks, with 47 per cent of debt owed by firms employing fewer than 1,000 workers classified as being at risk.

In Sub-Saharan Africa, the bank identified debt vulnerabilities, the close relationship between banks and sovereign borrowers, and high levels of non-performing loans as major threats to financial stability.

It listed Angola, Burkina Faso, Ghana, Guinea and South Africa among countries whose banking systems have significant exposure to government securities. Ghana's recent debt restructuring was cited as an example of the risks associated with the relationship between government borrowing and bank balance sheets.

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Central Bank, NIBSS seek stronger cyber safeguards as AI raises risks

By **Helen Oji**

THE Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) and the Nigeria Inter-Bank Settlement System (NIBSS) have called for stronger cybersecurity safeguards across the financial services industry, warning that the growing adoption of artificial intelligence (AI) and digital payment platforms is exposing institutions to increasingly sophisticated cyber threats.

The stakeholders, who spoke at the 2026 Cybersecurity Conference of the Information Security Society of Africa-Nigeria (ISSAN) in Lagos yesterday, said financial institutions must balance technological innovation with effective risk management, resilience and accountability.

Speaking on the theme, 'Cybersecurity: Balancing Risk, Resilience and Responsibility in the AI Era', the Director, Payments System Supervision Department of the CBN, Dr Rakiya Yusuf, represented by the department's Deputy Director, Chika Ugwueze, said artificial intelligence was creating significant opportunities for the financial system but also introducing new security risks that required stronger controls.

She noted that AI was increasingly being deployed to improve fraud detection, customer service and operational efficiency, but warned that cybercriminals could exploit the same technology to develop more sophisticated attacks.

According to her, traditional cybersecurity measures, including firewalls and antivirus solutions, are no longer sufficient to address the growing complexity of cyber threats.

She said financial institutions must adopt a broader approach to cybersecurity by integrating it into their operations, technology infrastructure and overall risk management frameworks.

Yusuf said cybersecurity should no longer be treated as the sole responsibility of technology departments but as a business risk requiring the attention of institutional leadership and boards.

She urged financial institutions to protect sensitive data, test AI systems before deployment, maintain human accountability and secure the entire AI supply chain.

She also warned against granting AI systems access to sensitive information and critical operations beyond what institutions could safely manage.

The CBN director said the financial system must ensure that AI adoption did not undermine public confidence in payment services, savings, credit and other financial products.

She urged stakeholders to strengthen their capacity to assess, test and monitor emerging technologies while ensuring that innovation did not compromise security, resilience and accountability.

Also speaking, the Managing Director/Chief Executive Officer of NIBSS, Premier Oiwoh, represented by the Chief Information Security Officer, Olusola Odediran, said financial institutions must carefully manage the risks associated with integrating AI into their operations.

Insurers urged to look beyond recapitalisation

By **Bankole Orimisan**

THE Managing Director/Chief Executive Officer of Continental Reinsurance Plc, Dr Fatai Kayode Lawal, has urged insurance companies to look beyond regulatory capital requirements and embrace innovation, operational efficiency, sound corporate governance and sustainable business models to unlock the industry's growth potential.

Lawal, who spoke at a webinar organised by the Chartered Institute of Directors Nigeria's Insurance Sectoral Group on November 20, 2026, said the recapitalisation exercise should serve as a foundation for transforming the industry rather than an achievement for operators to celebrate in isolation.

Speaking on the theme, 'Post-Recapitalisation and the Future of Insurance in Nigeria: Opportunities, Risks and Readiness', he noted that although the exercise had strengthened insurers' financial capacity and resilience, the real test would be their ability to deploy the additional capital effectively to underwrite bigger risks, improve service delivery and contribute more meaningfully to economic development.

His position reflects a major challenge confronting the Nigerian insurance industry, where increased capitalisation must now translate into stronger technical capacity, better risk management, improved claims settlement and wider insurance coverage.

According to him, the post-recapitalisation environment presents opportunities for insurers to expand their participation in infrastructure, energy, agriculture, digital insurance, microinsurance, Takaful and Retakaful, while improving local risk retention and positioning Nigerian operators for regional expansion.



Chairman of the Awards Decision Council, Nigerian Marketing Awards 2026, Iquo Ukoh (left); Group Managing Director, SO&U, and recipient of the Marketing Icon Award, Udeme Ufot and Founder, Nigerian Marketing Awards, Anthony Agenmonmen, at the 2026 Nigerian Marketing Awards themed 'Reimagine Marketing', held in Lagos.

NAICOM seeks customer-focused insurance industry

By **Bankole Orimisan**

THE National Insurance Commission (NAICOM) has challenged insurance operators to translate the gains of the recapitalisation exercise into improved customer service, innovative products and wider market penetration, warning that stronger capital bases alone would not guarantee the industry's growth and competitiveness.

The Commissioner for Insurance, Olusegun Omosehin, gave the charge at the fifth edition of Insurance Meets Tech (IMT 5.0), held at the weekend in Lagos. He urged operators to make technology and customer satisfaction central to the next phase of industry transformation.

Omosehin, who was represented by the Deputy Commissioner for Insurance, Administration and Finance, Ekerete Ola Gam-Ikon, said the success of the recapitalisation exercise should be measured by its impact on institutional capacity, product innovation, service delivery and the protection of policyholders, rather than simply the volume of capital raised.

He said the exercise had provided an opportunity to build financially stronger insurance companies capable of underwriting bigger risks, supporting national development and extending protection to more Nigerians.

"Capital is important, but capital without innovation is dormant," he said, urging operators to convert their improved financial capacity into stronger institutional capabilities and competitiveness.

Speaking on the theme, 'Building Insurance that Connects', the commissioner identified technological disruption, changing consumer expectations, demographic shifts and emerging risks as factors reshaping the global financial services industry.

He said insurers that hoped to remain competitive must embrace innovation, invest in digital infrastructure and place customers at the centre of their business strategies.

Omosehin listed digital onboarding, embedded insurance, artificial intelligence, predictive analytics, automation and advanced risk modelling as technologies creating opportunities to improve operations across the insurance value chain.

However, he cautioned that technology investments must address practical challenges facing policyholders rather than become an end in themselves.

According to him, the real benefits of digital transformation should be reflected in simpler insurance processes, faster claims settlement, wider accessibility, reduced service bottlenecks and improved public confidence.

"The destination remains the customer," he said, stressing that technology would only deliver meaningful value when it made insurance easier to understand, purchase and access.

RSA holders rise by 352,061 in eight months

By **Bankole Orimisan**

NIGERIA'S pension fund assets increased by N4.34 trillion in the first eight months of 2026, reaching N31.8 trillion in August from N27.46 trillion recorded at the end of December 2025, while the number of registered Retirement Savings Account (RSA) holders rose to 11.39 million.

The growth represents a 15.8 per cent increase in pension assets, with 352,061 new RSA accounts registered between January and August, reflecting the continued expansion of the Contributory Pension Scheme (CPS).

However, the growing asset base has heightened expectations on Pension Fund Administrators (PFAs) to improve investment performance, diversify their portfolios and ensure that the increasing pool of retirement savings delivers better returns for contributors and retirees.

Speaking during a virtual press conference with journalists yesterday, the Executive Secretary/Chief Executive Officer of the Pension Fund Operators Association of Nigeria (PenOp), Anthonia Ifeanyi-Okoro, said the development reinforced the importance of pension funds as a major source of long-term capital for the Nigerian economy.

Ifeanyi-Okoro said the next phase of growth should focus on translating the expanding asset base into sustainable investment returns while ensuring the protection of contributors' retirement savings.

UBA assets rise to N34.96tr, operating income up 12.7%

By **Helen Oji**

UNITED Bank for Africa (UBA) Plc strengthened its balance sheet in the nine months ended September 30, 2026, with total assets rising to N34.96 trillion and customer deposits increasing to N24.6 trillion, while operating income grew by 12.7 per cent to N1.67 trillion.

The bank's performance was supported by a growing deposit base, lower interest expenses and increased income from fees, commissions and foreign exchange transactions, according to its unaudited consolidated financial statements for the period.

Gross earnings rose to N2.54 trillion from N2.47 trillion recorded in the corresponding period of 2025, while profit after tax stood at N401.6 billion.

Despite the profit recorded during the period, the bank made impairment charges of N272.12 billion as part of measures to strengthen its balance sheet against potential credit risks.

A breakdown of the results showed that UBA's net interest income increased to N1.19 trillion, supported by a reduction in interest expenses to N738.98 billion from N820.22 billion in the corresponding period last year.

The bank also recorded significant growth in non-interest income, which rose by 48.8 per cent to N477.25 billion from N320.83 billion.

This was driven largely by a 271.8 per cent increase in net trading and foreign exchange income to N153.76 billion, while net fee and commission income grew by 10.2 per cent to N270.73 billion.

The bank also recovered N74.85 billion from previously written-off loans, representing a 48.4 per cent increase over the N50.42 billion recovered in the corresponding period of 2025.

On the balance sheet, customer deposits increased to N24.60 trillion from N23.07 trillion at the end of December 2025, reflecting continued growth in its deposit base.

Cash and bank balances also rose to N9.68 trillion, while shareholders' funds strengthened, with total equity increasing to N4.39 trillion. Retained earnings grew by 23 per cent to N1.56 trillion.

The bank's third-quarter performance also showed an improvement in profitability. Profit attributable to owners of the parent company for the three months ended September 30, 2026, rose to N381.08 billion from N189.88 billion in the corresponding quarter of 2025.

Basic and diluted earnings per share for the quarter increased to N8.62 from N5.02 recorded in the same period last year.

Commenting on the results, UBA's Group Managing Director/Chief Executive Officer, Oliver Alawuba, said the performance reflected the strength of the bank's diversified business model and disciplined balance sheet management.

He said: "Our nine-month performance and strong third-quarter rebound underscore the resilience of our core banking franchise across Africa and globally. By growing our deposit base to N24.6 trillion, optimising funding costs, and taking prudent steps to fortify our balance sheet, we have positioned UBA to deliver sustainable long-term value for our shareholders."

BEYOND THE BRUSH

Noella Foundation Empowering Young Adults with Vocational Skills Programme

FACILITATOR SPOTLIGHT: TENNYCOCO



TennyCoco demonstrating her makeup techniques during the hands-on practical session with a model.

A practical skill can be the starting point for a career, a business and a source of economic independence. But turning that skill into a sustainable livelihood requires more than technical ability. It takes industry knowledge, professional discipline, business understanding and access to people who can share their experience.

This is the thought process behind Noella Foundation's Empowering Young Adults with Vocational Skills Programme, which equips young Nigerians with practical, industry-relevant skills and insights into building careers and businesses across different sectors.

Since its introduction in 2024, the programme has provided opportunities for young people to learn directly from experienced professionals across the creative and digital industries. The first edition brought together over 100 participants for practical training in event planning, makeup artistry and hairstyling, with sessions facilitated by Zapphaire Events, TennyCoco Studio and Hair by Adefunke.

In 2025, the second edition expanded into digital marketing, photography and visual storytelling, with Redrick PR and Felix Crown Photography supporting the delivery of training to 100 young people.

The third edition, held on 28 October 2026, further broadened the programme's scope to four areas: Photography, Makeup Artistry, Events Management and Content Creation. Through practical instruction and engagement with industry professionals, participants gained exposure to the skills, standards and opportunities associated with their chosen fields.

Among the facilitators was Mrs Teniola Chigbata, professionally known as TennyCoco, a Nigerian professional makeup artist, beauty entrepreneur and educator with over a decade of experience in the industry.

Her journey offers a useful perspective on what it takes to develop a skill into a profession and build a business within the beauty industry.

From a School Dormitory to a Professional Beauty Brand

TennyCoco's introduction to makeup artistry began during her school years. What started as an interest in experimenting with makeup gradually developed into a serious pursuit. She practised on friends, transforming her dormitory room into a makeshift studio where she could refine her techniques and develop her understanding of the craft.

Over time, that early interest grew into a professional career spanning private clientele, destination assignments and beauty education, with experience in Nigeria and internationally.

Her progression illustrates an important lesson for aspiring creatives: a successful career does not necessarily begin with significant resources or a fully established business. It can begin with curiosity, the willingness to practise and a commitment to

Beyond the Craft: Understanding the Business of Beauty

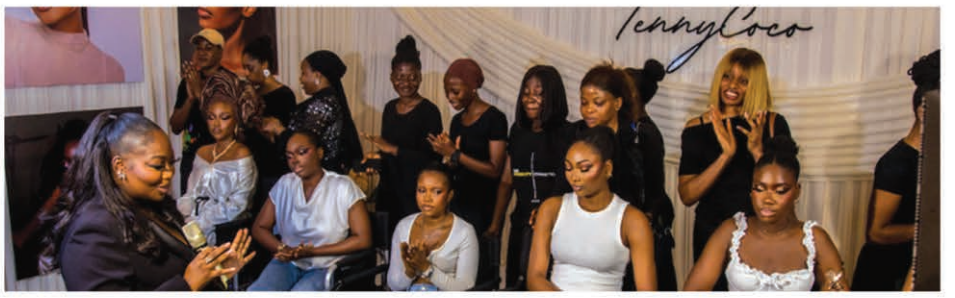
For TennyCoco, becoming a successful makeup artist involves much more than mastering application techniques. Professionalism, consistency and the quality of the client experience are equally important.

Clear communication, adequate preparation, punctuality, reliability and the ability to manage client expectations all contribute to building trust. These practices can distinguish a professional service provider, encourage repeat business and generate referrals.

She also highlights the breadth of opportunities available within the beauty industry. While bridal and occasion makeup remain established areas of practice, artists can explore fashion, editorial, film, television, content creation, beauty education, brand partnerships and product development.



Group photography from Day 1 of the physical training, with TennyCoco, Noella Foundation's representative and the Students



Students showcasing their practical work with their models, demonstrating the skills and techniques acquired during the training.

This broader perspective is particularly important for young people entering the industry. Developing a skill provides an entry point, but understanding how to market services, manage clients, maintain professional standards and identify opportunities is what helps turn that skill into a viable business.

Taking Industry Experience into the Classroom

The Foundation's partnership with TennyCoco brings this understanding into its vocational training programme, connecting participants with someone who has navigated the practical and commercial demands of the beauty industry.

For the 2026 edition, the Makeup Artistry segment of the programme was delivered as a specialised Masterclass for 30 participants, all of whom completed the training and assigned practical tasks. The programme comprised two virtual sessions and two in-person practical classes, combining guided instruction with opportunities to apply the skills they had learnt.

Beyond makeup application, the sessions addressed professional standards, personal branding, client management and the business considerations involved in establishing a sustainable makeup practice.

