The Guardian

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Vol. 43, No. 18,266 ■ Tuesday, November 24, 2026

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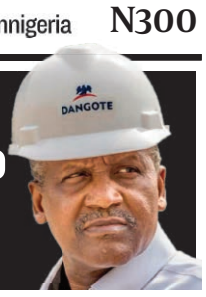
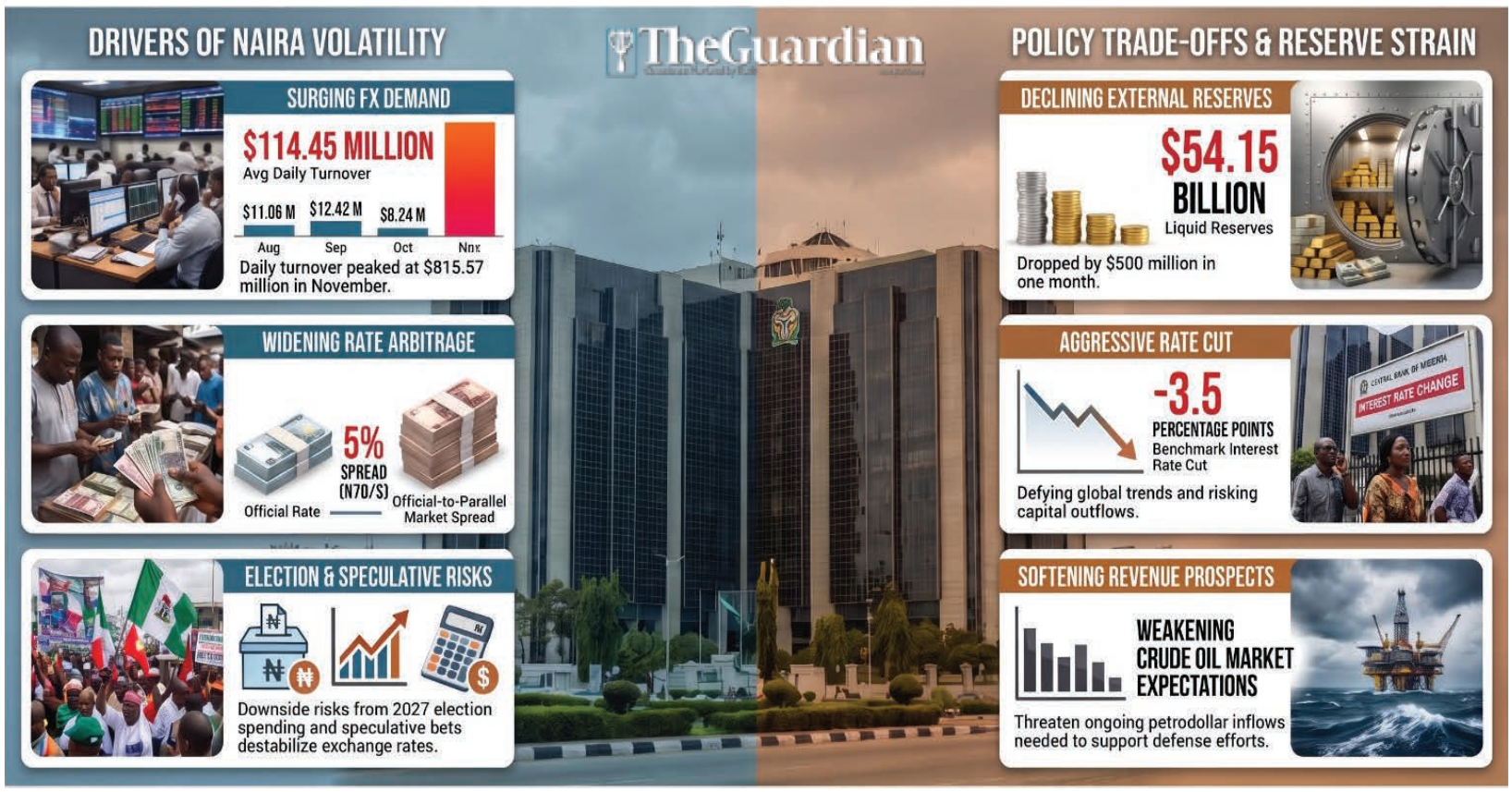
Aliko Dangote wins 2026 Obafemi Awolowo prize for leadership NEWS PAGE 5



Speculation, arbitrage, FX demand test CBN's naira defence as MPC meets P6



FG unveils five-year drug control plan, urges execution NEWS PAGE 7

Stop VCs, rectors from using NELFUND to hike tuitions, NANS tells Tinubu NEWS PAGE 7

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Kano State Governor, Abba K. Yusuf, in a group picture with leaders of the Igbo community in Kano shortly after the endorsement of President Tinubu and Yusuf at the Government House on Sunday.

NLC warns against dividing labour ahead of minimum wage negotiations NEWS PAGE 5

NCAA frowns on airport officials soliciting alms from passengers NEWS PAGE 29

Panorama

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SPOTLIGHT

2027: Tinubu woos Ndigbo, promises inclusive governance

From **Terhemba Daka**, Abuja

PRESIDENT Bola Ahmed Tinubu, yesterday, reaffirmed his commitment to an inclusive Nigeria in which every ethnic group has a stake, telling a packed gathering of Igbo leaders, business people and community representatives in Lagos that the Igbo people remained indispensable to the country's economic development and national progress.

The President spoke at the Ndigbo Lagos State Town Hall Dialogue, convened by the Honourable Minister of State for Budget and Economic Planning, Dr Doris Nkiruka Uzoka-Anite, under the auspices of the Ndigbo National Dialogue and Development Initiative (NNDDI).

The main bowl of the Wole Soyinka Centre for Culture and the Creative Arts, formerly the National Theatre, Iganmu, was filled with enthusiastic participants, including traditional and community leaders, captains of industry, market associations, women and youth groups, in a powerful demonstration of the strength and influence of the Igbo community in Lagos.

Addressing the gathering, President Tinubu acknowledged the enormous contribution of Ndigbo to commerce, enterprise, job creation and national development, stressing that neither Lagos nor Nigeria could realise its full potential without their participation.

Fountain of Life trustees begin contempt proceedings against Odukoya

THE Incorporated Trustees of the Fountain of Life Church have initiated contempt proceedings against Pastor Jimmy Odukoya over alleged disobedience of a Lagos State High Court order restraining him from presenting himself as the church's Senior Pastor and Spiritual Head.

The trustees instituted the proceedings on Monday, following an order issued by Justice Adewunmi-Oshin on November 18.

As a result, the Lagos State High Court has ordered Jimmy Odukoya to appear on Thursday over the alleged disobedience of an order restraining him from acting as the Senior Pastor and Spiritual Head of The Fountain of Life Church.

The court directed Odukoya to appear on November 26 to show cause in the contempt proceedings instituted by the church's Incorporated Trustees.

The development came a day after Odukoya told worshippers during Sunday service that he had heard about the injunction but had not been served.

In the order issued on Monday, Justice O.O. Adewunmi-Oshin authorised the trustees to serve Form 48 and other court processes on Odukoya through substituted means.

The approved methods include publication in a widely circulated newspaper, pasting the documents at a conspicuous part of his last known Lagos address and electronic delivery.

"The respondent is required to be present in court on the said date," the court ordered before adjourning the matter until Thursday for him to show cause.