Staying Relevant in an Evolving Industry

TennyCoco emphasises the importance of continuous learning and research in keeping pace with these changes. Artists must remain open to improving their techniques, understanding new products and adapting their services to meet evolving market demands.

At the same time, following trends should not come at the expense of developing a recognisable professional identity. Understanding one's strengths and building a portfolio that reflects those strengths are important steps towards establishing credibility and attracting the right clientele.

Advice for Aspiring Makeup Artists

For those considering a career in makeup artistry, TennyCoco's advice is to begin with the resources available and commit to consistent practice. She also stresses that professional conduct should be established from the beginning. Communicating clearly, arriving on time, managing expectations and honouring commitments are essential to building a reputation that clients can trust.

Creating Opportunities Through Vocational Skills Development

At Noella Foundation, the Empowering Young Adults with Vocational Skills Programme is part of a broader commitment to improving access to practical learning, supporting youth employability and encouraging entrepreneurship.

Across its three editions, the initiative has continued to introduce young people to different areas of the creative and digital economy, while creating opportunities for them to learn from professionals with direct industry experience.

The involvement of facilitators such as TennyCoco adds an important dimension to this work. By sharing not only technical knowledge but also the lessons gained from building a career and navigating an industry, experienced professionals can help young people develop a more realistic understanding of the opportunities and responsibilities that come with pursuing a vocation.



End-of-training group photograph featuring Tennycoco, NF representatives and the the students

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ADMISSION ON GOING FOR 2026/2027 ACADEMIC YEAR

PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT

ABIA STATE GOVERNMENT

Office of the Honourable Commissioner, Ministry of Lands, Umuahia

Internal Memo

Date: 18th November, 2026

PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT FOR ENUMERATION AT ISIALA ARONGWA IN OSISIOMA NGWA L. G. A. IN RESPECT OF LAND ACQUISITION FOR ABA COMMERCIAL SMART CITY

The general public is hereby informed, particularly all individuals or group of persons who have any form of interest in the parcel of land traditionally known as Ala Isialangwa Ibeku Isialangwa Arungwa and Amazu Umuovo communities Osisioma LGA Abia state Nigeria contained in a 3 parcels of land, portions A, B and C measuring approximately 107.292, 12.544, and 20.077 hectares cumulatively 139.913 hectares shown on a preliminary survey plan ABA (AB) 628, affected by the government acquisition, for overriding public interest, particularly for Aba Commercial Smart City, are by this announcement informed and advised to come to the Ministry of Lands, Umuahia with their Passport Photograph, I.D. Card and other relevant documents and complete their indemnity certificate for onward payment of their compensation as follows:

- **Date:** Commencing on Wednesday, 18th November, 2026
- **Venue:** The site along Enugu-Port Harcourt Expressway, Osisioma Ngwa L. G. A.

Anybody that has sold his portion of land has no right to claim compensation as government will not take it kindly with anyone who falsifies claim.

ESV MONG N. UDUMA
State Director (Lands)
For: Hon. Commissioner.

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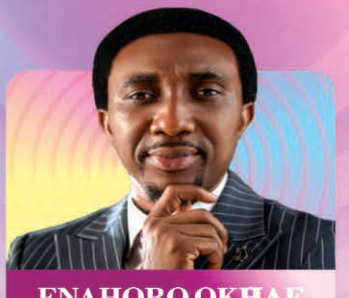

ENAHORO OKHAE
CEO,
GIG MOBILITY (GIGM)



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THURSDAY, 26TH NOVEMBER, 2026

SCAN TO INDICATE INTEREST

10AM

Request for Expression of Interest (REOI)

EIB Assisted Nigeria Climate Adaptation-Erosion & Watershed Project (NEWMAP-EIB)

CONSULTANCY SERVICES UNDER THE NIGERIA CLIMATE ADAPTATION –EROSION AND WATERSHED PROJECT (NEWMAP-EIB)OGUN STATE PROJECT MANAGEMENT / IMPLEMENTATION UNIT

Reference No.: OGNEWMAP-EIB/CS/RP/2026/006
Date: 23rd November, 2026
Project: Consultancy Services for Focal NGO to support Project Implementation Activities for Six (6) Gully Erosion Priority Sites in Ogun State
Client/Procuring Entity: Ogun State NEWMAP-EIB

The Federal Government of Nigeria (FGN), through the Federal Ministry of Environment (FMEnv.) has received a credit from the European Investment Bank (EIB) towards the cost of Nigeria Climate Adaptation Erosion and Watershed Project – EIB (NEWMAP-EIB). Ogun State is a beneficiary of the Credit and now intends to apply part of the proceeds of this credit to payments under the contract for engagement ofConsultancy Services of Focal Non-Governmental Organization to support project implementation activities at the Gully Erosion Priority Sites in Ogun State.

Accordingly, the Ogun State SPIU invites qualified, experienced and reputable consulting firms, consulting organizations, consortia and/or joint ventures to Express their Interest in providing the consultancy services described under the Lots below;

SCOPE OF SERVICES

DESCRIPTION OF CONSULTANCY SERVICES
Engagement of Focal Non-Governmental Organization to support project Implementation activities at the Gully Erosion priority Sites: 1. Olorunsogo Gully Erosion, Ijebu-Ode, 2. Makalewo Gully Erosion, Ijebu-Ode, 3. Ojumele Isote Gully Erosion, Sagamu, 4. Isakale Gully Erosion, Ijako, Ota, 5. Ilodo Gully Erosion, Ilaro, Igbore-Robiyan Comm. High Sch. Gully Erosion, Ifo LGA

2. Interested consulting firms must demonstrate relevant institutional experience, technical capacity and availability of qualified multidisciplinary personnel. The following criteria shall apply, as relevant to the firm expresses interest.

- At least five (5) years relevant general experience in environmental, water resources, catchment, watershed, erosion-control, climate-resilience or related consulting services.
- Specific and successful experience in catchment/watershed management planning and integrated water resources management.
- Successful experience in erosion and flood-risk assessment and hydrological assessment/modelling.
- Successful experience in GIS/remote sensing and spatial watershed analysis.
- Successful experience in environmental and social assessment, participatory community planning and climate-risk assessment.
- Experience in investment planning and development partner-financed projects.
- Experience in the World Bank, EIB, IsDB, AfDB or comparable development-partner projects shall be advantageous.

3.SHORTLISTING / MINIMUM QUALIFICATION CRITERIA
Interested consultants/firms are to submit an Expression of Interest containing below **Mandatory** requirement:

- Evidence of Company's registration with the Corporate Affairs Commission (CAC) or equivalent in the country of incorporation.
- Evidence of the company's current Tax Clearance Certificate for the last three (3) years (2023,2024 and 2025)
- Company's audited account for the last three years (2023, 2024 and 2025) duly stamped.
- Evidence of Registration with State Bureau of Public Procurement (BPP) 2026 or equivalent at national level or in the country of incorporation.
- Well detailed company profile with managerial and technical structure, office address and functional contact details including staff list with functions and years of experience and years with firm.
- For joint ventures, a draft memorandum of understanding must be attached.
- Evidence of experience as required for the qualification criteria for the assignment under consideration inclusive of Client contact details
- The attention of interested consultants(s) is drawn to section I sub-section 1.5 of Guide to procurement for projects financed by EIB September 2024, setting forth the bank's policy on conflict of interest.
- Following the shortlisting of qualified consultants based on the information submitted in response to this REOI, the shortlisted consultants will be invited to submit a technical and financial proposal in the next stage and subsequently evaluated and the successful consultant selected in accordance with the **Consultant Qualification Selection (CQS)** method set out in the applicable procurement regulations.
- Request for proposal will be issued to the shortlisted applicant.
- Interested eligible consulting firms may obtain further information from the State Project Coordinator (SPC) Ogun State NEWMAP-EIB, State Project Implementation Unit (SPIU) during office working days/hours from 0900 to 1600 at the address stated below.

The attention of interested consultants(s) is drawn to section I sub-section 1.5 of Guide to procurement for projects financed by EIB September 2024, setting forth the bank's policy on conflict of interest

Following the shortlisting of qualified consultants based on the information submitted in response to this REOI, the shortlisted consultants will be invited to submit a technical and financial proposal in the next stage and subsequently evaluated and the successful consultant selected in accordance with the **Consultant Qualification Selection (CQS)** method set out in the applicable procurement regulations
Request for proposal will be issued to the shortlisted applicant.
Interested eligible consulting firms may obtain further information from the State Project Coordinator (SPC) Ogun State NEWMAP-EIB, State Project Implementation Unit (SPIU) during office working days/hours from 0900 to 1600 at the address stated below:

Office Address:
Address for submission and Opening of Tenders.
Ogun Nigeria Climate Adaptation-Erosion & Watershed ProjectEIB Assisted (OGNEWMAP-EIB)
Contact Address: **Floor 2 Moyo House, MTD, Ibara, Abeokuta.**
Contact Email Address:
ogunnewmapeibproc@gmail.com**cc:**ogunstatenewmapeib@gmail.com
Phone Number: +234 9137144620
Invitation to Tender (ITT) No.: OGNEWMAP-EIB/CS/RP/2026/006

4. SUBMISSION OF EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST
Expressions of Interest should be clearly marked with the title and submitted to:
The State Project Coordinator,
Ogun State NEWMAP-EIB
NEWMAP-EIB Office, Floor 2 Moyo House, MTD-Ibara, Abeokuta, Ogun State.
Email: ogunnewmapeibproc@gmail.com, **cc:** ogunstatenewmapeib@gmail.com
Closing Date:15th December, 2026
Closing Time: 11.00am

Only shortlisted consultants/firms will be invited.

Signed
Project Procurement Officer

EDO STATE UNIVERSITY, IYAMHO

Km7, Auchi-Abuja Road, Iyamho-Uzairue,
Edo State, Nigeria

8TH CONVOCATION CEREMONY
PROGRAMME OF ACTIVITIES

The Vice-Chancellor, **Professor Victor O. Adetimirin, FNPBA**, on behalf of the Governing Council, Senate, Management, Staff and Students of Edo State University, Iyamho, hereby announces the University's **8th Convocation Ceremony**, holding on **Saturday, 28th November 2026, at 11:00 a.m.**at the **Aliko Dangote Auditorium**. The ceremony features the award of postgraduate degrees, postgraduate diplomas, first degrees and prizes.

PROGRAMME OF ACTIVITIES

Sunday, 22nd November, 2026

7:00 a.m. Thanksgiving Service; St Joseph Catholic Church, Iyamho.

Monday, 23rd November, 2026

10:00 a.m. Vice-Chancellor's Press Briefing, University Senate Chambers.

Tuesday, 24th November, 2026

10:00 a.m. Flag-off of Two-Day Free Medical Outreach (24th–25th November).

Wednesday, 25th November, 2026

3:00 p.m. Novelty Football Match: (i) University Staff versus Auchi Coaches; (ii) Female Academic Staff versus Female Non-Academic Staff.

Thursday, 26th November, 2026

2:00 p.m. Convocation Lecture: "That Nigeria's Higher Education System May Fulfil Its Purpose". **Lecturer:**Professor Labode Popoola, Ph.D., FFAN. **Distinguished Guest:**Professor Andrew Haruna, FNAL, FLAN. **Special Guest:**Dr Washington O. Osifo, Commissioner for Education, Edo State. **5:00 p.m.**Vice-Chancellor's Cocktail.

Friday, 27th November, 2026

1:00 p.m. Jumat Prayers; Iyamho Central Mosque.

Saturday, 28th November, 2026

11:00 a.m.8th Convocation Ceremony; Aliko Dangote Auditorium.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Parents, guardians, guests and members of the public are advised to arrive early for processing and seating. Admittance into the official venue shall be subject to university security and seating arrangements. Guests are required to present invitation cards and means of identification. Vehicles are to be parked in designated areas, and all visitors are expected to comply with traffic, security and ceremonial instructions issued by authorised university personnel.

Guests and students are to be seated by 10:30 a.m.

NOTICE TO GRADUATING STUDENTS

Graduating students are required to comply with all academic, administrative and ceremonial regulations relating to the Convocation. Participation in the academic procession requires the use of approved academic gowns. Graduands are to obtain from their Faculties, Departments, the Registry and the Ceremonials Committee information on fees, robing, procession, invitation cards, official materials, clearance and collection of their certificates. **Graduands are to converge at 10:00 a.m. at the E-Library Building where they will receive important instructions.**

CONGRATULATORY MESSAGE

The Governing Council, Senate, Management, Staff and Students congratulate all graduands and thank their parents, guardians and sponsors. The University welcomes all guests to its 8th Convocation Ceremony and wishes everyone a memorable celebration.

Special Guest of Honour: His Excellency, Senator Monday Okpebholo, Executive Governor of Edo State and Visitor to Edo State University, Iyamho.

ENQUIRIES

Toksi Omage-Umeh, FCPM, MANUPA(Registrar): 0703 888 7811
Professor Harriet Efanodor-Obeten, Ph.D.(Chairperson, Ceremonials Committee): 0803 943 0181

Signed
Toksi Omage-Umeh, FCPM, MANUPA
Registrar and Secretary to Council

PUBLIC NOTICE

CAVEAT EMPTOR

This is to notify the general public that certain underlisted properties comprised in the residuary estate of late Dr. John Randle (deceased) are subject of litigation, specifically Appeal no: CA/L/272/2017: Mrs. Abosede Odusola & ors. v. Mr. Olajide Pereira & ors. in which the Applicants are seeking the leave of the Court of Appeal to appeal against the judgment of the Lagos State High Court in Suit no: LD/2434/88, which applied the 'Ori-Ojori Yoruba customary law of distribution to residuary estate of late Dr. John Randle who had left a Will, and the properties in contention were those that were not covered by the said Will.

It is trite that an appeal for leave to appeal is regarded as an appeal under and by virtue of the Court of Appeal Rules, 2021.

It has however come to the notice of the descendants of late Chief R. A. Randle (deceased) that other descendants of late Dr. John Randle (deceased) have convened a General Meeting of all descendants, which is scheduled to hold on 29th November, 2026, with an agenda, "to wind up the estate and distribute its assets". This is not acceptable to the descendants of late Chief R. A. Randle (deceased) and a formal objection has accordingly been submitted.

The affected properties are as follows;

1. No. 31, Marina, Lagos Island
2. No. 63/65, Marina, Lagos Island
3. No. 2, Onikepo Street, Lagos Island
4. No. 23, Broad Street, Lagos Island
5. No. 152/156, Broad Street, Lagos Island
6. No. 180, Broad Street, Lagos Island
7. No. 17, Maye Street, Yaba
8. No. 287, Herbert Macaulay Way, Yaba

Any person, natural or corporate, who deals in, purchases, or in any way or manner, acquires any interest in these properties, does so at his own peril.

Signed:

Dr. Odunmbaku A. A. Randle
Administrator with the Will Annexed,
Estate of the Late Chief R. A. Randle

OR ENQUIRIES:
Rotimi Aladesanmi & Co.
Solicitors to the Estate of late Chief R. A. Randle (deceased).
55, Raymond Njoku Street,
S. W. Ikoyi, Lagos.
Tel: 07045885213, 08084623687

TheGuardian Property

www.guardian.ng

Monday, November 23, 2026

Guardian Nigeria GuardianNigeria 08136370421 Guardiannigeria

Countries to track progress, accelerate action on chemicals, waste

By **Chinedum Uwaegbulam**

• Nigeria, 12 others to benefit from global chemicals fund

COUNTRIES and stakeholders have agreed on new measures to accelerate the implementation of the Global Framework on Chemicals (GFC) at its first International Conference, held in Geneva, Switzerland, last week.

The outcomes include adopting an initial set of global indicators to track progress towards the framework's targets, and two global implementation programmes to strengthen national legal and institutional systems and promote coordinated action across sectors and value chains. The conference also extended the Global Framework on Chemicals Fund to sustain implementation efforts in developing countries and countries with economies in transition.

Three years after the framework was adopted in Bonn, Germany, in 2023, the conference focused on strengthening the foundations for its implementation. With most of its 28 targets expected to be achieved by 2030, the decisions reached in Geneva are intended to improve progress monitoring, identify implementation gaps, accelerate action and sustain financial support.

More than 1,200 participants attended the conference, representing governments, civil society organisations, the private sector, international organisations, academia and other stakeholder groups.

The GFC is a voluntary, multi-stakeholder and multisectoral international framework designed to help countries and stakeholders develop and implement solutions for the safe and sustainable management of chemicals and waste. The GFC Secretariat coordinates it, and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) hosts it.

Its dedicated financial mechanism, the GFC Fund, provides catalytic financing to help countries and stakeholders translate the framework's objectives and targets into practical action.

Under its second funding round, the fund announced nine new national, regional and cross-regional projects benefiting 13 countries, including Nigeria. The projects will receive a total of $5.4 million to support efforts to translate the framework into concrete action.

This brings the fund's overall reach to 23 countries across its first two funding rounds, with approximately $8.2 million committed to 13 national and regional projects. The fund provides grants ranging from $300,000 to $800,000 for projects lasting up to three years. It complements larger financing mechanisms, such as the Global Environment Facility, by supporting institutional strengthening, innovative approaches and multi-stakeholder action.



Chemicals stored in drums.

The project covering Nigeria and Ghana is designed to strengthen governance for the life-cycle management of industrial chemicals and waste, with the potential to replicate across West Africa.

The importance of effective chemicals management is underscored by the sector's extensive economic reach. Chemicals are used in approximately 95 per cent of manufactured goods, while the global chemical industry contributes an estimated $5.7 trillion to global gross domestic product and supports about 120 million jobs. This makes chemicals management an economy-wide concern, with implications for production, supply chains, product design and waste management.

The conference provisionally adopted an initial set of indicators to monitor progress towards selected framework targets. Delegates also agreed to continue developing its measurability structure, including work on two high-level indicators covering the global burden of disease and the global environmental burden attributable to chemicals and waste.

The Secretariat is expected to develop an accessible online reporting tool and prepare an assessment of progress ahead of the second International Conference.

Delegates also adopted two global implementation programmes to support the delivery of the framework's targets.

The first programme focuses on strengthening legal frameworks and institutional capacities for the sound management of chemicals and waste. The second seeks to promote industry engagement and action across value chains, with initial sectoral programmes covering construction, electronics, healthcare and textiles.

Together, the programmes provide a platform for governments, industries and other stakeholders to coordinate activities, exchange knowledge and strengthen implementation across countries and sectors.

The conference also welcomed new guidelines to help national focal points coordinate implementation of the framework, alongside a capacity-building strategy to enable countries and stakeholders to identify existing strengths, capacity gaps and priority needs.

Delegates agreed to continue work on existing issues of concern under the framework.

Read the remaining story on www.guardian.ng

'African cities need people-centred development, not greenwashing'

By **Chinedum Uwaegbulam**

AFRICAN governments have been urged to put people, cultural heritage and environmental sustainability at the centre of urban planning, rather than pursue large-scale infrastructure projects that displace communities and deepen inequality.

Leverhulme Professor in Planning and Heritage at the University of Liverpool, Taibat Lawanson, advised while delivering her inaugural lecture, titled Curating African Urban Futures: Heritage, Sustainability, and Phantoms of Utopia, at the university's School of the Arts.

The lecture, held at the Budden Lecture Theatre, Liverpool School of Architecture, examined the relationship between Africa's urbanisation, climate change, heritage preservation and sustainable development.

Lawanson said Africa's urban population had grown from approximately 170 million in 1975 to 913 million in 2026, while about 70 per cent of its cities faced climate-related hazards, including flooding, heatwaves, droughts and tropical cyclones.

She argued that urban development should not be measured by impressive infrastructure or ambitious environmental projects, particularly when these undermine existing communities and livelihoods.

Lawanson noted that since 2008, more than 70 master plans for smart and eco-cities had been initiated by governments and private consortia across Africa. Many promise high-tech climate solutions, including driverless electric vehicles, while marketing developments through world-class and sustainable-city concepts.

However, she questioned whether these projects addressed residents' needs or primarily served investors and wealthy property buyers. Describing the trend as the weaponisation of climate adaptation, Lawanson said environmental concerns were increasingly used to justify displacing low-income communities and opening valuable urban land to private investment.

She explained that marginalised neighbourhoods were first classified as environmental hazards, followed by government or private-sector redevelopment in the name of resilience. Developers subsequently captured the increased land values through high-end commercial and residential investments.

She described this as bourgeois environmentalism, where sustainability becomes a branding tool for attracting foreign investment and facilitating the exclusion of poorer residents. Citing research covering 5,503 African municipalities, she said green-blue adaptation investments were associated with a 13 per cent increase in local housing prices and 52.9 per cent population growth in affected areas, driven by affluent in-migration.

Using Eko Atlantic City in Lagos as an example, Lawanson questioned the wider environmental consequences of coastal protection projects. She said the development had extended its shoreline seaward by an average of 92.16 metres annually, but its breakwaters had disrupted natural sediment flows, accelerating erosion around neighbouring coastal communities.

According to her, more than 350 metres of coastal land had been lost around Alpha Beach and Okun Alfa, with shoreline retreat averaging 3.55 metres annually. She also questioned the environmental cost of restricting access to Bar Beach, a natural coastal heritage asset, in the process of developing Eko Atlantic.

Lawanson, who leads the Urbanism and Coastal Heritage Lab, acknowledged the importance of climate adaptation in cities facing flooding and coastal erosion but said its success should be measured against its effects on surrounding communities and ecosystems.

She also highlighted the carbon emissions, construction waste, air pollution and resource depletion associated with demolitions and rebuilding, arguing that projects involving extensive reconstruction cannot automatically be considered sustainable.

The professor further condemned waste colonialism, through which non-functional materials are exported to African countries under the guise of charitable donations, second-hand goods and recycling.

She said Nigeria receives about 500,000 metric tonnes of used electrical and electronic equipment annually, much of it through Lagos ports, with a significant proportion arriving non-functional.

According to her, the practice exposes informal waste workers and local communities to environmental and health hazards while undermining domestic recycling capacity.

Challenging the perception that informal settlements are inherently unsustainable, Lawanson said many possess characteristics that could inform climate-responsive urban planning. She identified compact communities, low carbon footprints, resourcefulness, social cohesion, indigenous knowledge and community-led adaptation as important features of informal settlements.

Using Makoko in Lagos, she highlighted its stilted timber architecture and aquatic craftsmanship as examples of traditional ecological knowledge that help residents adapt to flood-prone conditions.

She argued that informal settlements should be upgraded rather than demolished, stressing that improved infrastructure, sanitation, housing and secure land tenure without displacement constitute climate action.

Lawanson cited Oworonshoki, a Lagos Lagoon community, where repeated evictions since 2023 had been justified by wetland preservation, flood protection and urban renewal. She said more than 7,000 households had been displaced.

Read the remaining story on www.guardian.ng

GuardianProperty www.guardian.ng

Architects raise concerns over regulatory gaps, economic pressures

By **Victor Gbonegun**

THE Nigerian Institute of Architects (NIA), Lagos State Chapter, has identified building collapses, regulatory gaps, procurement practices and economic pressures as major challenges facing architects and urban development in the state.

The Chairman of the chapter, Biodun Fatuyi, spoke at its 2026 Biennial General Meeting (BGM) in Lagos, themed "The Architect's Legacy: Honouring Our Past, Our Present and Inspiring Our Future." He was re-elected alongside other members of the executive committee.

Fatuyi called for stronger professional advocacy, closer engagement with government and private-sector stakeholders, improved training opportunities and greater support for young architects.

He also urged architects to adopt digital technologies, sustainable design and smart urban planning while retaining the human-centred principles of the profession.

The meeting brought together architects, fellows, past leaders and other professionals to review the chapter's activities and discuss the future of architectural practice in Lagos. Other elected officers include Moniba Odunlami, Vice Chairman; Adaku Osuagwu-Oguamanam, General Secretary; Aiyepe Taiwo, Treasurer; Popoola Damilola, Welfare Officer; and Moshood Akinde, Public Relations Officer.

Fatuyi stressed the need for professional unity, institutional integrity and continuity in leadership.

He said architects must look beyond building design to influence physical planning policies, promote ethical practice and shape sustainable cities.

He described architecture as a responsibility to future generations, noting that buildings and urban spaces designed today would form part of the country's physical and cultural heritage.

In her keynote address, NIA member, Brenda Unuavworho, highlighted the need to preserve the profession's heritage while preparing architects for emerging technologies and changing urban demands.

She expressed confidence that the re-elected chairman and his executive committee would strengthen the chapter, increase members' participation and raise architects' influence in public policy and urban development.

Unuavworho urged the executive to collaborate with NIA's national leadership, government agencies, professional bodies and private-sector operators to advance architectural practice in Lagos.

Group advocates community-led surveillance to prevent building collapse

By **Abigail Ikhaghu**

A NEW report by a non-governmental organisation, Thrivescape Initiative, has urged the Lagos State government to establish community-based building safety groups and involve residents in monitoring construction activities to prevent building collapse.

The report said government agencies could not address the problem alone, advocating a community-driven approach that would enable residents to identify early signs of structural failure, report unsafe buildings and hold developers accountable.

It also proposed toll-free hotlines and secure digital platforms, through which residents could report suspected unsafe structures, upload photographs, provide locations and track complaints without disclosing their identities.

The recommendations are contained in a research report, "Ajumose: Understanding How Community-led Innovations Can Complement Government Efforts Towards Resilient Construction in Lagos State." The report is part of the project titled "Mapping Community-Led Innovations for Resilient Construction in Lagos State (MCLIRC)." The study also identified high statutory charges and delays in obtaining building approvals as factors that could encourage developers to evade regulations and compromise construction standards.

Speaking at the public presentation of the research findings in Lagos, organised by Thrivescape Initiative, Prof. Gbemiga Faniran of the Department of Urban and Regional Planning, Obafemi Awolowo University, said communities had the capacity to support building safety but remained largely excluded from formal monitoring and regulatory processes.

The research covered Lagos Central, East and West senatorial districts and involved 472 household surveys, two focus group discussions and 19 key informant interviews with residents, property owners, developers, construction professionals, artisans and government representatives.

It found that 94.9 per cent of respondents were aware of building collapse, while 88.3 per cent identified visible cracks as a major warning sign of structural problems. Faniran said Lagos accounted for between 50 and 55 per cent of recorded building collapses in Nigeria since the first reported incident in 1974.

"Globally, building collapses occur. In Nigeria, Lagos is currently the epicentre of building collapses. The first report of building collapse was in 1974. Between 1974 and date, around 50 to 55 per cent of building collapses in the country have occurred in Lagos alone, out of the 36 states and the Federal Capital Territory," he said.

He cited documented records of 108 building collapses in Lagos between 1984 and 2003, attributing the state's vulnerability to its coastal terrain, high population density, rapid urbanisation and construction practices.

Faniran said preventing further incidents required a shift from an approach dominated by government enforcement to one that allowed residents to participate in monitoring developments. "The government alone cannot do it. The best approach is a bottom-up approach, where we make it people-centred and allow the people to participate. They are the ones who own the development, and their input is important," he said.

Despite widespread awareness, participation in organised building safety programmes remained low. Only 15.25 per cent of respondents had attended safety training, although 91.74 per cent believed such programmes could help reduce building collapse.

The study identified substandard materials, poor foundation work, ageing structures, inadequate maintenance, unauthorised additional floors and weak regulatory enforcement as major causes of building failure.

About 33.9 per cent of respondents attributed collapses to substandard and low-quality materials. Participants in the focus group discussions also raised concerns about developers using inferior reinforcement bars and cement to reduce construction costs.

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1) FOR SALE WATERFRONT LAND
Size: 9290 sqm (half can be sold)
Location: Ozumba Mbadiwe, Victoria Island Lagos
Prices: 3.8m per sqm. Title C of O

2) PROPERTIES FOR SALE
22 Floor building with 3 floors of parking space
Location: Marina Road, Lagos Island
Total lettable space: 8000 SQM, Condition: Vacant
Title: Lagos Free Hold Right of occupancy
Price: 25b(complete sale). Rental option: 80,000 per sqm for 5years.
Partial Sale: 70% to buyer, 30% to owner

3) WATERFRONT PROPERTY FOR SALE AT IKOYI
Description: Old Waterfront Detached Mansion
Location: Queens Drive Off Bourdillon Road Ikoyi
Size: 5093 sqm. Price: N5.5m per sqm
Title: Lagos state Land Certificate

4) PROPERTY FOR SALE
Location: Probyn Road,off Bourdillion Road Ikoyi
Size: 3768sqm, Price: 4.3m per sqm
Title: Lagos state C of O

5) FOR SALE: Prime Development Property
Size: 4000 sqm, Title: C of O
Location: Sinari Daranijo Street Victoria Island
Price: 10b (2.5m per sqm)

6) FOR SALE : Empty Land
Size: 4000 sqm (1000sqm can be sold in bits)
Location: Banana island, Ikoyi
Title: C of O, Price: 4.9m per sqm

SHEF, ACRC pledge sustainable WASH facilities in Lagos community

By **Favour Udezue**

THE Shantytown Empowerment Foundation (SHEF) and the African Cities Research Consortium (ACRC) have pledged to ensure the sustainable management of water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) facilities provided in Okerube, Lagos State, through community ownership, technical training and collaboration with government authorities.

The project partners also plan to conduct a situation analysis to establish the community's water and sanitation needs and identify priority areas for intervention. The findings are expected to guide collaboration among residents, project partners and government agencies in developing lasting solutions.