Form 48 is a formal notice warning a person of the possible consequences of disobeying a court order.



Project Lead, World Children Day Celebration, Babajide Aduragbemi Sanwo-Olu (BAS) Foundation, Habeeb Oladipupo (left), addressing pupils from different schools in Agege Local Council, during the World Children Day in Lagos, yesterday. PHOTO: NAN

NVIDIA reinstates Jensen Huang as CEO

By **Adeyemi Adepetun**

TECHNOLOGY firm, NVIDIA has reinstated Jensen Huang as President and Chief Executive Officer, following a unanimous vote by its Board of Directors after a review of his leadership and potential national security concerns.

A statement, yesterday from the company, disclosed this, saying the decision takes effect immediately after discussions and meetings with Huang.

The Board said it assessed Huang's candour and ability to lead the company before reaching its decision. It also received input from senior levels of the United States government and said it was confident that his reinstatement posed no national security risk.

The decision restores Huang to the leadership of the U.S.-based chipmaker, while Chief Financial Officer Colette Kress, who served as interim CEO, will continue in her role as CFO.

Harvey C. Jones, Chairman of NVIDIA's Board, said the directors believed Huang was the right person to lead the company and that his return was in the best interests of shareholders, employees, partners and customers.

"The Board believes Jensen is the right person to lead NVIDIA, and that his reinstatement is in the best interests of our stockholders, employees, partners and customers," Jones said.

Fani-Kayode denies recall, flags treatment of Nigerians in S'Africa

NIGERIA'S High Commissioner to South Africa, Femi Fani-Kayode, has dismissed social media reports that the Federal Government recalled or reprimanded him.

Fani-Kayode said the claim was "completely unfounded".

The High Commissioner called for deeper ties between Abuja and Pretoria while raising concerns about how Nigerians living in South Africa are treated.

Speaking during a visit to Abuja, he said the trip was part of routine consultations with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, during which he briefed officials on recent developments in South Africa and received policy guidance. He also met officials responsible for African affairs and for Nigeria's missions across the continent.

"There have been reports on social media suggesting that I have been recalled. Those claims are simply untrue," he said.

... DAY 4594

OUR GIRLS STILL MISSING

Tope Templer Olaiya, News Editor

@TopeTempler



RANDOM FACTS

- In Japan, depression is described as "kokoro no kaze" — a cold of the soul.
- In 2011, the United Nations declared Internet access a human right, and disconnecting people from it is against international law.
- Emotional tears contain Leu-enkephalin - a natural pain killer. That's why crying makes you feel better.
- Once you stop looking, things find you.

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

- A consumer must be provided with a written record of every transaction by the undertaking. This record should contain the business details of the undertaking, the full details of transaction, tax payable etc.

TODAY'S QUOTE

"If you want to steal, steal a little in a nice way. But if you steal too much to become rich overnight, you'll be caught.

MOBUTU SESE SEKO

It is not the strongest of the species, nor the most intelligent that survives. It is the one that is the most adaptable to change.

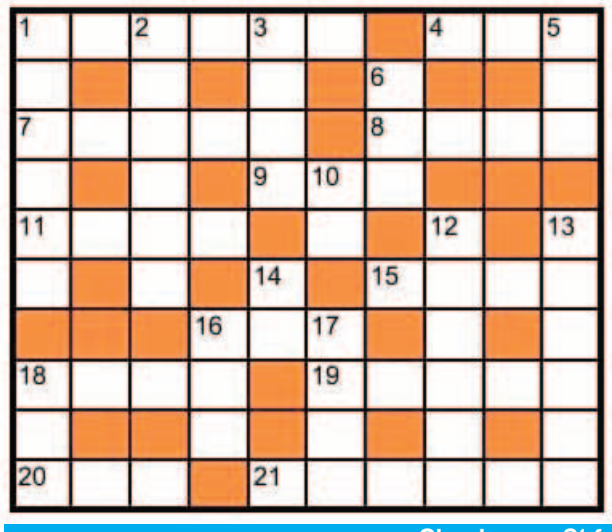
Ignorance more frequently begets confidence than does knowledge.

CHARLES DARWIN"

TODAY IN HISTORY

- **2025 - Nigeria**
Former Vice President Atiku Abubakar formally joined the African Democratic Congress and vowed to unite the opposition.
- **2025 - Jamaica**
Reggae legend, soul musician, Jimmy Cliff died at 81.
- **2023 - UK**
Hibiscus Rising, commemorating David Oluwale, was unveiled in Leeds.
- **2017 - Zimbabwe**
Emmerson Mnangagwa was sworn in as President of Zimbabwe, following resignation of Robert Mugabe.
- **2016 - Colombia**
The government of Colombia and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia–People's Army signed a revised peace deal, bringing an end to the country's over 50-year-long civil war.
- **2001 - Turkey**
The Grand National Assembly of Turkey ratified changes to the country's legal code that made women equal to men before the law and no longer subject to their husbands.
- **1991 - UK**
Freddie Mercury, lead singer of Queen died a day after announcing he had AIDS. Kiss musician Eric Carr died on the same day.
- **1982 - Kenya**
Barack Obama Sr., Kenyan economist and academic, father of Barack Obama, 44th President of the Uni-ted States, died. Obama Sr. was involved in three serious car accidents during his final years; he died as a result of the last one in 1982.
- **1976 - Iran**
Parts of Iran and the Soviet Union were struck by a magnitude 7.3 earthquake, killing about 5,000 people.
- **1971 - USA**
During a thunderstorm in Washington, D. B. Cooper hijacked a plane after departing Portland, Oregon and got $200,000 in ransom. He jumped from the plane and was never seen again (the only unsolved skyjacking in history).
- **1965 - DRC**
Joseph-Désiré Mobutu seized power in Democra-tic Republic of the Congo and became President, which he renamed Zaire in 1971. He ruled for over 30 years, until he was overthrown by rebels in 1997.
- **1963 - USA**
Lee Harvey Oswald, the assassin of Pres. John F. Kennedy, was killed by Jack Ruby on live television in the basement of Dallas police headquarters.
- **1859 - UK**
British naturalist Charles Darwin's *On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection* was published, a work of scientific literature considered to be foundation of evolutionary biology.

CROSS WORD PUZZLE



• ACROSS

I. Opening device, (6).
4. Protective clothing, (3).
7. Follow, (5).
8. Bone of human forearm, 4().
9. Indicates maiden name, (3).
II. Not often happening, (4).
I5. Mother, (4).
I6. Leguminous plant, (3).
I8. Late Afro beat king, (4).
I9. Dark-headed goose, (5).
20. Label, (3).
2I. Exchange teasing remark, (6).

© Olulana Olukayode

• DOWN

I. Imo state capital, (6).
2. Make something certain, (6).
3. Aligned, (4).
5. Non-poisonous large snake, (3).
6. Prompt, (3).
I0. Education, abbr., (2).
I2. Expression of sadness, (6).
I3. Horse's medium gait, (6).
I4. Iron symbol, (2).
I6. Average level, (3).
I7. Gov. Alex Otti state, (4).
I8. Obese, (3).

Check page 3I for solution to the puzzle

News

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Oyedele admits households, businesses yet to feel economic growth

Reps decry bureaucracy, high lending rates stifling small businesses, accuse govts

From **Joel Oladele**, Abuja

NIGERIA'S economy recorded further improvements in the second quarter of 2026, but the developments have yet to translate into sufficient relief for households and businesses.