SHEF project co-lead, Dr Seun Muraina, gave the assurance at a stakeholders' meeting attended by representatives of Community Development Associations (CDAs), women and youth groups, religious leaders, the ward councillor and the Baale of Okerube.

Muraina said the initiative would involve residents in managing the facilities, making modest financial contributions towards maintenance and acquiring technical skills to prevent infrastructure from falling into disrepair.

She explained that the project was developing governance and financing arrangements to sustain the facilities beyond the period of external support. These would include community ownership structures, designated representatives to oversee operations and contributions to fund routine maintenance and repairs.

Residents would also receive training in financial management, plumbing, water conservation, purification and filtration to strengthen their capacity to operate and maintain the facilities.

According to her, the partners hope to integrate successful community-led management models into existing governance structures in Lagos and replicate them in other informal settlements.

Muraina, a lecturer at the University of Lagos, identified citizen mobilisation, reform coalitions, elite commitment and state capacity strengthening as the four principles guiding ACRC's interventions across African cities. She said development projects were more likely to deliver lasting results when residents participated in identifying their needs and determining solutions.

Also, SHEF project co-lead, Mr Kazeem Abiodun, said the intervention went beyond providing water facilities to address the wider WASH challenges facing residents.

He explained that Okerube was selected after consultations revealed significant gaps in water access and sanitation. He cited previous interventions in communities such as Ajegunle and Apapa, as part of the foundation's efforts to improve living conditions through community-driven development.

Abiodun urged residents to cooperate with enumerators who would conduct the situation analysis, stressing that accurate information was necessary to identify pressing needs and guide subsequent interventions.

CONFIRMATION AND CONSOLIDATION OF NAME

I, formerly known, addressed, and registered on various shareholdings, dividend warrants, and Central Securities Clearing System (CSCS) records as DIYOKE INNOCENT OKECHUKWU, DIYOKE INNOCENT OKECHUKWU ENGR., DIYOKE OKECHUKWU INNOCENT, DIYOKE INNOCENT, DIYOKE OKEY INNO and DIYOKE INNO OKEY, hereby notify the general public, the Central Securities Clearing System (CSCS) Plc, all Company Registrars, Stockbroking Firms, Banks and relevant authorities that all the aforementioned names refer to one and the same person.

Henceforth, I wish to officially known, addressed, and have all my records consolidated strictly as DIYOKE INNOCENT IKECHUKWU, in alignment with my Bank Vertification Number (BVN) and National Identification Number (NIN). All former documents bearing any of the above variations remain valid.

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GuardianProperty

Quantity surveyors urged to take active role in infrastructure funding

By **Chinedum Uwaegbulam**

AFRICAN quantity surveyors have been urged to take a more prominent role in infrastructure financing and investment decisions across the continent to ensure that projects deliver value for money and respond to Africa's development needs.

The call was made by a founding member and past president of the African Association of Quantity Surveyors (AAQS), Olusegun Ajanlekoko, at the association's General Assembly hosted by the Zambia Institute of Quantity Surveyors (ZIQS) in Lusaka.

The General Assembly provided a platform for African quantity surveying professionals to consider the future direction of the association and how the discipline could become more influential in shaping the continent's infrastructure agenda.

In his address titled The Task Ahead, Ajanlekoko challenged professionals across Africa to move beyond their traditional responsibilities of preparing bills of quantities, estimating construction costs and managing contracts to become active participants in the planning, financing and delivery of major infrastructure projects.

He argued that the profession must position itself strategically within continental and international development institutions, particularly as African countries seek funding for roads, housing, energy, transport, water and other critical infrastructure.

Ajanlekoko outlined four priority areas that should guide the association's engagement and strengthen the contribution of quantity surveyors to Africa's infrastructure development.

First, he called on the AAQS to pursue observer status with the African Union (AU), describing continental representation as an important step towards ensuring that the profession has a voice in policy discussions and decisions affecting infrastructure investment and development.

According to him, gaining a seat at the continental table would enable African quantity surveyors to contribute their technical expertise to discussions on infrastructure priorities, investment frameworks and development strategies.

Town planners urged to uphold ethics as colleagues honour Adediran

By **Victor Gbonegun**

TOWN planners have been urged to uphold integrity, professional independence and ethical standards in their practice, with a warning that compromising planning regulations could endanger lives, damage the environment and undermine public confidence in the profession.

A former Attorney-General of Enugu State, Nduka Ikeyi, gave the charge at a luncheon organised by professionals to mark the 70th birthday of former Chairman of the Nigerian Institute of Town Planners (NITP), Lagos State chapter, Ayodele Adediran.

Speaking on the theme, "Ethics and Leadership for Professional Service Delivery," Ikeyi said town planners wield considerable influence over physical development and the quality of life in communities, making integrity essential to their decisions.

He argued that ethical conduct was more important than enacting additional laws, noting that the effectiveness of existing regulations depended on the character and integrity of those responsible for enforcing them.

Describing town planners as fiduciaries to both their clients and society, he urged practitioners to put public interest above personal or commercial considerations. He advised them to resist pressure from clients to approve developments that violate zoning and planning regulations, reject inducements and avoid conflicts of interest and other forms of undue influence.

Ikeyi said unethical approvals, particularly for developments in unsuitable locations or those that disregard planning and design standards, could expose residents to pollution, poor ventilation, inadequate sewage systems and other environmental hazards. He urged practitioners to build reputations for probity, independence and sound professional judgment, even when their decisions conflict with the interests of clients or employers.

The luncheon attracted town planners from the public and private sectors, who celebrated Adediran for his contributions to physical development, professional leadership and mentorship of younger practitioners.

In his remarks, Adediran urged planners to remain committed to honesty, consistency and professional excellence, saying they should educate the public on the importance of planning regulations rather than rely solely on enforcement.

Stakeholders seek shift from housing finance to home ownership

By **Chinedum Uwaegbulam**



Deputy Director, District Head, Lagos State Building Control Agency, Toyin Dada (left); Team Lead, Thrivescape Initiative, Ms Tosin Aniramu-Joseph; Prof. Gbemiga Faniran of the Faculty of Environmental Design and Management, Department of Urban and Regional Planning, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile Ife; Deputy Director, Development Permit Department, Lagos State Physical Planning Permit Authority (LASPPPA), Ramon Adetunji and Chairman, Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN), Alimosho Local Council, Samuel Adeyemi at the Public Presentation of Ajumose Report by Thrivescape Initiative in Lagos.

STAKEHOLDERS in the housing sector have called for a shift from housing finance to actual home ownership, insisting that no housing project should commence without secured financing, land title and identified buyers.

The resolution was reached at the ninth Affordable Housing Finance and Investment Summit and Expo (AHFIS 9.0), convened by Dr Yemi Adelakun and chaired by Prof. Ibrahim Gambari. Participants agreed that long-term housing projects require long-term financing, urging the deliberate mobilisation of pension and capital market funds for housing development. They argued that 20-year housing investments cannot be financed with 90-day deposits.

According to the communiqué issued after the two-day summit, stakeholders identified secure land titles as a critical factor in reducing housing costs. They called for digital land registries and functional foreclosure laws across all states, arguing that these would reduce investment risks and transaction costs more effectively than subsidies.

They also urged governments to prioritise regulatory reforms and risk-sharing mechanisms before deploying public funds, with targeted support designed to attract private investment rather than displace it.

To expand access to mortgages, participants called for lending models that recognise informal earnings, using verifiable income data to assess the creditworthiness of millions of Nigerians outside formal payroll systems.

They also advocated rent-to-own schemes, graduated payments and staircasing arrangements that allow tenants to build equity towards ownership rather than spend their entire income on rent.

On domestic capital mobilisation, the summit called for greater investment in housing through the National Housing Fund (NHF), Retirement Savings Account (RSA) equity, cooperatives and diaspora funds.

Developers were urged to align housing production with available financing, focusing on large-scale delivery on properly titled land and meeting agreed completion timelines. The communiqué also called for a digital housing market supported by verified property listings, shared data and escrow arrangements to protect buyers and strengthen confidence in transactions.

To improve public understanding of available housing options, stakeholders proposed a multilingual national awareness campaign and a single, updated and credible terms sheet that clearly explains mortgage products and financing conditions.

They further called for coordination among government agencies and housing institutions through a common roadmap, baseline data and public performance scorecard to prevent duplication and fragmented implementation.

The resolutions come against the backdrop of Nigeria's validated housing deficit of 14.925 million units, mortgage debt of less than one per cent of GDP, and pension assets of N31.8 trillion, with only about 0.4 per cent invested in real estate. The country requires between 500,000 and 550,000 new homes annually to address the shortage.

Female valuers showcase career opportunities in estate management

By **Victor Gbonegun**

THE Lagos State branch Women's Wing of the Nigerian Institution of Estate Surveyors and Valuers (NIESV) has intensified efforts to introduce secondary school students to estate management and encourage them to consider it as a career.

The immediate past Coordinator of the Lagos State Women's Wing, Mrs Olutosin Bamigbola, disclosed this at the wing's annual general meeting in Lagos, describing its "Catch Them Young" initiative as vital to attracting young people to the profession and securing its future.

Bamigbola said the programme had been implemented at Baptist Girls' Academy, Obanikoro, Lagos, where members mentored Junior Secondary School Three (JSS3) students and explained the subject combinations required to study estate management at tertiary institutions.

She said the initiative was part of the wing's commitment to mentorship, capacity building and succession planning, noting that many young people knew little about estate management before choosing courses in higher institutions.

Speaking at the meeting, Lagos State NIESV Chairman, Tosin Kadiri, said the branch had visited at least 30 secondary schools this year, reaching more than 30,000 students through its programme. He urged the women's wing to support the campaign.

Kadiri identified poor advocacy and public awareness as major challenges facing the profession, saying many students did not consider estate management when selecting courses for higher education.

"If new secondary school students are not choosing estate management as a career in higher institutions, then it becomes a challenge," he said.

He said the branch also planned to expand its public awareness campaign through radio and television programmes in Yoruba and Pidgin English to reach traders, artisans, transport workers and other grassroots audiences. The campaign is expected to help the public understand the profession and encourage parents to guide their children towards it.

The Chairman of the NIESV National Women's Wing, Mrs Ibironke Ogun, commended the Lagos wing for its achievements and urged the incoming executives to sustain its programmes.

Represented by a former National Women's Wing Coordinator, Toyin Agbalaya, Ogun called for closer collaboration between the national and state wings to advance women's interests and raise their visibility in the profession.

A Professor of Estate Management and Valuation at the Federal University of Technology, Minna, Kemiki Adebowale, also praised the women for their initiatives and administration, urging the leadership to sustain its efforts.

The meeting featured the launch of the wing's social media platforms, awards and the election of new executives. It attracted former NIESV Lagos Chairman, Mr Dotun Bamigbola, and former Chairman of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS), Mrs Olayinka Patuntola-Ajayi.

MEANWHILE, the wing elected Olufunke Taiwo as its new Lagos State Coordinator, with Charity Ikpoba as Vice-Coordinator. Other elected officers are Hannah Babatunde, Secretary; Adebusola Oguntola, Treasurer; Anuoluwapo Ajayi, Publicity Secretary; and Tosin Toyin-Aluko, Assistant Secretary. Edith Aiyede and Olayinka Gbeminiyi were elected ex-officio members.

World Report

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Russia-bound ship on fire after attack in Gulf of Finland

RESCUE and firefighting efforts are continuing for a Russian cargo vessel hit by a drone attack in the eastern Gulf of Finland, authorities have said.

The ship - the Sparta II, was bound for Russia's Baltic exclave Kaliningrad when it was hit on Saturday morning, before drifting into Finnish waters. Finnish defence forces said Ukraine was likely behind the attack. Kyiv has yet to comment.

Finland's Border Guard said yesterday that work was ongoing to make sure the cargo ship did not sink but it was not aware of any danger to surrounding maritime traffic.

Water was still being used to douse the ship yesterday. Finland said Estonian and Russian assets were also involved in recovery work.

Kaliningrad Governor Alexei Besprozvannykh said two drones had been used in the strike, based on preliminary information, and there was "no threat" to the territory's supplies.

"War is spilling over into our immediate vicinity, Ukraine has the right to fight back against the aggressor,"Finnish Prime Minister Petteri Orpo said.

The Sparta II was sanctioned by the U.S. in 2022 and Ukraine earlier this year, and is run by a Russian company, according to the Ukrainian and U.S. governments.

The company said on its website that it was established within the structure of Russia's defence ministry in 2011 and since 2015 has been operating within the military construction complex.

Finland's coast guard said it had been alerted to the attack at around 08:50 local time (06:50 GMT) on Saturday and that the cargo vessel had been located approximately 50km west of the island of Suursaari in the Gulf of Finland.

"This prompted temporary aviation and maritime restrictions around the area," Finnish border officials said.

Lebanese president decries Iran's interference, seeks Israel's withdrawal

Lebanese President, Joseph Aoun has decried Iran's meddling in Lebanon's affairs and demanded Israel's withdrawal from his country's south.

In a speech at the weekend, on the eve of Lebanon's 83rd independence anniversary, Aoun said Lebanon faces two interconnected fateful tests: the "Israeli occupation of parts of our land" and "foreign interference" from "some influential parties in the Iranian regime" through weapons and decisions outside the authority of the Lebanese state.

"These two fundamental obstacles, inseparably linked mean that Lebanon cannot fully celebrate its independence.

"Withdraw from every inch of Lebanese territory. Stop your attacks. And return our captives," Aoun demanded of Israel.

Dozens of Lebanese citizens are believed to be held in Israeli detention centres, including civilians as well as members of the Hezbollah armed group captured during fighting in southern Lebanon.

South Korea's education minister resigns over exam cheating scandal

SOUTH Korea's Education Minister, Choi Kyo-jin has resigned over an exam cheating scandal that shocked the nation.

Kyo-jin said he took full responsibility for the confusion caused by last-minute measures aimed at stopping AI-assisted cheating during Thursday's yearly college entrance exam, known as Suneung.

A week ago, the top scorer in the national tax accountancy exam admitted using a mini-camera, mobile phone and AI tools. This prompted officials to act urgently to detect hidden devices, including sending emergency alerts to every single mobile phone in the country.

The Suneung takes up to nine hours to complete, and it plays a big role in career trajectories of millions of South Koreans.

"As the minister in charge, I believe I cannot escape criticism that we failed to prepare in advance," Choi was quoted as saying on Sunday by South Korea's Yonhap's news agency.

"Now that the exam has concluded, I feel a deep sense of responsibility and am offering my resignation," the minister added.

South Korean President Lee Jae Myung - who has been calling for an overhaul of the current exam system - later accepted Choi's resignation.

'Only 7% of women survivors of violence report cases to police'

By Silver Nwokoro

ONLY seven per cent of women and girls who experience physical or sexual violence report their cases to the police, while between 63 and 97 per cent of reported cases globally fail to result in convictions, a new report by UN Women has revealed.

The report, titled Access to Justice for Women Survivors of Violence, which covers 54 countries, also found that only 23 per cent of survivors seek help from family members, their communities or relevant authorities, highlighting widespread barriers to accessing justice.

The findings were released ahead of the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, observed yearly on November 25.

According to the data brief, nearly one in three women and girls globally, representing about 840 million people, have experienced physical and/or sexual violence during their lifetime.

UN Women Executive Director, Sima Bahous, said justice systems across the world were failing women and girls who experience violence, with many cases going unreported, prosecutions collapsing and court decisions left unenforced.

"Too many justice systems around the world are failing women and girls who experience violence. Cases go unreported, prosecutions fall through, and court decisions go unenforced.

"Justice cannot be served when women and girls cannot access it, or when the law fails to protect them. We must work together to ensure that justice systems deliver on their fundamental responsibility to protect survivors, uphold their rights and hold perpetrators accountable," she said.

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News

Climate negotiators fail to agree on text over fossil fuels, finance row

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

hicles and alternative energy sources. Yet security concerns and economic pressures continue to make many countries reluctant to abandon fossil fuels without affordable, reliable alternatives.

For Nigeria, the issue is especially difficult. Despite its large oil and gas reserves, the country faces inadequate electricity supply, weak industrial capacity, energy poverty and limited investment in critical infrastructure.

Oil and gas remain central to government revenue, foreign exchange earnings and investment. Natural gas is also seen as vital for expanding electricity generation, supporting manufacturing and growing the domestic economy.

Managing Director of Azura Power, Edu Okeke, said Nigeria and other African countries should prioritise development and energy security before accepting restrictions on fossil-fuel investment.

"First, Nigeria and broadly other African countries need to develop. They cannot do that without fossil fuels. Before climate commitments, we should think of energy security first," he said.

Okeke welcomed the absence of restrictions on fossil fuels at the summit, saying countries such as Nigeria should retain the flexibility to develop their energy resources.

His view reflects concerns among African energy stakeholders that climate commitments should not undermine development, especially where millions still lack reliable electricity and clean cooking solutions.

However, continued investment in oil and gas must not weaken Nigeria's climate commitments or leave the country with infrastructure that becomes costly as global energy markets change.

Questions over Nigeria's COP delegation

NIGERIA'S participation at COP31 also raised questions about the effectiveness of its climate diplomacy.

With 1,506 delegates, Nigeria had the third-largest national delegation at the 2026 summit in Antalya, behind Türkiye and Brazil. This was an increase from the 1,453 participants at COP30 in Brazil in 2025.

But the size of the delegation has prompted concerns about coordination, accountability and the tangible benefits of Nigeria's participation.

Former President of the Nigerian Economic Society, Prof. Adeola Adenikinju, criticised what he described as the absence of proper coordination and cost-benefit assessment in Nigeria's participation at international climate meetings.

According to him, the country's representation does not necessarily reflect its financial capacity or demonstrate that participants have clearly defined responsibilities. "Our participation in international meetings like the COP does not reflect our financial situation. There is a serious lack of coordination behind the representation. There are no cost and benefit analyses done and I doubt if attendance is coordinated," he said.

Adenikinju expressed concern that some officials could be using their positions to secure opportunities for people whose participation might not advance Nigeria's national interests.

He recommended that the National Council on Climate Change (NCCC) coordinate official representation at future climate conferences and publish comprehensive reports detailing attendance, agreements, commitments and outcomes.

Similarly, Okeke questioned the contributions of Nigerian public officials who attended the summit, arguing that the value of participation should be measured by what delegates contributed to negotiations and delivered for the country.

"All those who went to COP, what did they really contribute to the sessions?" he queried.

Despite the concerns, Nigeria recorded potential investment gains at COP31, particularly in infrastructure financing and climate-smart agriculture.

These include a $750 million UK-Nigeria pension-backed infrastructure memorandum of understanding to mobilise pension funds for energy, transport and digital infrastructure; a $3 million climate-smart greenhouse pilot in Kano State; and a proposed $1 billion NIRSAL Climate Finance Facility to attract partnerships and de-risk climate-smart agriculture investments.

Their value, however, will depend on implementation, transparency and measurable economic benefits.

For Nigeria, the challenge after COP31 is to turn climate diplomacy into investments that address energy poverty, improve electricity supply, strengthen climate resilience and support economic diversification.

The country must also match its defence of oil and gas with a credible plan to expand renewable energy, reduce emissions and protect communities exposed to flooding, desertification and other climate impacts.

Ultimately, COP31 highlighted Nigeria's difficult choice: how to use its oil and gas resources to finance development while preparing for a global energy system increasingly shaped by climate concerns.

Campaigners condemn outcome

CIVIL society groups led by the Climate Action Network accused developed countries, particularly the European Union, of obstructing progress.

CAN Executive Director Tasneem Essop criticised the Turkish and Australian presidencies for weak leadership and for allowing corporate interests to influence the talks. She said a sprawling cover decision diverted attention from core negotiations and opened the door to carbon capture and carbon-dioxide removal.

"This was the worst COP ever," she said. "Rich nations gutted the very measures that could have made a difference."

Power Shift Africa founder Mohamed Adow also condemned the outcome, accusing developed countries of demanding greater ambition from poorer nations while withholding financial and technical support.

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Coalition of former VP's support groups endorses Obi-Kwankwaso joint ticket

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

vide an opportunity for voters to hold the incumbent administration accountable for its performance.

He urged Nigerians to assess candidates on their competence, track records and capacity to address national challenges rather than their political affiliations, religious beliefs or ethnic backgrounds.

According to him, an incumbent seeking a second term must justify another mandate through tangible achievements.

"A second-term election is a referendum. It is standing on the leg of your previous performance. If you have done well, they give you another mandate. If you have not done well, they ask you to go home," he said.

Youth group tells Atiku to retire from politics

IN a separate development, the Nigerian Youths for Good Governance (NYGG) has urged Atiku to abandon his presidential ambition, describing his continued pursuit of the presidency at 80 as an expression of political desperation, greed and entitlement.

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Energy&Solid Minerals

Nigeria banks on fiscal framework to attract new oil investment

From **Kingsley Jeremiah**, Abuja

NIGERIA is banking on an improved fiscal framework, enhanced security and reduced investment risks to attract fresh capital into its upstream petroleum sector, as it prepares to open the bidding portal for its 2026 oil and gas licensing round on November 20.

The Commission Chief Executive, Nigerian Upstream Petroleum Regulatory Commission (NUPRC), Mrs Oritsemeyiwa Eyesan, disclosed this at the 2026 Abu Dhabi International Petroleum Exhibition and Conference (ADIPEC) in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates, on Monday.

Eyesan, who spoke during a roundtable discussion titled 'Energy Sovereignty in an Interconnected World: Aligning National Priorities, Markets and Global Security', urged international investors to take advantage of the licensing round, which offers 40 oil and gas blocks.

She said Nigeria had introduced an attractive fiscal regime and incentives to improve competitiveness, while strengthening security and addressing operational challenges that have historically discouraged investment.

"We are expecting investors to turn to Nigeria. We are going in for another licensing round and we will be launching our bid portal on November 20. We expect to see interested investors because the environment is a lot more competitive.

"We have set a very attractive fiscal framework for investors. The entire environment is a lot more secure. We have been able to manage costs with a lot of incentives for investors and we expect to see investors take up the offer when we open the portal," she said.

The NUPRC chief executive attributed the improving investment climate to the Petroleum Industry Act (PIA) 2021 and executive orders introduced by President Bola Tinubu to reposition the sector.

According to her, Nigeria has conducted at least four successful licensing rounds between 2021 and 2026, marking a departure from the pre-PIA period when bidding exercises were less frequent.

Beyond crude oil, Eyesan identified Nigeria's largely untapped gas resources as another major investment opportunity, noting that the country holds about 215 trillion cubic feet (TCF) of proven gas reserves but produces barely seven billion cubic feet daily.

She said recent investments in major gas infrastructure projects would help unlock supplies for domestic consumption, regional markets and international exports.

Eyesan also highlighted the proposed Nigeria-Morocco Atlantic Gas Pipeline and Trans-Sahara Gas Pipeline as strategic projects capable of expanding Nigeria's access to African and European markets.

She, however, acknowledged that competition for global petroleum investments had intensified, requiring host countries to address investors' concerns about execution risks, project costs, delays and policy uncertainty.

"What we have done in Nigeria is to ensure that we guard against these risks and then attract the investment required to enable us to unlock the huge resources we sit on," she said.

The 2026 licensing round is expected to test the effectiveness of Nigeria's fiscal incentives and regulatory reforms in translating its substantial hydrocarbon resources into new exploration, production and investment commitments.

Middle East conflict redefines oil investment, fuels new global energy alliances

From **Kingsley Jeremiah**, Abuja

THE escalating security challenges in the Middle East are reshaping investment strategies among leading national oil companies (NOCs), forcing energy producers to prioritise export resilience, diversify international portfolios and deepen partnerships as geopolitical risks threaten global supply chains.

A new assessment by Wood Mackenzie indicated that the conflict has exposed significant differences in the ability of Abu Dhabi National Oil Company (ADNOC), Saudi Aramco and QatarEnergy to sustain exports, protect production and pursue expansion plans amid disruptions around the Strait of Hormuz.

The report noted that alternative export routes, ship-to-ship transfers and the partial reopening of the Strait had helped Saudi Aramco and ADNOC increase their combined operating cash flow by approximately $35 billion, representing a 25 per cent rise against pre-conflict estimates.

However, it warned that the recovery remained fragile, with attacks on the East-West pipeline and Red Sea shipping exposing the security risks associated with alternative export corridors.

QatarEnergy has suffered the most significant disruption, coming under pressure just as its ambitious North Field expansion was expected to increase liquefied natural gas (LNG) capacity from 77 million tonnes per annum (mtpa) to 142 mtpa.

According to Wood Mackenzie, the crisis is forcing the three producers to reconsider how they allocate capital, access technology and secure international markets, with partnerships increasingly becoming central to their expansion strategies.

"The conflict has increased the number of competing priorities facing Middle East NOCs," Director, Corporate Research at Wood Mackenzie, Neivan Boroujerdi, said.

He explained that although the companies faced different challenges, they were simultaneously balancing domestic expansion, international growth and operational resilience.

The report identified ADNOC as a company pursuing ambitious production and international LNG expansion targets, with its 2027 production target of five million barrels daily potentially giving way to six million barrels daily in the early 2030s.

Saudi Aramco, meanwhile, could open parts of its upstream gas business to external investors as unconventional gas production expands. Wood Mackenzie projected that sales gas supply could reach 180 billion cubic metres annually in the early 2030s, exceeding anticipated domestic demand of about 130 billion cubic metres.



Tankers transiting through Strait of Hormuz.

Such a surplus could support LNG exports and create opportunities for international oil companies (IOCs) through equity participation, offtake agreements and gas-trading partnerships.

For QatarEnergy, infrastructure damage, production losses and continued dependence on the Strait of Hormuz could trigger costly repairs and extensions to existing IOC contracts.

Beyond the Middle East, the assessment warned that geopolitical uncertainty could make international oil companies more selective about exposure to the region, despite its relatively low-cost petroleum resources.

The region currently accounts for about 15 per cent of production by major international oil companies, projected to rise to 17 per cent by 2030.

Wood Mackenzie said international diversification was increasingly becoming a strategy for energy security rather than simply production growth, with partnerships expected to shape future investments across upstream petroleum, gas and LNG markets.

Why LPG remains next frontier for Africa's downstream

By **Anibor O. Kragha**

AT The IEA's first Summit on Clean Cooking in Africa in Paris in May 2024, Akinwumi Adesina, then African Development Bank President, recalled studying by smoky lamps and cooking fires, which he links to eyesight damage. Still today, nearly one billion Africans cook with firewood and charcoal.

Household air pollution kills about 815,000 Africans annually. Between 2022 and 2023, sub-Saharan Africa's population grew by 30 million while only 11 million gained clean cooking access.

For a decade, refining has dominated Africa's downstream story. But the next frontier is Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG): the continent's fastest-growing petroleum product, a backbone of clean cooking, and a market with an underbuilt supply chain. Investment is urgently required: from gas processing and import terminals to bottling plants, inland logistics and household cylinders.

Africa's next phase of growth will be shaped not simply by who has the resources, but by who invests first in the infrastructure that connects supply to demand.

The race to build Africa's LPG future

LPG accounts for 76 per cent of people gaining clean cooking access in sub-Saharan Africa. Yet the region consumed 6.4 million tonnes in 2025, or 4.8 kg per person, against more than 50 kg in North Africa. Demand grew 12 per cent last year, and CITAC Africa forecasts it will nearly triple to 17 million tonnes by 2045. By 2050, one in four people worldwide will be African.

The supply chain is not ready. The United States is Africa's largest LPG supplier, yet no sub-Saharan terminal can discharge a full Very Large Gas Carrier (VLGC) cargo of about 45,000 tonnes. Only about 20 LPG storage facilities on the continent hold 10,000 tonnes or more, and stocks commonly cover ten days of demand or less. Africa buys mostly on the spot market, in small, expensive cargoes, without long-term contracts or price predictability. Demand is not the constraint. Molecules, terminals, cylinders and trucks are.

In 2026, when the Strait of Hormuz closed, import prices in East and West Africa jumped 70–100 per cent above their 2025 average. When refills double in price or depots run dry, households return to charcoal. Clean cooking scales at the speed of the fuel supply chain.

The value chain opportunity

INVESTMENT is needed across the chain: gas processing and refining to keep more African LPG at home, despite exports of around 10 million tonnes a year; VLGC-capable import hubs and strategic storage for long-term contracts; bottling plants and cylinder manufacturing to reduce household costs; inland logistics for landlocked markets; and last-mile distribution through cylinder recirculation, small 3–6 kg cylinders and pay-as-you-go. The IEA estimates universal clean cooking in Africa will cost about $2 billion annually by 2040, less than 0.1 per cent of global energy investment. Capital is not scarce; bankable structures are. Programmes too often fund just the stove rather than the entire chain.

The opportunity will not wait – and those who move first will help shape Africa's LPG future. Three questions are critical: who invests, where, and how to bring developers and financiers together.

Who should invest, and why

NO single player can do this alone, but each has a role and reason to move.

U.S. producers supply most cargoes. Long-term contracts, with formula pricing over 12 to 24 months or longer, can make import hubs bankable, ideally backed by minority equity. Producers secure a region where LPG demand will grow for decades. The US Department of Energy supports the Fueling Lives initiative that champions LPG access abroad.