The Minister of Finance and Coordinating Minister of the Economy, Taiwo Oyedele, presented the economic update at yesterday's 162nd National Economic Council (NEC) meeting.

Relatedly, the House of Representatives decried the bureaucratic bottlenecks and high lending rates that are stifling the growth of Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in the country.

The lawmakers also accused state and local governments of failing to support small businesses adequately despite increased federal allocations.

Senior Special Assistant to the President on Media and Communications, Office of the Vice President, Stanley Nkwocha, disclosed the NEC meeting's proceedings in a statement yesterday.

At the meeting, Oyedele reportedly said Nigeria's economic indicators continue to improve, with real Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growing by 4.43 per cent in the second quarter of 2026, compared with 4.23 per cent in the corresponding period of 2025.

He also noted that headline inflation declined for the fifth consecutive month to 14.06 per cent in October 2026, its lowest since September 2020.

Additionally, The Guardian gathered that Nigeria's external reserves stood at $54.87 billion as of November 12.

According to the minister, Nigeria's trade surplus increased from N10.2 trillion in the first half of 2025 to N20.1 trillion in the corresponding period of 2026.

He added that net revenue distributed through the Federation Account Allocation Committee (FAAC) rose by 44 per cent, from N15.2 trillion in 2024 to N21.9 trillion in 2025.

"Oyedele, however, observed that the improving economic indicators had yet to translate sufficiently into relief for households and businesses, particularly in the areas of food prices, electricity costs, access to affordable credit and employment," the statement noted.

Earlier, in his opening remarks, Chairman of the Council, Vice President KashimShettima, said Nigeria's economic future and the lasting success of President Bola Tinubu's reforms depended on building strong institutions.

SPEAKER of the House, Tajudeen Abbas, observed the bottlenecks yesterday through the Majority Leader, Julius Ihonvbere, at a stakeholders' engagement organised by the House Committee on Small and Medium Enterprises in Abuja.

The engagement, with the theme, 'Unlocking the Potential of Nigerian MSMEs Through Legislative Reform, Access to Finance, Market Linkages and Strategic Partnership', brought together government agencies, financial institutions and business stakeholders.

Abbas said despite the establishment of many intervention agencies and the injection of funds into the sector, many small businesses continued to struggle.

He lamented that businesses which managed to survive did so largely through their own resilience rather than government support.

"Those that are surviving are surviving not because of government and agencies, but despite government and agencies," he said.

The Speaker attributed the situation in part to policymakers' failure to understand the difficulties entrepreneurs face. He said many government officials remained disconnected from the realities of struggling businesses.

He also faulted cumbersome procedures for accessing intervention funds, warning that excessive bureaucracy had discouraged entrepreneurs from seeking government-backed loans.



Wife of Lagos State Governor, Ibijoke Sanwo-Olu (left); Governor Babajide Sanwo-Olu; President Bola Tinubu; Minister of State for Budget and Economic Planning, Dr Doris Uzoka-Anite; Lagos State Deputy Governor, Dr Obafemi Hamzat; Minister of Works, David Umahi; and immediate past Minister of State for Labour and Employment, Nkeiruka Onyejeocha, during Tinubu's Town Hall meeting with Ndigbo Community in Lagos State, yesterday.

INEC picks 17,656 polling units for nationwide BVAS mock exercise

- CSO urges Nigerians to audit campaign promises
- APC disowns letter to INEC on Tinubu's re-election, alleges plot to smear Yilwatda

From **Adamu Abuh** and **Sodiq Omolaoye**, Abuja

THE Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) has selected 17,656 Polling Units (PUs) nationwide for amock accreditation and result upload exercise ahead of the 2027 general elections.

Meanwhile, a civil society organisation (CSO), Connected Development (CODE), urged Nigerians to scrutinise candidates' campaign promises and demand accountability.

CODE said citizens should look beyond campaign slogans and demand specific commitments, including how proposed policies would be funded, when they would be implemented and how elected officials would be held accountable.

However, the All Progressives Congress (APC) has disowned a letter allegedly written by its National Chairman, Prof. Nentawe Yilwatda, to INEC, seeking the electoral body's support for President Bola Tinubu's re-election in 2027.

The mock accreditation and result upload, scheduled for Saturday, November 28, will test the BVAS's functionality and assess accreditation procedures ahead of the elections.

Disclosing this in a statement posted on its X handle yesterday, INEC noted that the exercise would take place between 8:30 a.m. and 2:30 p.m.

The document released by the commission revealed that the mock exercise would hold in 17,656 PUs across the country; two in each of the 8,838 Registration Areas (RAs) nationwide.

THE founder of CODE and Follow The Money, Hamzat Lawal, called for scrutiny in Abuja yesterday, while announcing CODE's 2027 general election observation mission.

2027: Obi may use open space for Edo town hall meeting

- Atiku accuses FG of intimidating ADC members
- Arewa Think Tank cautions Northerners against political violence

From **John Akubo**, Abuja

TENSION brews in Benin City, Edo State, over tomorrow's visit of presidential candidate of the Nigerian Democratic Congress (NDC), Peter Obi.

This was as former Vice President Atiku Abubakar accused the Federal Government of intimidating members of the African Democratic Congress (ADC), following reports of arrests of party supporters in Tudun Wada, Zaria, Kaduna State.

However, Convener of Arewa Think Tank, Muhammad Yakubu, cautioned Northern political stakeholders against the growing tendency to attack presidential candidates from Southern Nigeria, particularly President Bola Tinubu, saying such conduct could deepen political divisions and threaten the country's national cohesion.

Obi had been scheduled to hold a town hall meeting at an Event Centre in the state, but the centre's management returned the venue payment to the party.

Addressing journalists on the issue, the Edo chapter of NDC expressed frustration at securing a venue for a town hall with Obi. It said the management of the Event Centre withdrew its earlier approval for the use of the facility after payments had been made and a booking receipt issued.

Chairman of Edo NDC, David Olukoga, said the party made a deposit on November 10 and completed the payment on November 17.

State Police: NEC approves additional N130b for police colleges

Work with security agencies to protect South-West, Tinubu tells Igboho

From **Terhemba Daka** (Abuja) and **Oluwole Ige** (Osogbo)

THE National Economic Council (NEC) has approved an additional N130 billion for the rehabilitation and modernisation of police training institutions nationwide, raising the total intervention fund to N230 billion, as Nigeria prepares for expanded police recruitment and ongoing discussions on state policing.

Also, President Bola Tinubu tasked Yoruba nation activist and founder of the IruEkun Security Network, Sunday Adeyemo, popularly known as Sunday Igboho, with helping to ensure security in the South-West against threats to residents' peace and safety.

The fresh funding for police colleges is expected to accelerate upgrades to police colleges and training facilities across the country, strengthen institutional capacity, and prepare the security training infrastructure for increased manpower requirements.

The approval was one of the major decisions taken at the Council's 162nd meeting yesterday, alongside the endorsement of two development programmes, including a proposed $850 million in World Bank financing for disaster resilience and early childhood development.

The NEC also reviewed the country's economic performance, pension reforms and efforts to expand national identity registration.

Presenting an update on the police institutions rehabilitation programme, the NEC ad hoc Committee, chaired by Enugu State Governor, Peter Mbah, disclosed that work was ongoing at 13 locations nationwide, with about 30 per cent of the rehabilitation projects completed.