International traders such as Petredec, Vitol and Trafigura have the shipping, risk management and balance sheets to operate multi-country hubs. Cargo aggregation and redistribution are their business; first movers can secure prime port positions.

Gulf partners, including national oil companies, sovereign funds and trade financiers, can provide capital and cargo financing while gaining downstream growth. Saudi Arabia's Oil Sustainability Program backs LPG clean cooking through Forward7, including the IGNITE challenge. Saudi trade financiers can fund cargoes. The next step is infrastructure capital.

Chinese investors are already at the table. In April, NNPC signed a memorandum of understanding with Sanjiang Chemical and Xinganchen (Fuzhou) Industrial Park on a potential equity partnership to restart and expand the Port Harcourt and Warri refineries, including petrochemicals and gas-based industrial hubs. Chinese firms can partner on gas processing, petrochemicals and cylinder manufacturing, provided cooking-grade butane is reserved for African kitchens.

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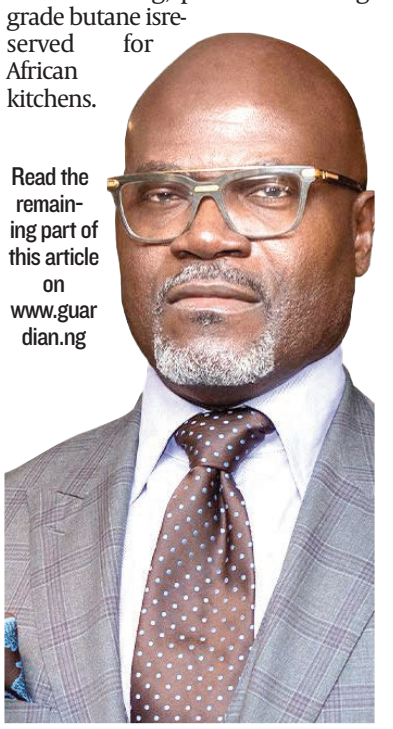

Kragha

Transport&Tourism

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Lenders demand credible contracts, securities to increase maritime funding

Stories by **Adaku Onyenucheya**

FINANCIAL and legal experts have identified weak contractual arrangements, uncertain cash flows, and difficulties in enforcing collateral agreements as major obstacles to increasing lending to Nigeria's maritime industry, warning that improvements in liquidity alone would not guarantee access to financing.

The concerns come amid persistent delays in accessing credit and, in some cases, outright refusal by financial institutions to finance maritime projects, raising questions about the industry's ability to attract the capital required to expand local capacity.

The issues featured prominently at a panel session titled, 'Bankability of the Nigerian Maritime Industry: What Do Lenders Really Want?' during the 17th Lecture and Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the Nigerian Maritime Law Association (NMLA) in Lagos.

The event brought together bankers, legal practitioners, economists, regulators, and maritime operators to examine financing constraints in the industry, including the prolonged delay in disbursing funds from the Cabotage Vessel Financing Fund (CVFF).

Team Lead, Litigation and Dispute Resolution, Legal Department, First Bank of Nigeria Limited, Chibueze Muobuikwu, said lenders were primarily concerned about borrowers' capacity to repay facilities.

He identified predictable cash flows, credible charter contracts, clear vessel ownership, adequate insurance, absence of competing interests and enforceable mortgage agreements as critical considerations in maritime lending.

According to him, banks also need mechanisms to monitor vessels' operations and ensure that revenues generated from those operations are domiciled with the lending institutions.

Divisional Head, Institutional Banking Group, Sterling Bank Plc, Moyomade Akinyosoye, said robust maritime financing was possible in Nigeria but required careful assessment of vessels, borrowers, contractual arrangements and investment risks.

She described maritime financing as a form of patient capital, given the high acquisition costs of vessels, their long operational life and the substantial resources required to maintain them.

Akinyosoye said shipowners must demonstrate that vessels acquired with borrowed funds would generate sufficient revenue to cover operating expenses and meet debt obligations.

She called for broader financing options, including maritime investment funds, pension funds, bonds, initial public offerings, leasing arrangements and increased participation by development finance institutions.

She also advocated standardised maritime financing documents and faster enforcement of maritime securities to reduce uncertainty and encourage lending.

Legal Counsel, Tetra Maritime Limited, Ogonnaya Emele, said lawyers had an important responsibility in conducting due diligence on borrowers, reviewing contractual arrangements, establishing the reliability of projected cash flows and ensuring that lenders could obtain enforceable security over vessels and related assets.

She noted that although Nigeria's Merchant Shipping Act and Admiralty Jurisdiction Act provided a legal framework for protecting lenders, delays in enforcing securities remained a major disincentive to funding.

According to her, a vessel arrested over a financing dispute could lose its revenue-generating capacity while legal proceedings continue, potentially reducing its value and exposing lenders to more losses.

She also argued that the position of mortgage holders in the hierarchy of maritime claims deserved reconsideration to encourage greater participation by financial institutions in vessel financing.

Partner, Finance, at Olaniwun Ajayi LP, Yewande Senbore, advocated blended financing arrangements involving commercial banks, development finance institutions and government intervention to reduce the financing burden on shipowners.



Executive Director, Operations NIMASA, Fatai Taiye Adeyemi (left); Denmark Ambassador, Jens Ole Bach Hansen; Director General, NIMASA, Dr. Dayo Mobereola and Sustainability Lead and Senior Advisor, Maritime Energy, Water and Environment Trade Council of Denmark, Tumi Onamade, when the Ambassador to Denmark paid a courtesy visit to the Agency's headquarters in Lagos.

Shipping, port operators under pressure to cut 900m tonnes of carbon emissions

SHIPPING companies and port operators face growing pressure to accelerate the adoption of cleaner fuels and low-carbon technologies, with the maritime industry accounting for approximately 2.3 per cent of global carbon dioxide emissions, equivalent to 900 million tonnes yearly.

In the midst of the struggle, poor coordination among fuel producers, shipowners and port operators has emerged as a major obstacle to accelerating the industry's decarbonisation, with each stakeholder waiting for the others to commit resources before making investments.

This was disclosed during a press webinar organised by Future Cleantech Architects (FCA), titled 'Navigating Net Zero: The Challenge of Decarbonising the Maritime Sector'.

Associate Cleantech Analyst at FCA, Pauline Leroi, said fuel producers needed assurances that vessels would purchase green fuels before committing capital to production, while shipowners required adequate fuel availability before ordering vessels designed to use alternative energy sources.

Similarly, ports must invest in bunkering infrastructure to ensure that alternative fuels are available to vessels.

Leroi said coordinated investments among the three groups would reduce first-mover risks, limit the possibility of stranded assets and accelerate the industry's transition to cleaner energy.

According to her, international shipping accounts for 86 per cent of the sector's CO2 emissions, followed by domestic shipping at 10 per cent and fishing activities at four per cent.

She identified general cargo ships, cruise ships, bulk carriers, container ships and tankers as the vessel categories responsible for nearly 75 per cent of global shipping emissions, making them priority targets for decarbonisation.

Leroi stressed that the geographical spread of shipping emissions made international cooperation essential, particularly through stronger regulations under the International Maritime Organisation (IMO).

She identified four major pathways for reducing shipping emissions: energy efficiency improvements; wind-assisted technologies and carbon capture; alternative marine fuels; and new propulsion technologies.

Experts seek trade-friendly regulations, removal of intra-African trade barriers

AFRICAN governments have been urged to dismantle unnecessary regulatory and operational barriers to cross-border commerce and establish trade-friendly systems that protect legitimate business activities without imposing avoidable delays.

The call was made at the Import Export Conference: Global Nexus 2026 in Lagos, where government institutions, business leaders, manufacturers, importers, exporters, investors, and international trade partners examined practical solutions to challenges that constrain commerce across Africa.

Convener of Global Nexus 2026, Dr Tobias Eze, said the continent possessed enormous economic opportunities, vast markets and entrepreneurs capable of connecting businesses across borders.

He cited Lagos, Accra, Nairobi and Johannesburg as examples of commercial centres driving economic activities across the continent but questioned whether African countries were trading at their full potential.

He also challenged governments to examine whether they were maximising the opportunities offered by the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) and to develop the logistics, infrastructure, ports, and financial systems required to compete effectively in global markets.

Eze said unlocking the continent's trade potential would require deliberate efforts to strengthen intra-African commerce, improve cross-border efficiency and expand access to international markets.

He stressed the need for stronger collaboration between governments and the private sector, arguing that no country could build a strong economy in isolation.

According to him, importers cannot succeed without efficient logistics, just as exporters cannot thrive without access to international markets.

He noted that importers needed transparent and predictable processes, exporters required efficient trade facilitation, manufacturers needed access to competitive markets, while logistics operators depended on efficient port and border operations.

Eze added that governments could not build prosperous economies without active private-sector participation, just as businesses needed an enabling environment to operate, invest, and expand.

He identified the Nigeria Customs Service (NCS), the Standards Organisation of Nigeria (SON), the National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control (NAFDAC), and other regulatory institutions as critical to maintaining standards and facilitating legitimate international trade.

However, he urged the agencies to strengthen engagement with businesses to ensure that operators understand and comply with applicable standards and regulations.

Lawyers, students urged to explore opportunities across maritime value chain

LEGAL practitioners and law students have been urged to look beyond traditional courtroom practice and explore opportunities across the maritime value chain, as shipping, offshore operations, marine insurance and port logistics offer expanding prospects for specialised legal services.

The call was made at the maiden annual maritime conference organised by The Maritime Society, University of Ibadan, with support from Bloomfield LP.

The conference, themed "The Sea Does Not Begin at the Shoreline: Maritime Law, the Blue Economy and the Pursuit of a Maritime Career beyond the Littoral States," examined the opportunities available to legal practitioners beyond coastal states and traditional maritime litigation.

Partner at Bloomfield LP, Adedoyin Afun, identified seven major segments of the maritime industry: ship ownership and finance; offshore and oil servicing; ports, terminals and logistics; trade, cargo and commodities; marine insurance and protection and indemnity; regulation, safety and security; and the blue economy.

He explained that the maritime value chain involved several players, including customs brokers, haulage companies, shipyards, financiers, shipowners, charterers, terminal operators, inland depots and cargo buyers.

Consequently, businesses operating in inland states were also integral to the industry and offered opportunities for legal practice, investment and commercial development.

Afun cited Oyo State as an example of how an inland location could emerge as a significant maritime hub despite having no coastline, arguing that the development of an inland dry port and rail freight connectivity could create opportunities for investment, trade and specialised legal services.

He urged law students to prepare for opportunities in the sector by familiarising themselves with key maritime documents, including bills of lading, charter parties and marine insurance policies.

He also encouraged them to follow industry developments, join professional associations and participate in maritime moot competitions to develop practical knowledge of the sector.

However, Afun identified the absence of an Admiralty Division of the Federal High Court in Oyo State as a potential constraint to the development of maritime legal practice in the region.

He also called on the Faculty of Law, University of Ibadan, to commence teaching maritime law, noting that although the course had been approved as an elective, it had yet to be introduced.

During a panel session, the Founder of Nanofins, Yinka Ayeni, said that a career in maritime law extends beyond courtroom litigation to include chartering, ship brokerage, ship and crew management, and maritime consultancy.

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To be or not to be: 2027 as referendum on Tinubu's reforms

Since Nigeria's return to democracy in 1999, only former President Goodluck Jonathan has failed to secure re-election while in office. His predecessor, Olusegun Obasanjo, and successor, Muhammadu Buhari, successfully leveraged incumbency to win second terms in 2003 and 2019, respectively. Whether President Bola Tinubu can replicate that feat in 2027 will largely depend on how voters weigh his administration's record against the economic hardships facing the country, ***SEYE OLUMIDE*** *reports.*

As President Bola Tinubu consolidates his political influence ahead of the 2027 general election, with opposition governors and prominent politicians defecting to the ruling All Progressives Congress (APC), the party's expanding national reach is raising questions about the extent to which control of government translates into electoral advantage.

The president's access to federal resources, political appointments, state structures and an expanding network of political allies could strengthen his re-election prospects. Yet, Nigeria's democratic experience shows that incumbency alone cannot guarantee victory. Economic hardship, insecurity, public dissatisfaction, party divisions and opposition mobilisation have, at different times, weakened the electoral prospects of sitting governments.

For Tinubu, therefore, the 2027 election will test not only the strength of the APC's political machinery but also the administration's ability to convert its institutional advantages into popular support. The central question is whether Nigerians consider his performance sufficient to earn him another four years.

Jonathan's defeat and the limits of incumbency

Jonathan's defeat in 2015 offers perhaps the most significant lesson for Tinubu. The Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), which had controlled the Federal Government since 1999, enjoyed considerable political influence across the states and the National Assembly. Yet, its dominance and access to federal power could not prevent the emergence of a formidable opposition coalition.

The Jonathan administration faced growing dissatisfaction over insecurity, particularly the Boko Haram insurgency and the abduction of 276 schoolgirls from Chibok, Borno State, in April 2014. Corruption allegations and declining confidence in the government's capacity to address national challenges further weakened its standing.

The PDP's internal crisis compounded the problem, culminating in the defection of five governors and other influential politicians to the newly formed APC. Their departure weakened the ruling party's structures, particularly in the North, while strengthening the opposition's organisational reach.

The APC's ability to unite previously competing political interests behind Muhammadu Buhari provided a credible alternative capable of challenging the PDP nationally. The election demonstrated that an incumbent's control of government could be overwhelmed when public dissatisfaction coincided with party fragmentation and a united opposition.

The vulnerability of incumbency is also evident in state elections. In 2003, five of the six Alliance for Democracy (AD) governors in the South-West lost their re-election bids to the PDP. They were Lam Adesina of Oyo, Bisi Akande of Osun, Olusegun Osoba of Ogun, Niyi Adebayo of Ekiti and Adebayo Adefarati of Ondo. Only Lagos Governor Bola Tinubu survived.

> "Ultimately, Tinubu's re-election prospects will depend on the interaction of these competing forces: the reach of the APC's political structures, the president's access to public resources, the cohesion of the ruling party, the credibility of the opposition and, above all, voters' assessment of the administration's performance."

Other sitting governors who lost re-election include Ikedi Ohakim of Imo in 2011, Kayode Fayemi of Ekiti in 2014, Idris Wada of Kogi in 2015, Mohammed Abubakar of Bauchi and Jibrilla Bindow of Adamawa in 2019, as well as Gboyega Oyetola of Osun in 2022. Oyetola lost to Ademola Adeleke, who polled 403,371 votes against his 375,027.

These precedents reinforce the argument that political power provides an advantage but cannot substitute for public acceptance.

Against this background, the APC's expanding presence across the country is an important factor in Tinubu's re-election calculations. Governors command considerable influence through their relationships with local government chairmen, legislators, party executives, community leaders and grassroots organisations. Their defection to the ruling party could strengthen its mobilisation capacity and improve the president's electoral reach.

However, whether these political structures can automatically deliver votes remains debatable.

A former spokesman of the Pan Niger Delta Forum (PANDEF), Ken Robinson, believes incumbency, financial resources and political structures will give Tinubu a considerable advantage over his challengers.

He argues that the president's access to federal and state resources, along with support from governors and local government structures, places him in a stronger position than his opponents.

"Whether we like it or not, the power of incumbency is a factor in Nigerian elections, particularly presidential contests. Since the return to democratic rule in 1999, the only time an incumbent President seeking re-election lost to the opposition was in 2015, when Goodluck Jonathan was defeated," he said.

Robinson, who expects the contest to be largely between Tinubu and former Vice President Atiku Abubakar, however, believes regional voting patterns will remain decisive. He argues that Atiku could struggle to secure sufficient support in the South-South and South-West.

Performance, hardship and the incumbency question

For Oluwole Aguda, a former gubernatorial contestant in Kogi State and election expert, the widely held notion of the power of incumbency is overstated.

He argues that holding public office merely provides opportunities that could strengthen or weaken a politician's electoral standing, depending on performance and the ability to sustain public confidence.

"The power of incumbency is simply a political myth in my opinion. There is no power in incumbency per se; it is simply leverage naturally provided by an office, which may be used to advantage or disadvantage," he said.

Aguda identified political appointments, control of resources and fiscal discretion as some of the advantages available to an incumbent but maintained that these do not automatically translate into electoral victory.

His argument places the administration's performance at the centre of Tinubu's re-election calculations.

The removal of petrol subsidies and the foreign exchange reforms introduced by the president remain major sources of public debate. While the administration argues that the measures are necessary to correct structural weaknesses, improve government revenue and establish a more sustainable economy, millions of Nigerians continue to contend with rising food, transportation, housing, healthcare and education costs.

For households struggling with the cost of living, the assessment of the reforms will be less about their stated economic objectives than whether they have translated into improved living conditions, better incomes and greater economic security.

Security will also be an important consideration. Persistent banditry, kidnapping and insurgency, particularly in parts of the North-West and North-East, continue to threaten livelihoods and public confidence. The administration's ability to improve security before the election could significantly influence voters' assessment of its performance.

A security expert and Director-General of the Institute for Police and Security Policy Research, Dr Charles Omole, describes incumbency as the single biggest advantage in Nigerian politics. He argues that Tinubu's control of government resources, political structures and security institutions places him in a stronger position ahead of the election.

Omole, however, cautions that these advantages do not guarantee victory, citing Jonathan's defeat as evidence that economic hardship and public dissatisfaction could overturn an incumbent's political calculations.

"Incumbency gives you a head start. Performance and the character to respect the referee determine whether you finish first," he said.

He identified the rising cost of living, poverty and insecurity as critical factors that could undermine Tinubu's re-election prospects, arguing that voters' economic experiences would ultimately matter more than political mobilisation.

On the opposition's preparedness, Omole said its fragmentation, weak grassroots organisation and competing presidential ambitions currently make it difficult to present a formidable challenge to the APC.

He argued that a successful opposition coalition requires more than prominent politicians defecting from the ruling party. It must have nationwide electoral structures, credible policy alternatives and the willingness of presidential aspirants to support a common candidate.

Omole also warned against the use of state institutions for partisan purposes, identifying public distrust of INEC and the police, insecurity and reported obstacles to collecting Permanent Voter Cards and conducting campaigns as issues requiring transparent responses.

Despite these concerns, he projects Tinubu as the favourite to win in 2027, largely because of the APC's national political spread and the absence of a united opposition platform.

"I don't think the APC needs to manipulate the election to win. No single opposition party appears to have a comparable national spread of popular support to the APC," he said.

He nevertheless warned that the emergence of a united opposition with a single presidential candidate could significantly alter the political calculations.



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

FG signs deal to accelerate 'Irrigate Nigeria' project

• Partners NASENI on irrigation equipment production plant

By **Adeyemi Adepetun**

THE Presidential Implementation Committee on Technology Transfer (PICTT) has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Valmont Industries, Inc., marking a major step in the federal government's flagship Irrigate Nigeria Programme.

Chairman of PICTT, Dr Dahiru Muhammed, who is also coordinating the full implementation of the Irrigate Nigeria Programme, said the MoU signing over the weekend officially brings Valmont - through its Valley Irrigation brand, the global leader in mechanised irrigation - on board as a major partner in the development of irrigation infrastructure across Nigeria.

Under the agreement, Valmont - the world's largest manufacturer of pivot irrigation systems - will not only partner in building world-class irrigation infrastructure in Nigeria.

Bandits kill Niger community head, four others, raze houses

From **Bala Yahaya**, Minna

ARMED bandits killed the village head of Lumma Ba'are community in Borgu Local Council of Niger State, Bawa Muhammad, and four other residents during an attack on the community after the early morning prayer last Saturday.

According to sources, the attackers also burnt a baby and the entire building after the mother ran away from the scene, leaving the baby behind, and further set the whole village ablaze before fleeing into the forest.

Five other persons who sustained injuries were also said to have been evacuated to the General Hospital, New-Bussa, for medical attention.

According to available information, some of the attackers were suspected Fulani boys from the same community, who have allegedly allied with armed bandits.

Meanwhile, the Niger State Government has condemned the attack, describing it as unfortunate and unacceptable, particularly for its devastating impact on innocent residents and the traditional institution.

In a statement from the Commissioner for Information and Orientation, Obed Nana, the government condoled with the people, stressing that joint security teams have been deployed to the affected community, while efforts have been intensified to apprehend those responsible for the attack and bring them to justice.

Stakeholders urge targeted investments to develop North

From **Terhemba Daka**, Abuja

• Urge Tinubu to prioritise agriculture, infrastructure, others

STAKEHOLDERS in Northern Nigeria have called on President Bola Tinubu's administration to adopt a strategic investment-driven approach to the region's economic development, insisting that the region needs investment, not sympathy, to unlock its vast economic potential.

They further identified agriculture, agro-processing, manufacturing, commerce, infrastructure, tourism and cultural industries as critical sectors requiring targeted investment, alongside improved access to affordable capital to stimulate industrialisation, create jobs and strengthen the region's contribution to national economic growth.

Speaking over the weekend at the 2026 Arewa Festival in Abuja, they advocated a shift from short-term interventions and humanitarian responses to sustainable investments that would transform the region's abundant resources into productive enterprises.

Leading the call at the event organised by Tripoint Travels and Tripoint Academy for Tourism and Enterprise Development, the Executive Director of Greenwich Bank, Dr Goni Farouk, said Nigeria's ambition to build a diversified trillion-dollar economy would remain difficult to achieve without harnessing the productive capacity of Northern Nigeria.

He warned that portraying the North primarily as a humanitarian challenge rather than an investment destination could discourage long-term capital and undermine its economic prospects.

According to him, the region's extensive arable land, established trading networks, craftsmanship in leather, textiles and metalwork, as well as its large youthful population, provide a strong foundation for economic transformation.

However, he stressed the need to move beyond the export of raw materials to local processing, value addition and industrial production.

Farouk further advocated the development of strategic trade corridors, particularly along the Abuja-Kaduna-Kano axis, to facilitate the movement of goods, connect producers to markets and stimulate regional commerce, among others.

According to him, stronger regional value chains and cross-border trade with neighbouring countries, including Niger, Chad and



Former President, Lagos Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI), Toki Mabogunje (left); former Group Business Editor of *The Guardian* and Group Managing Director, *Daily Independent* Newspaper, Ade Ogidan; and National Chairman, Commerce and Industry Correspondents' Association of Nigeria (CICAN), Taiwo Hassan, during the conferment of Ogidan with the Lifetime Achiever's Award as CICAN's key founding father at the association's Annual National Workshop and Awards in Lagos over the weekend.

CSOs seek NWDC's explanation on intervention items, governance

From **Murtala Adewale**, Kano

A COALITION of civil society organisations for Good Governance and Accountability (CCSGGA) has raised the alarm over the alleged failure of the North-West Development Commission (NWDC) to dispense intervention materials procured for its 2026 programmes.

Also, the coalition expressed worries over what it considered a leadership failure and an attempt to divert public resources belonging to the North West states and demanded the intervention of relevant security agencies for swift action.

The groups also accused the commission's leadership of administrative inertia and poor coordination, following what it described as prolonged silence over the commencement of an approved recruitment exercise and the failure of the governing board to hold meetings for about two consecutive quarters.

Briefing newsmen in Kano over the weekend, the coalition alleged that its inspection of the commission's warehouses revealed large quantities of intervention materials, including Hilux vehicles, tractors, fertilisers, solar-powered irrigation pumps, food items and streetlights, which were yet to be distributed to their intended beneficiaries.

Led by its Chairman, Dr Abdussalam Kani, and Secretary, Comrade Akibu Hamisu, the body expressed concern that public resources procured to address critical development challenges in the seven North-West states were left in warehouses while supposed beneficiaries faced economic and humanitarian difficulties.

Beyond the abandoned materials, the coalition was also piqued by the commission's alleged failure to commence recruitment, despite the Federal Character Commission (FCC) and other relevant regulatory agencies' approvals to do so.

According to the coalition, months after the said approvals, the Commission is yet to publish recruitment advertisements.

HURIWA, Dalung seek probe of bandits' access to military uniforms

From **Joel Oladele**, Abuja

•Query civilian casualties during Imo air operations

•Soldiers repel attacks on Benue communities

THE Human Rights Writers Association of Nigeria (HURIWA) has demanded an urgent investigation into how armed bandits allegedly gained access to military-style uniforms .

This followed a viral video allegedly showing armed men in a forest inspecting bundles of camouflage uniforms and military-style caps.

HURIWA also questioned the Nigerian Army's engagement with armed groups in Kwara State and reports of civilian casualties during the military's air operations in Imo State.

Also, a former Minister of Youth and Sports Development, Solomon Dalung, has called for a thorough investigation into how suspected bandits obtained newly packaged military camouflage uniforms found in a forest.

Meanwhile, suspected armed bandits have reportedly attacked the Mbatian community in Dyom, and Atuluku, Tse Kasua and Amachigh villages in Ukum Local Council Area of Benue State.

A community source said the attacks occurred between Friday night and Saturday morning, just as military personnel were also attacked at their duty posts.

IN a statement yesterday, HURIWA National Coordinator, Comrade Emmanuel Onwubiko, called on the National Security Adviser (NSA), Chief of Defence Staff and military authorities to explain the developments.

The body said the reported incidents raised concerns about military supply chains, the handling of armed groups and the protection of civilians during security operations.

On the Kwara operation, the association acknowledged the army's explanation that the engagement was part of a deliberate security operation which resulted in the recovery of 12 AK-47 rifles and the release of 10 kidnapped victims.

However, it demanded details of the legal framework guiding such engagements, the officers who authorised them and the procedures for handling armed persons who surrender, warning that negotiations with armed groups must not become a means of escaping investigation and prosecution.

While admitting that it had not independently established the source of the clothing, HURIWA urged security agencies to trace the manufacturers, financiers, suppliers and distributors, warning that criminals could impersonate security personnel wearing military-style uniforms and mount illegal checkpoints to deceive unsuspecting members of the public.

Dangote Coal disburses scholarships, pays surface rent

From **Yusufu Aminu Idegu**, Lokoja

DANGOTE Coal Mines Limited, in fulfilment of the extant Community Development Agreement (CDA) with host communities in Kogi State, has disbursed scholarships worth millions of naira to the affected students for the 2026/2027 academic session.

The company's General Manager, Special Duties, Mr Nuhu Elujah, said the gesture was part of the company's broader commitment to promoting sustainable community development and creating opportunities for future generations.

He disclosed that the company presented scholarship cheques to 42 students enrolled in various tertiary institutions across the six coal-bearing communities in Ankpa Local Council Area of the state.

Elujah, represented by Mr Emmanuel Alonge, listed the communities to include Awo-Akpali, Awo-Ojuwo, Awo-Akpolokuta, Awo-Atte, Onupi and Ajobe-Ofeanyaka.

According to him, the programme underscores the company's commitment to inclusive community development and building a skilled, empowered and productive generation capable of contributing to the growth of their communities and society at large.

Sokoto donates bus to nursing college as 278 graduate

From **Muhammad Gazali**, Garba

SOKOTO State Governor, Dr Ahmed Aliyu, has donated a brand-new Toyota bus to Fatima College of Nursing Sciences, Sifawa, as 278 students, comprising nurses and midwives, graduated from the institution.

Announcing the donation during the college's third graduation ceremony over the weekend, the governor, represented by Deputy Governor Umar Tafida, also awarded N250,000 to each of the six outstanding graduates in recognition of their academic excellence.

He said the establishment of the college by the Hajiya Fatima Yahaya Foundation was a significant contribution to healthcare manpower development in the state, while commending the former Chief of Army Staff, Lt.-Gen. Faruk Yahaya, and his wife, for their commitment to education, healthcare development and humanitarian services.

The governor disclosed that the government recruited 1,947 healthcare professionals within three years, comprising 187 doctors, 25 pharmacists, 86 medical laboratory scientists and over 1,500 nurses and midwives, while 21 general hospitals and 192 primary healthcare centres have also been renovated.

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24 years after, World Athletics lifts ban on Chioma Ajunwa

By Gowon Akpodonor

FORMER Nigerian athletics star, Chioma Ajunwa-Opara, has been cleared to return to competitive athletics after the World Athletics Athletes' Integrity Unit (AIU) lifted the lifetime ban imposed on her in 2002.

The decision, which takes immediate effect, brings an end to a 24-year-old doping controversy that forced the Atlanta 1996 Olympic gold medallist out of the sport.

Ajunwa Opara secured the review of her case after approaching the AIU on August 28, arguing that the anti-doping regulations under which she was sanctioned had since been replaced by newer rules.

Acting on the legal principle of *lex mitior,* which allows a person to benefit from a more lenient law introduced after an offence, the AIU ruled that her lifetime ineligibility should be reduced, making her eligible to return to athletics immediately.

In a memo dated November 18, the AIU explained that the regulations applicable to her case required a different assessment of the Nandrolone violation, which should have been treated as a first offence under the relevant provisions.

The integrity body also acknowledged that although there were grounds for an appeal when the original suspension was imposed in June 2002, the matter was not properly pursued.

According to an online report, Ajunwa-Opara, speaking yesterday, blamed past boards of the Athletics Federation of Nigeria (AFN) for failing to follow the appropriate procedures at the time, insisting that attempts to challenge the decision were unsuccessful.