The committee said the additional N130 billion would facilitate the completion and expansion of ongoing works, upgrade training facilities and improve the capacity of the institutions to accommodate increased recruitment and training requirements.

Initial N100 billion was approved for the intervention following the establishment of the committee in October 2025, on the recommendation of President Tinubu.

The rehabilitation programme is also expected to support preparations for the recruitment of 50,000 police personnel and strengthen the country's security training infrastructure.

TINUBU also stressed the need for healthy synergy between IruEkun, a homegrown security initiative, and the police, the Nigerian Army, the Department of State Services (DSS), and other relevant stakeholders to further stem the tide of insecurity in Yoruba states ahead of the January 2027 general elections.

According to a statement issued by Igboho's media office in Ibadan, Oyo State, yesterday, Tinubu gave the charge during a brief meeting with Igboho inside his official car shortly after the All Progressives Congress (APC) presidential campaign rally held at the popular Mapo Hall in Ibadan on Saturday.

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News Analysis

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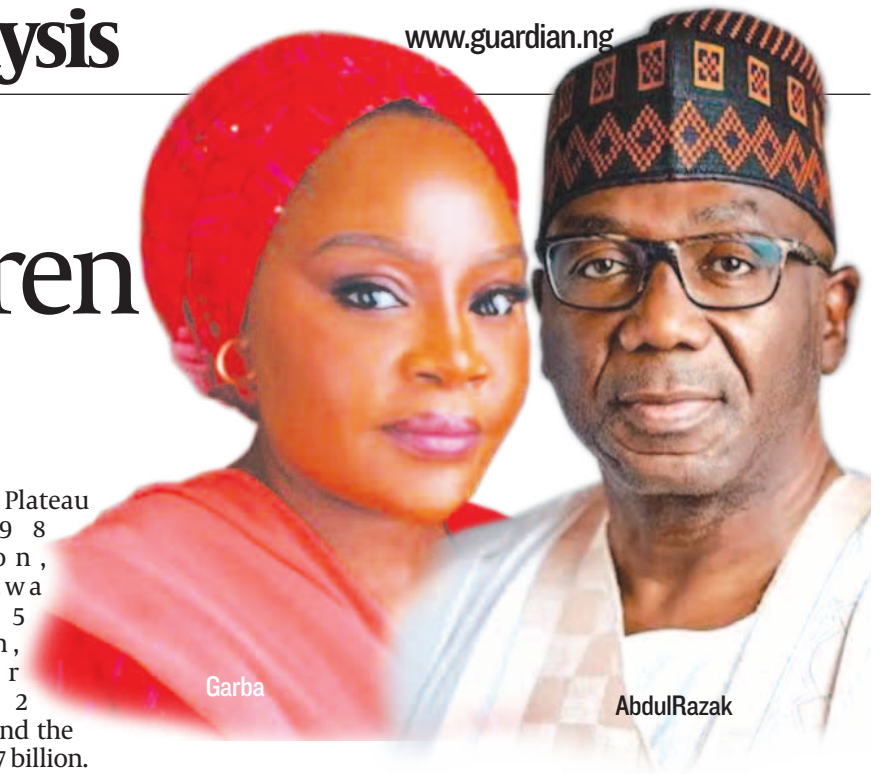
States sit on N264b UBE funds while 18.5m children stay out of school

Despite having 18.5 million out-of-school children, state governments have left N264.12 billion in Universal Basic Education (UBE) funds unspent in their accounts as of August 2026, with Benue, Imo, Osun, Kwara and Delta holding 28 per cent of the idle cash. With another N65 billion unaccessed, ***IYABO LAWAL****, in this report, examines the diversion, due process breaches, and politics behind Nigeria's learning crisis.*



AT exactly 8:15 a.m. on a Tuesday, pupils of LGEA Primary School, Nbegha in Buruku Local Council of Benue State, filed into a classroom without a roof. A windstorm ripped it off in 2017. Seven years later, lessons still hold under the sun. When it rains, school closes.

At Warah Community Junior Secondary School in Ilorin West, Kwara State, 67 children crowd into a makeshift shed built from zinc and bamboo by parents. Their original block collapsed after its ceiling caved in. There are no chairs. They sit on cement blocks.

But less than 400 kilometres from both schools, in the vaults of the State Universal Basic Education Boards (SUBEBs) in Makurdi and Ilorin, lies the money meant to fix them.

The Guardian's findings showed that as at August 2026, a staggering N264.12 billion released by the Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC) to 36 states and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) for basic education development is sitting idle and unspent in state accounts.

This is happening at a time when Nigeria's education sector is in its worst crisis. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) recently put the number of out-of-school children in Nigeria at 18.5 million, the highest in the world.

One in three Nigerian children is out of school. One in every five out-of-school children in the world is a Nigerian. The paradox is brutal and nationwide: money without classrooms, and classrooms without money.

The two failures: unutilised and unaccessed

THE GUARDIAN'S analysis of UBEC documents showed the crisis is two-pronged, both stemming from the same law.

Under the compulsory, free Universal Basic Education Act of 2004, the Federal Government contributes two per cent of its Consolidated Revenue Fund (CRF) to UBEC. The money is meant to be shared with states as matching grants to build classrooms and provide furniture, toilets, boreholes, instructional materials, and teacher training.

But there is a condition: to draw from it, a state must provide 50 per cent counterpart funding and submit an approved action plan showing what it will build, where, and how.

That simple condition has created two pools of idle money. Pool one is the failure to utilise: N264.12 billion that UBEC has released; states have collected and lodged in their SUBEB accounts but have not spent. As at August 2026, this money was still there. Pool two is a failure to access: money that has never left UBEC's coffers because states refused to pay their counterpart funding.

According to a UBEC document obtained by human rights lawyer, Mr Femi Falana (SAN), under the Freedom of Information (FoI) Act, as at June 2026, over N97.88 billion in matching grants was unaccessed for that reason.

The UBEC Executive Secretary, Dr Aisha Garba, updated the picture at a stakeholders' meeting last August. According to her, about N267 billion in previously released funds remained unutilised nationwide, while more than N65 billion in counterpart funding was still unaccessed.

Starting in 2024, the yearly federal grant allocation from UBEC per state has more than doubled from N1.5 billion to about N3.5 billion, totalling N7 billion with matching grants. The more money available, the more money left idle.

The Federal Ministry of Education's 2024 statistics put the learner-to-classroom ratio at 60:1, almost double the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation's (UNESCO) benchmark of 35:1. In that overcrowding, the cost of idle funds is measured in children who cannot read.

"About 70 per cent of Nigerian children of primary school age cannot read and understand a simple text," Garba lamented, outlining UBEC's strategic blueprint, which focuses on expanding access for rural populations, improving quality of teaching, reforming financing, and optimising systems.

Five states hold 28% idle billions

THE concentration of unspent funds is striking and reveals where the crisis is deepest. Benue alone has N19.18 billion unspent - the highest in the country. It is a cruel irony for a state where schools like LGEA Nbegha have no roofs. It is followed by Imo with N14.12 billion, Osun with N14.02 billion, Kwara with N13.99 billion, and Delta with N13.40 billion.

These five states alone account for N74.72 billion, about 28.3 per cent of the total idle fund.

But the rot spreads across all six geopolitical zones. In the North-East and North-West where out-of-school numbers are highest: Borno has N13.20 billion unspent, Anambra N12.67 billion, Kano N12.15 billion, Adamawa N11.38 billion, Gombe N11.09 billion, Jigawa N7.92 billion, Kebbi N7.21 billion, Kaduna N7.09 billion, Zamfara N7.03 billion, Katsina N6.15 billion, Sokoto N1.96 billion, Yobe N4.37 billion, Taraba N168.48 million, and Bauchi N825.99 million.

In the North-Central: Kogi has N7.60 billion, Plateau N6.98 billion, Nasarawa N6.75 billion, Niger N3.62 billion, and the FCT N5.67 billion.

In the South-East: Abia N8.64 billion, Enugu N5.03 billion, Ebonyi N2.81 billion. In the South-West: Ekiti N8.40 billion, Ogun N5.26 billion, Oyo N5.09 billion, Ondo N3.48 billion, and Lagos N1.85 billion - the lowest in that zone but still enough to build over 100 classrooms.

In the South-South: Akwa Ibom N8.09 billion, Edo N2.48 billion, Cross River N2.47 billion, Bayelsa N1.60 billion, and Rivers N329.28 million. Only three states in the federation - Bauchi (N825.99m), Rivers (N329.28m) and Taraba (N168.48m) - have less than N1 billion unspent.

Diversion, slow utilisation, linked to sloppy money movement

TO understand why billions sit idle while children sit on bare floors to learn, one must understand the politics of UBEC funds. At a financial management training for SUBEB finance directors in Abuja in July, Garba listed the official reasons: slow utilisation, non-compliance with action plan guidelines, alleged diversion of funds, failure to deduct and remit taxes, breaches of due process in contract awards, and failure to follow approved action plans.

"The difference between releasing funds and delivering benefits is implementation," a UBEC monitoring officer who pleaded anonymity told *The Guardian*.

> "Section 11(2) of the UBE Act imposes a duty on states to provide free, compulsory basic education. Section 12 makes it an offence to obstruct that. When a governor collects UBEC matching grant and keeps N19 billion in the bank while children learn under trees in Buruku, that is not inefficiency; that is a breach of trust and criminal negligence."

But stakeholders said the official reasons hide deeper political economy issues.

Lawyer and education rights advocate Falana, whose FoI request forced UBEC to release data on unaccessed funds, said the non-utilisation is not merely a bureaucratic delay but a breach of the law that should attract prosecution.

He said: "Section 11(2) of the UBE Act makes it a duty for states to provide free, compulsory basic education. Section 12 makes it an offence to obstruct that. When a governor collects UBEC matching grant and keeps N19 billion in the bank while children learn under trees in Buruku, that is not inefficiency; that is a breach of trust and criminal negligence.

"These are funds meant for children. The Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) and the Independent Corrupt Practices Commission (ICPC) should track this money because, in many cases, what we see is diversion to other uses. We have asked UBEC to publish the action plans and contract awards for these unspent billions, because transparency is the only antidote," Falana stated.

A former executive chairman of a SUBEB in the North-Central, who spoke on condition of anonymity because he still consults for UBEC, gave an insider account of how governors frustrate spending.

"Governors see UBEC money as political money, not education money; to access it, you must bring 50 per cent from the state. Many governors don't want to allocate state funds for basic education, which they consider the job of local governments. Even when they access it, they want to award contracts to their cronies at inflated costs.

UBEC's new system, HOPE-Gov, now demands e-procurement, BVN verification of contractors, and geo-tagged photographic evidence of projects before the next tranche is released.

The human cost and way forward

IN Benue, Osun and Kwara - the top three defaulters - primary school completion rates have dropped. In Benue, SUBEB's own 2023 audit showed that 4,200 classrooms needed urgent renovation. With N19.18 billion idle, the state could build over 2,000 blocks of three classrooms at the current UBEC unit cost of about N25 million per block.

In Imo, N14.12 billion is idle, while teachers buy chalk from their salaries. Education Consultant and Proprietor of Advanced Learner Consults, Mr Joseph Olaojo, said erring states, especially those in the north where 60 per cent of out-of-school children are concentrated, should be encouraged to recommit and activate the process of accessing grants.

Olaojo said stringent measures should be put in place to discourage and sanction defaulting states, including withholding other federal allocations.

A retired Principal from Oke-Odo High School, Lafenwa, Ogun State, Mr Odejimi Somefun, said: "I wonder why states should default in accessing funds that are readily and freely made available by the federal government when primary education is in bad shape, begging for urgent attention. If a child fails at the primary level, he has failed for life."

The Programme Coordinator at Education for All, a non-governmental organisation, Mrs Olabisi Kilanko, called on the federal government to initiate measures to sanction states that default in paying counterpart funds and impose stiffer sanctions on states that collect the funds but fail to utilise them. "That is money meant for our children, sitting idle."

"With HOPE-Gov, we are very optimistic that the situation will improve," Garba assured. But for the pupils of LGEA Primary School, Nbegha, optimism does not provide a roof. As of this November, their N19.18 billion is still in the bank in Makurdi. Their classrooms are still under direct attack from the sun. The bell still rings, but learning does not happen in the right atmosphere. The money has not reached the classroom.

NLC warns against dividing labour ahead of minimum wage negotiations

From **Collins Olayinka,** Abuja

PRESIDENT of the Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC), Joe Ajaero, has alerted to alleged subtle moves by agents and sympathisers of the government to adopt divide-and-rule tactics to sway minimum wage negotiations in the government's favour when the process eventually begins.

Ajaero, who hinted at such a possibility while speaking in Abuja yesterday at the opening of the 2026 NLC Harmattan School, however, warned against such clandestine moves and urged trade unions and workers to maintain a united front in the struggle for improved wages and working conditions.

Ajaero said forces opposed to workers' interests were already working to exploit differences among unions, spread rumours, and weaken labour's bargaining position even before negotiations begin.

Tasks INEC on election transparency

Speaking under the theme 'Organising in the Context of Socio-economic Transformation', Ajaero urged workers to remain vigilant and resist attempts to pit one union against another, stressing that unity remained the labour movement's strongest instrument for securing a decent national minimum wage.

"At this point, as we prepare to negotiate a new national minimum wage, we want to draw your attention to the fact that the enemies of the labour movement are already at work. Their strategy is as old as it is dangerous: divide us, weaken our resolve and sabotage the forthcoming national minimum wage negotiations before they even begin," he said.

The NLC president urged workers to speak with one voice, maintain a common negotiating position and ensure that the forthcoming wage negotiations produce meaningful improvements in workers' living conditions.

He also called on the Federal Government to honour the October 27, 2026 agreement with organised labour, particularly the payment of the N70,000 monthly transport allowance and the establishment of the Tripartite National Minimum Wage Negotiation Council.

According to him, workers expect the agreed benefits to be paid in November, along with a monitoring meeting to assess implementation.

He urged state governments and private-sector employers to implement the agreement's relevant provisions, stressing that fidelity to negotiated commitments was essential to building trust and sustaining industrial harmony.

Ajaero maintained that government agreements should not be treated as matters of convenience, warning that failure to honour commitments could undermine confidence in collective bargaining and industrial relations.

The NLC president linked the wage negotiations to the worsening economic conditions confronting workers, particularly rising costs of food, transportation, housing, healthcare and education.