She recalled how fellow athlete Rosa Collins travelled to Monaco to seek another hearing but was directed to channel the matter through the AFN, whose officials, according to her, were unwilling to listen.

The former athlete said the punishment abruptly ended her career but maintained that she held no bitterness over the experience.

"I give thanks to God that the stain has been removed from my athletics career. I am now free to participate in all activities," she said.

She urged Nigerian athletics administrators to improve their knowledge of technical regulations and anti-doping procedures to prevent athletes from suffering similar experiences.

Ajunwa-Opara made history at the 1996 Atlanta Olympics when she won the women's long jump gold medal, becoming Nigeria's first Olympic gold medallist in track and field.



Ajunwa

Tinubu reaffirms Nigeria's support for FIFA President Infantino

• CAF increases financial support for member-associations by 33 per cent

By Christian Okpara

PRESIDENT Bola Tinubu, at the weekend, reaffirmed Nigeria's support for FIFA President, Gianni Infantino, who is vying for a third term in office as the world's number one football administrator.

Infantino is seeking another term of office at the FIFA election billed to hold on March 18, 2027 in Rabat, Morocco.

Speaking at the 48th CAF Ordinary General Assembly hosted in Abuja, President Tinubu, who was represented by the Speaker of the House of Representatives, Tajudeen Abbas, reaffirmed Nigeria's strong confidence in the Swiss administrator's leadership.

The crucial endorsement positions Nigeria firmly behind Infantino as he heads toward the vote during the 77th FIFA Congress. Infantino faces challenges from French Football Federation President Philippe Diallo and Japan Football Association honorary president Kohzo Tashima for the 2027–2031 term.

Battle for general secretary position sparks fresh crisis in NFF

By Gowon Akpodonor

THE Normalisation Committee for the Nigeria Football Federation (NFF) may have more than the restructuring of the game's leadership architecture, as a muted battle over who heads the secretariat has become part of the committee's problems.

NFF's deputy secretary general, Dr Emmanuel Ikpeme, has been at the head of the secretariat since Dr Mohammed Sanusi resigned from the post alongside former NFF Presi-dent, Ibrahim Gusau and other senior officials of the federation.

The federation's Director of Communications, Ademola Olajire, was asked to act as his deputy.

It looked like a simple arrangement on paper then, but *The Guardian* learnt that it has opened a fresh war within the system.

World football governing body FIFA does not even see Emmanuel Ikpeme as acting General Secretary. In FIFA's books, Ikpeme is still Deputy General Secretary. This was communicated to the delegation led by the Chairman of the National Sports Commission, Shehu Dikko, when they briefed FIFA at its headquarters in Zurich in September 2026 regarding the vacuum in the NFF.

Eunisell: Man-of-the-Match, Player-of-the-Month Awards meant to spur competition in Abia Warriors

By Christian Okpara

ABIA Warriors Football Club of Umuahia's major sponsor, Eunisell, has explained that it introduced the Man-of-the-Match and Player-of-the-Month awards to motivate the players to put in their best to win laurels for the club.

The firm said that he gesture, which has been widely applauded by the players, technical crew, and supporters of the club, is aimed at rewarding excellence, encouraging healthy competition, and spurring the team to greater heights on the pitch.

The awards come with additional cash prizes, which will see the Man-of-the-Match for each game going home with N50,000, while the Player-of-the-Month award attracts a N100,000 reward.

Reacting to the development, Abia Warriors Chairman, Coach John Sam Obuh, expressed his gratitude to Eunisell for introducing such a laudable initiative, which, he said, will fire up the players as they navigate their way out of the murky waters of the relegation zone.

He reserved special praise for the Group Managing Director of Eunisell, Mr. Chika Ikenga, for his unwavering commitment, generosity, and continued support for the club, describing him as a true partner in the Abia Warriors project.

Itauma returns in February 'with nowhere to go'

FRANK Warren wants a top ten heavyweight for Moses Itauma's comeback, though the division leaves him trapped between aging veterans and domestic British fighters, reports *boxingnews24.com.*

Chris Mannix reported on X on November 20 that the 21-year-old plans to return in February after Filip Hrgovic knocked him out in their August world title fight. Neither group of available opponents solves the conditioning flaw that cost Itauma his belt.

Warren initially talked about bringing Itauma back in late January or early February against "a name to start with." By early November, he had shifted to calling for "a top ten ranked fighter."

Itauma wanted an immediate rematch with Hrgovic, who stopped him in the ninth round on August 29 at London's O2 Arena to win the vacant IBF title. Hrgovic has a mandatory defense lined up against Frank Sanchez, leaving Itauma (14-1, 12 KOs) waiting on the outside.

Sporting Lagos partners Locker Room Bonus for players' development

By Christian Okpara

SPORTING Lagos F.C has become the first official partner of Locker Room Bonus (LRB), the direct-to-athlete reward programme supported by betPawa.

The agreement, LRB's first with an individual club, follows Sporting Lagos's promotion to the Nigeria Premier Football League (NPFL).

Sporting Lagos experienced the LRB model during its 2025/26 Nigeria National League (NNL) campaign. The new agreement brings those match-win bonuses into the club's NPFL season.

Under the terms of the agreement, every eligible player and technical backroom staff member will receive a fixed bonus for each competitive victory.

Payouts are delivered directly to personal mobile-money wallets before the squad leaves the dressing room, bypassing administrative bottlenecks and connecting on-pitch results directly to immediate Compensation.

Sporting Lagos' Head of Football, Ayobami Animasahun, explained: "Getting to the NPFL took more than the 11 players people saw on matchday. It took an entire group working together, week after week. We want to carry that respect for the whole team into this next chapter."


NNL Champions, Sporting Lagos celebrating their Super Four playoff win at the end of the 2025/26 season.

Okoko takes Alpha Bravo crown to complete impressive treble

By Eniola Daniel

THE stars are shining brightly for 19-year-old, Godwin Okoko, who, at the weekend, completed an impressive treble of tournament victories in less than four weeks, winning the maiden Alpha Bravo Classic at Lakowe Lakes Golf Club, Lagos, after overturning a two-shot deficit to Ghana's Vincent Torgah in the final round.

The Nigerian teenager's latest triumph follows victories at the Rift Valley Championship in Nakuru, Kenya, on October 27, and the 7th CIO Classic in Port Harcourt two weeks ago, where he set a new course record with a 22-under-par total of 266. His only non-winning finish in the four-event run came at the 26th Cote d'Ivoire Open, where he placed third behind Torgah and Nigeria's Sunday Olapade.

Solution

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24 years after, World Athletics lifts ban on Chioma Ajunwa /31



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That campaign feedback from Garki mosque

THERE'S hardly room for ordinary citizens to put across their feelings and demands to politicians during grand campaigns. All you have is a flurry of activities, long convoys, tight security, booming loud speakers and rented chants. Except at townhalls, where the privileged elites are able to interrogate manifestoes and programmes of candidates and their parties, there are no provisions for feedback from the streets. Once the political class and others in higher society have been briefed and settled, ordinary folks are lectured on how to vote. They can be seen but not heard.

But some youths forced their voices to be heard on November 13, 2026, when they chanted *'Ba ma yi'* to President Tinubu's convoy as he departed the Shehu Shagari Central Mosque, Area 1, Garki, Abuja, where he had gone to pray. *Ba ma yi,* in Hausa simply means: we don't want it or we do not support it. This phrase had been used across political ages to pass message to politicians who disregard the people.

For those who cared to listen, chants of *Ba ma yi* have been all over place, long before President Tinubu was serenaded with it at the mosque. Perhaps, that was too insignificant to matter to a ruling party that is menacingly endowed and too rich to listen to the masses.

At the APC campaigns in Kaduna, Kebbi and Sokoto, chants of *Ba ma yi* hummed in the backgrounds. They were ignored. Until they stepped forward on November 13, to make their voices heard. It was alleged that the protesters pelted President Tinubu's convoy with missiles. Video recordings of the encounter were not explicit, but the chants and the rejection were clear.

The initial reaction of the Presidency was to post another footage of the same event, where another group joyously welcomed the President to the Mosque. Bayo Onanuga, presidential spokesman, described this version as the rousing welcome accorded to the President at the mosque. But that clip could not eclipse the *Ba ma yi* spectacle.

Did the feedback from the mosque convince government that *Ba ma yi* is the genuine response of the masses to its unpopular and poverty inducing economic policies? No. Instead, government notoriously framed it as campaign violence sponsored by opposition elecments.

Ba ma yi forced a statement on political tolerance from President Tinubu, where he canvassed that campaigns must be about issues that promote welfare of the people, rather than violence. The president said he had followed reports of political violence in different parts of the country. He condemned violence and said he was committed to peaceful, free and fair election, and urged politicians and their followers eschew violence. The president said that being in different parties does not make the people enemies, as all Nigerians are members of the same household.

Then he said: "We shall not tolerate any irresponsible conduct by politicians and their supporters. Security agencies are therefore authorised to confront thuggery and other anti-social and anti-democratic activities with full force."

Not many observers believe that genuine concern for peaceful campaigns was the motivation for President Tinubu's statement, coming



the same day his convoy was pelted. That statement could have come much earlier, when the opposition reported multiple attacks across many states, with governors being promoters of violence. The presidential authorisation for security agencies to confront the thuggery in the middle of campaigns must be just and equitable to make sense. The Presidency and the ruling party control security agencies.

Swiftly, the FCT Police said it arrested the 78 youths suspected to stone the president's convoy as he departed the mosque. But they were later released in what was described as presidential clemency, after warning.

The presidential pardon seemed to be a good political move to avoid backlash. This is not the time to squander the residual goodwill that is available. But the APC Presidential Campaign Council insisted with certainty that the opposition sponsored the protests to manipulate public opinion and to spread lies about the state of the nation. The Council does not believe that citizens that are at the receiving end of obnoxious polices retain the consciousness and obligation to express grievance and demand better life. That unfeeling arrogance of people in power!

Previous feedback

In 2024, there were hunger protests in parts of the country, Abuja, Lagos, Port Harcourt, Kaduna, Ibadan, Enugu, Maiduguri and others. Niger State was where citizens first protested loudly that they were hungry, before it spread to other states. The protests were most popular in the North. Citizens called for an end to bad governance and hunger. They wanted subsidy removal reversed, cut in living costs, including electricity, tackle insecurity and reduce cost of governance.

It turned violent in the North because of exposure and vulnerability to government's economic reforms. President Tinubu was compelled to address the country on August 4, with the usual promise of sharing palliatives. The protesters were unimpressed. Government drafted the military to quell the uprising, at the end of which Amnesty International reported that 13 peaceful protesters were killed. Curfews were imposed in Kano, Borno, Yobe to stave escalation.

About 119 protesters were arrested including more than 50 minors, who were detained for about three months until their gaunt visage forced global outrage on the day they were brought to court. They were detained for nearly three months without food and medicine, before government was forced to announce amnesty for them on November 4, 2024. Perhaps, that reminder informed the timely amnesty for the *Ba ma yi* protesters. But the larger lessons of delivering good governance are lost on this government.

At the centre of *Ba ma yi* is the hardship inflicted by fuel subsidy removal in 2023. The policy was advertised as much-needed savings for use in crucial sectors of society. Despite subsidy removal and freeing of resources, this government remains neck-deep in debt. The other reforms and drive for taxes only make life harder for ordinary people. That's why they call for change.

Senator Ali Ndume, in one of his maverick moments, once queried the borrowing methods of the Tinubu-led government, often without input of lawmakers. He said between June 2023 and June 2024, the government borrowed $9.45 billion. He gave the breakdown as: $500 million (June 2023) for a women's programme. $800 million (June 2023) to cushion the effects of increased petroleum prices following fuel subsidy removal. $700 million (September 23) for adolescent girls' initiatives/learning and empowerment. $750 million (December 2023) for renewable energy scale-up. $1.5 billion (June 2024) to support Nigeria's economic stabilization reform. $750 million (June 2024) for immediate financial and technical support to stabilise the economy and scale up support for the poor.

There are no traces of implementation of these loans, but the ruling party has surplus cash for campaigns.

For a lawmaker who is supposed to report to his constituents, Ndume confessed to be unaware of any formal National Assembly approvals for these loans. In addition to the borrowed funds and increased revenues from Tinubu's petrol tax, the budgets are poorly implemented. In three years, Nigerians have become poorer, hungrier and despondent. That's the feedback from the streets.

> "The era of taking Nigerians for granted must come to an end. Let Nigerians decide how they're governed. That feedback from Garki is echoed all over the country. Let the resources work for the people. Let the poor breath!"

Therefore, militarising the campaigns to suppress the people's legitimate anger and demand for good governance cannot work. That seems to be the new thinking in government, as promoted in the Senate. The lawmakers suddenly realised that there are attacks on campaigns and candidates ahead of the 2027 elections. Senators confirmed and condemned the attack on President Tinubu at the Garki mosque.

The lawmakers directed the Inspector General of Police (IGP) and heads of other security agencies to arrest and prosecute perpetrators of political violence. They urged the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), to disqualify candidates and political parties found instigating violence. The Senate also urged governors to provide a level-playing field to all candidates and parties to use public facilities for campaigns.

Again, just like President Tinubu's belated call for peaceful campaigns, the Senate came too late. When the candidate of Africa Action Congress (AAC), Omoyele Sowore was assaulted, along with his team in Ekiti, the Senate did not condemn the assault. Till date, the police is yet to go after the original perpetrators, who are known faces in government.

So, let the police begin the arrest from Ekiti. The gunmen who sprayed the home of Chief John Oyegun, in GRA Benin on February 24, 2026, where leaders of the African Democratic Congress (ADC) gathered for a meeting, are still at large. The killers of a member of Nigeria Democratic Congress (NDC), Ifeanyi Nwolie, in October 2026, at the party's office/secretariat in Enugu GRA have not been arrested. The Police should also invite FCT minister, Nyesom Wike, for his inflammatory statements and repeated threat to put fire in some states. The man's rainbow contraption is a threat to democracy.

On the order by the Senate to INEC to delist candidates or parties that instigate violence, let's remind the lawmakers that there are provisions in the Electoral Act to deal with campaign and election violence. It does not require extra-judicial pronouncements that can be misused by an electoral body that has not demonstrated sufficient neutrality. Already, there are concerns out there of subterranean moves to further use the judiciary to disqualify candidates close to the elections.

It is important to listen to feedback from ordinary folks. Reliance on heavy disbursements and cash transfers at the upper echelon might give the impression that the people at the grassroots don't matter. They will matter if INEC allows the elections to be free and fair. They will matter if the elections are not militarised. The people will matter if the judiciary remains impartial.

The era of taking Nigerians for granted must come to an end. Let Nigerians decide how they're governed. That feedback from Garki is echoed all over the country. Let the resources work for the people. Let the poor breath!

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