Truecaller flags 6.9b fraud attempts in seven months

Alerts Nigerians to new mechanism

By **Adeyemi Adepetun**

CALLER ID, spam-blocking, and communication app, Truecaller, has flagged 6.9 billion fraud attempts globally in the first seven months of 2026, one-and-a-half times what it blocked throughout 2025.

Behind this surge is a new capability, live since March 2026, that allows Truecaller to identify and block entire scam networks once a single number is confirmed as fraudulent. A typical scam ring operates 26 numbers, while the largest uncovered so far has nearly 45,000 numbers across several countries.

Truecaller, in a statement, yesterday, said: "In Nigeria, where scam calls can come disguised as bank representatives, delivery agents, recruiters, or even familiar contacts, the number calling your phone may be just one part of a much larger operation.

AIICO Insurance, Cornerstone merger to create N858b insurance powerhouse

By **Bankole Orimisan**

PROPOSED merger between AIICO Insurance Plc and Cornerstone Insurance Plc is expected to reshape Nigeria's insurance industry, creating a combined entity with approximately N858 billion in total assets and N194 billion in shareholders' funds, amid growing pressure on operators to strengthen their capital base and underwriting capacity.

The boards of the two insurance companies have approved the proposed transaction and will recommend it to their respective shareholders for consideration, according to a corporate disclosure filed with the Nigerian Exchange Limited (NGX) yesterday.

The proposed combination is expected to create Nigeria's leading listed insurance company by gross written premium, insurance revenue and shareholders' funds, with an enhanced capacity to underwrite larger risks, retain more business and compete more effectively in the evolving insurance market.



Special Adviser to the President on Community Engagement, South-West, Moremi Ojudu (left); Managing Director, Hitech/Contractor in Charge of Lagos-Calabar Coastal Highway, Dany Abboud; Minister of Works, Dave Umahi, and Controller of the Federal Ministry of Works, Lagos, Olufemi Dare, during the inspection tour of the bridges on the Lagos-Calabar Coastal Highway in Lagos, yesterday. PHOTO: NAN

Nigeria records 64,000 new HIV infections yearly, says UNAIDS

From **Nkechi Onyedika-Ugoeze,** Abuja

- Warns of prevention gaps, uneven access, stigma
- Targets 2030 AIDS elimination, unveils sustainability strategy
- Africa Records 26.3m HIV cases as WHO urges wider Access to treatment

NIGERIA is still recording about 64,000 new HIV infections yearly, far above the fewer than 5,000 yearly infections required to end AIDS as a public health threat by 2030, the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) has warned.

The UNAIDS Country Director, Ms Tina Bunto, who disclosed this at a press briefing organised by the National Agency for the Control of AIDS (NACA) ahead of the 2026 World AIDS Day, said Nigeria must urgently intensify HIV prevention interventions to reverse the trend.

Bunto said that although the country had recorded significant progress in treatment and care, persistent gaps in prevention, testing, access to new technologies and the elimination of mother-to-child transmission threatened efforts to end AIDS.

She stressed that the country must accelerate interventions to bring yearly new infections down from the current 64,000 to fewer than 5,000, describing access to HIV services as central to achieving the 2030 target.

The warning comes as Nigeria prepares to commemorate this year's World AIDS Day on December 1, under the theme, "Ending AIDS Starts with Access: Equity, Ownership, and Sustainability."

Detection of COVID-19 in 18 countries raises concerns for festive travels

By **Ijeoma Nwanosike**

Nigeria urged to intensify genomic surveillance, COVID-19 preparedness

A new COVID-19 variant, PJ.2.1, has been detected in 18 countries, prompting renewed global surveillance, as the World Health Organisation (WHO) classifies the strain as a Variant Under Monitoring (VUM) and rates its additional global public health risk as low.

The variant, a descendant of the Omicron JN.1 lineage, was first detected in Ontario, Canada, on May 2, 2026, and has since been reported in the United States, Canada, Spain, France, the Netherlands, Israel, Singapore, Brazil, Argentina, Australia and New Zealand, among other countries.

In a public health advisory, the Academy of Medical Sciences, through its Rapid Response Group, said available evidence suggested that PJ.2.1 might spread more widely than other circulating Omicron sub-lineages, although there was no evidence that it could cause more severe illness.

The Academy, however, noted that the WHO's low-risk assessment carried low confidence because clinical data on the variant remain limited.

The advisory, signed by the Academy Chairman, Prof. Boaz Adegboro, and the President, Prof. Joseph Ahaneku, explained that PJ.2.1 has approximately 24 changes in its spike protein compared with its parent lineage, a development described as a "saltation", or evolutionary jump.

It added that laboratory studies had also shown stronger binding to the human ACE2 receptor and more efficient entry into cells, potentially giving it a transmission advantage.

Despite these changes, early studies have not established substantial additional immune escape, as antibodies generated by updated XFG-adapted mRNA vaccines have been found to neutralise the variant.

According to the advisory, symptoms include sore throat, fever, cough, runny or blocked nose, fatigue, headache, muscle aches and chills. Some cases reportedly involve severe sore throats and prolonged fatigue. However, the symptoms are similar to those of common respiratory infections, making testing necessary to establish infection.

On Nigeria's preparedness, the Academy said there had been no public report of PJ.2.1 detection in the country as of the time of its advisory, although the Nigeria Centre for Disease Control and Prevention (NCDC) continues routine COVID-19 surveillance and has reported sporadic confirmed cases in 2026.

Aliko Dangote wins 2026 Obafemi Awolowo prize for leadership

Foundation introduces Sectoral Leadership Awards

OBAFEMI Awolowo Foundation has announced the recipient of the 2026 baf mi Awol w Prize for Leadership.

The prize was instituted in honour of one of Africa's foremost statesmen and advocates of visionary, people-centred governance.

The first Premier of the Western Region of Nigeria, Chief Obafemi Awolowo , was widely acclaimed for his visionary leadership, integrity, discipline and commitment to social and economic transformation for the citizens.

A statement signed by Executive Director bafemi Awolowo Foundation, Dr Olatokunbo Awolowo Dosumu, noted: His pioneering programmes in education, healthcare and rural development, together with his advocacy for federalism and economic self-reliance, remain enduring landmarks in Nigeria's developmental history.

"Established in 2012, following a special dialogue organised by the Foundation on Transformational Leadership and Good Governance: Lessons from the Awolowo Example, the biennial prize seeks to recognise, reward and celebrate individuals whose leadership exemplifies the values and ideals for which Chief Awolowo was renowned."

According to the statement, the selection process involves public nominations, rigorous screening, verification and careful evaluation against established criteria, including integrity, vision, courage, discipline, accountability, people-centred leadership and demonstrable contributions to societal advancement.

The process is overseen by a distinguished Selection Committee chaired by former Commonwealth Secretary General, Chief Emeka Anyaoku.

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

Speculation, arbitrage, FX demand test CBN's naira defence as MPC meets

By **Geoff Iyatse**, Business Editor

- Daily transaction volumes spike by over 1,800 per cent in November
- Owoh: Apex bank never had a strong hold on macroeconomic prices
- Election risks, lower interest rates test policy efficiency
- Market inefficiency price pushing above 5%

THE Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) appears to be losing its grip on the naira, given the rapid movement in the currency's rate in the last few days, with speculative trading, rising market arbitrage and a growing spike in foreign exchange (FX) demand throwing a spanner in the works.

The familiar trio – speculative trading, high market arbitrage and demand shocks – threatens to reverse the gains of the past year, raising concerns about market uncertainty and the short-term direction of the local currency.

The renewed bets against the naira have raised questions about market liquidity, the adequacy of recent reforms, the appropriateness of the recent interest rate cut and rising election-related risks.

The CBN's Monetary Policy Committee (MPC), in September, slashed the benchmark interest rate by 3.5 percentage points in one fell swoop, defying the global trend. CBN Governor, Yemi Cardoso, said the decision was intended to recalibrate monetary policy transmission.

Even though the market had remained relatively stable, some experts warned that the policy option could come with costly trade-offs, including capital outflows and increased pressure on inflation and the exchange rate.

For the first time since March 10, the dollar touched N1,400 at the Nigerian Foreign Exchange Market (NFEM) on Friday, suggesting that the late-October upturn could not be dismissed as white noise.

The local currency closed last week at a weighted average rate of N1,389.73/$, a metric the CBN has adopted as the official exchange rate. Over the five working days of the week, the naira shed 2.6 per cent of its value, while its month-to-date loss stood at three per cent.

Of course, the year-to-date (YTD) value gain remains comfortably in positive territory at approximately three per cent. The currency started trading in January at N1,430.90/$. At about N1,390/$, however, it currently trades at the upper end of the best-case forecasts for the year.

Yet, forward-looking indicators are more important in financial markets than historical figures. In the outlook, the 2027 presidential election represents a significant downside risk. There are already reports that election spending is contributing to the naira's lacklustre performance.

In the meantime, there is insufficient data to establish how election spending has impacted the currency's poor performance. Previously, FX market swings were more pronounced during political party primaries than shortly before general elections.

Understandably, the 2027 general elections are different from previous ones. For instance, the primaries, especially those of the ruling All Progressives Congress (APC), were less competitive and relied more on President Bola Tinubu's endorsement. This may explain why there was no significant spike in backdoor dollar trading during the nomination process.

The Nigerian FX market witnessed its most turbulent trading during the primaries that produced Tinubu. As increasing numbers of politicians visited currency exchange kiosks in Abuja and Lagos with their briefcases, the spread between the official and parallel markets widened from about 50 per cent to 80 per cent, deepening market distortions and speculation.

That the 2022 election-related FX liquidity crisis may change its location is, for now, mere speculation. On the demand side, aggregate money balances grew by 25.3 per cent year-on-year (Y/Y) as of September, from N117.79 trillion to N147.6 trillion. That is a significant uptick, especially when weighed against the moderate expansion in economic activity.

However, narrow and quasi-money supply, which largely drive FX demand, recorded slower growth of 12.7 and 23.3 per cent, respectively. These are not necessarily troubling increases, considering that the country is on the eve of an election year.

Interestingly, political expenditure in Nigeria is largely covert and often difficult to aggregate in official monetary statistics. In many cases, transactions are not conducted through formal financial channels, making their impact on macroeconomic data difficult to measure. The absence of reliable data on such dealings also makes many macroeconomic estimates largely speculative.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 28



All Progressives Congress (APC) Lagos deputy governorship candidate, Damilola Sonayon-James (left); APC Lagos governorship candidate and Deputy Governor, Dr Obafemi Hamzat; his wife, Oluremi; Governor of Lagos State, Babajide Sanwo-Olu; his wife, Dr Ibijoke and Chairman, APC Lagos, Cornelius Ojelabi, during the party's gubernatorial Lagos Central Senatorial District Mega Rally in Lagos, yesterday.

2027: Political violence worries INEC as Omo-Agege escapes attack in Delta

From **Sodiq Omolaoye**, Abuja, and **Monday Osayande**, Asaba

- Four dead, several injured in attack on NDC campaign team
- Omo-Agege alleges police failure, demands IGP's takeover of investigation
- Ughelli North chairman claims three of his supporters were killed
- Delta imposes dusk-to-dawn curfew after deadly confrontation
- INEC warns 'rig and die' slogan could endanger election officials
- Commission insists on PVC, assures on nationwide mock accreditation

AT least four persons have reportedly been killed in a violent attack on the campaign team of former Deputy Senate President, Ovie Omo-Agege, in Delta State, raising fresh concerns over the safety of political activities ahead of the 2027 general elections.

Omo-Agege, the Nigeria Democratic Congress (NDC) senatorial candidate for Delta Central, narrowly escaped the attack, which occurred during a campaign rally at Uduere community in Ughelli North Local Government Area. The incident also left several others with gunshot injuries.

The development comes as the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) warns against inflammatory political rhetoric capable of triggering violence during the elections, particularly the increasingly popular slogan, 'rig and die'.

In response to the violence, the Delta State Government has imposed a dusk-to-dawn curfew on Ughelli North, while Omo-Agege has called on the Inspector-General of Police (IGP) to take over the investigation, citing a lack of confidence in the state police command.

According to the Omo-Agege Campaign Organisation, armed men opened fire at close range on the former lawmaker and his entourage while he was addressing supporters during what it described as a peaceful campaign tour of Uduere community.

The organisation said four persons, including two campaign aides, Moses Anaughe and Akima Efemena Umukoro, were killed in the attack.

It described Anaughe, who was Omo-Agege's Personal Assistant, as one of the victims, while a former member of the Delta State House of Assembly was among those reportedly shot and critically injured.

Other persons named among the injured were Chuks Erhire, Tobore Agba, who was reportedly shot in the neck, and Ayodo Wanogho.

The organisation alleged that Omo-Agege was the principal target, claiming that the attackers repeatedly shouted, "It's Omo-Agege we want to kill! It's Omo-Agege we want to kill!"

According to the campaign organisation, the former Deputy Senate President escaped by what it described as divine intervention, as bullets reportedly whizzed past his head while he addressed the gathering.

His Media Adviser, Sunny Areh, confirmed the incident and accused the assailants of deliberately targeting the NDC candidate.

The campaign organisation also alleged that Ughelli North Local Government Chairman, Jaro Egbo, led the attackers on the orders of Governor Sheriff Oborevwori. The allegations against the council chairman and the governor had not been independently established.

Council chairman gives conflicting account

HOWEVER, Egbo rejected the allegations, offering a different account of the circumstances that led to the confrontation.

The chairman, an All Progressives Congress (APC) chieftain, said the disagreement started over the use of a community hall which he claimed had already been booked for an event he was organising for residents.

According to him, his supporters had gone to the community to prepare for the event when they learnt that Omo-Agege's campaign team also intended to use the facility.

Egbo claimed that his supporters asked the NDC team to find another venue because the hall had already been booked, but the request was rejected.

He said the campaign subsequently proceeded with its activities close to where his supporters had gathered, despite the disagreement.

The chairman accused members of Omo-Agege's entourage of opening fire on his supporters, claiming that three of his men were killed.

He added that some casualties were receiving treatment at Central Hospital, Ughelli.

The rival accounts have left the circumstances surrounding the bloodshed contested, with Omo-Agege's camp reporting four deaths and Egbo claiming that three of his supporters were killed.

The latest incident has heightened concerns over recurring political violence in Delta State. It follows earlier clashes in the Warri-Effurun axis and Asaba, where one person was also reportedly killed.

Omo-Agege demands IGP's intervention

FOLLOWING the attack, Omo-Agege called on the IGP to take over the investigation, insisting that he had no confidence in the Delta State Police Command to deliver justice.

Speaking on Channels Television's *Politics Today*, the former lawmaker alleged that police officers deployed to the campaign venue failed to intervene when the shooting occurred.

He claimed that six truckloads of policemen were present at the venue but did nothing to stop the attackers.

Omo-Agege said the incident had left opposition politicians in the state feeling endangered.

"What we have learned is this: we are not safe here in Delta State. In fact, all members of the opposition party, NDC, most especially, we are all endangered," he said.

He accused the state police command of being unlikely to conduct an impartial investigation and urged the IGP to assume direct responsibility for the probe.

"We do not expect any justice to come from the police here in Delta State. Neither do we expect any justice to come from the police on this very one," he said.

"We are appealing to the IG to take this matter over directly. We tried to reach him this evening. We couldn't reach him."

The former Deputy Senate President also called for justice for those killed and in-

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FG unveils five-year drug control plan, urges execution

From **Bertram Nwannekanma** (Lagos) and **Tina Abeku** (Abuja)

- VP, Fagbemi advocate sustained trafficking response
- Marwa says previous plan recorded 77,736 arrests, 14,200 convictions, drug seizure

THE Vice President, Kashim Shettima, has urged federal and state governments, ministries, agencies, the private sector and international partners to ensure the effective implementation of Nigeria's National Drug Control Master Plan (NDCMP) 2026–2030.

Shettima, who spoke yesterday during the official launch of the five-year plan in Abuja, said drug control must remain a national priority, warning that Nigeria could not secure its future without protecting the people responsible for building it.

The Vice President, represented by the Special Adviser to the President on Special Duties, Office of the Vice President, Dr Modibbo Aliyu Umar, called for urgent, coordinated and sustained action by all stakeholders to translate the policy into measurable results.

He described drug abuse and trafficking as public health, security, economic and development challenges, stressing that enforcement alone would not address the problem without prevention, treatment and action against illicit financial flows sustaining drug markets.

Shettima, however, commended the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA), under its Chairman, Brig.-Gen. Mohammed Buba Marwa (rtd), for introducing Nigeria's alternative development programme, which he said was already transforming three pilot communities in Ondo State.

He urged state and local governments to support and take ownership of the initiative.

The Vice President warned that a national policy without a credible financing framework could become merely a declaration of good intentions.

He, therefore, directed Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) to incorporate the plan's priorities into their work programmes, budget proposals and implementation schedules, while urging other stakeholders to identify specific responsibilities towards its success.

Earlier, Marwa said the new master plan was designed to consolidate previous achievements, address identified weaknesses and respond to emerging threats in the illicit drug trade.

He disclosed that the evaluation of the 2021–2025 plan recorded 77,736 arrests, the seizure of more than 14.8 million kilogrammes of illicit drugs and over 14,200 convictions, adding that more than 32,400 people also benefited from treatment, counselling and rehabilitation services during the period.

However, Marwa acknowledged gaps in coordination, funding, service delivery, data management, monitoring and accountability, as well as inadequate capacity at state and local council levels.

He said the new plan would address these shortcomings by integrating supply and demand reduction strategies and targeting the financial and technological networks supporting drug trafficking.

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



Senator Babafemi Ojudu (left); Orangun of Oke-Ila, Oba Adedokun Abolarin, and Asiwaju of Are-Ekiti, Dipo Anisulowo, during the 2026 Are-Ekiti Day celebration. PHOTO: NAN

Women seeking elective offices to present leadership plans omorrow

By **Abigail Ikhaghu**

THE Women in Leadership Advancement Network (WILAN) is set to provide a platform for women contesting the 2027 general elections to present their leadership plans, political experiences and priorities to Nigerians, as part of efforts to strengthen women's participation in the country's political process.

The initiative, tagged "The Leading Woman Show Live: Women on the Ballot," will bring together female candidates representing Nigeria's six geopolitical zones for discussions on their political journeys, reasons for seeking elective offices, community needs and visions for governance.

The two-hour non-partisan programme will be held at the MUSON Centre, Onikan, Lagos, tomorrow, November 25, 2026, with candidates participating in individual moderated conversations focused on their aspirations and the issues they intend to address if elected.

WILAN's Founder and Executive Director, Abosede George-Ogan, said the platform would enable Nigerians to engage candidates beyond their names, party affiliations and campaign materials.

Oyebanji congratulates Ewi of Ado-Ekiti, Adejugbe, at 81

By **Opeyemi Babalola**

EKITI State Governor, Biodun Oyebanji, has congratulated the Ewi of Ado-Ekiti, Oba Rufus Adeyemo Adejugbe, Aladesanmi III, on his 81st birthday.

Oyebanji, in a statement by his Special Adviser on Media, Olayinka Oyebode, described the monarch as a visionary traditional ruler, a lover of development and a champion of noble causes.

The governor commended Oba Adejugbe for the strategic role he played, alongside other prominent Ekiti leaders and traditional rulers, in the struggle for the creation of Ekiti State.

He also acknowledged the monarch's invaluable contributions to the socio-economic growth and infrastructural development of the state.

Oyebanji, however, lauded the Ewi's passion for the progress of Ado-Ekiti and the state in general, as well as his unwavering support for successive administrations.

Stop VCs, rectors from using NELFUND to hike tuitions, NANS tells Tinubu

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

- Says increase may threaten President's education loan legacy
- VC challenges FG over exclusion of private varsity students from loan scheme

THE National Association of Nigerian Students (NANS) has accused vice-chancellors and rectors of undermining President Bola Tinubu's Nigerian Education Loan Fund (NELFUND) initiative through arbitrary tuition increases, warning that the development could defeat the scheme's objective of making higher education accessible and affordable.

NANS President, Akinteye Babatunde Afeez, who raised the alarm in an open letter to Tinubu, alleged that some university administrators were increasing fees on the assumption that NELFUND would automatically cover whatever charges they imposed on students.

The Guardian reports that among institutions that have recently increased tuition are Ahmadu Bello University (ABU), Zaria; Delta State University (DELSU), Abraka; Niger Delta University (NDU), Bayelsa State; University of Nigeria, Nsukka (UNN) and Kogi State-owned tertiary institutions, among others.

Findings also revealed that the increases range from approximately 130 per cent to over 250 per cent, worsening the financial burden on students and their parents.

Afeez, however, stressed that the introduction of NELFUND was not a substitute for government funding of tertiary institutions, insisting that the scheme should not become an excuse for increasing tuition.

The NANS President urged Tinubu to call vice-chancellors and rectors of federal institutions to order and caution them against arbitrary increases.

He warned that continued increases could undermine the President's education financing legacy and defeat the purpose of establishing NELFUND.

MEANWHILE, the leadership of Ajayi Crowther University (ACU), Oyo, has challenged the Federal Government to extend the Nigerian Education Loan Fund (NELFUND) scheme to students of accredited private universities, saying that excluding them will defeat the initiative's objective of ensuring that no Nigerian student drops out of school due to financial constraints.

Vice-Chancellor of the university, Prof. Ebunoluwa Oduwole, appealed during a media briefing heralding the institution's 18th convocation ceremony.

Oduwole said that government's support for education should be based on students' eligibility and not the ownership of the institutions they attend.

Makinde warns NURTW against violence in Oyo

From **Rotimi Agboluaje**, Ibadan

Says agitators' children are abroad while others face violence

OYO State Governor, Seyi Makinde, yesterday warned the National Union of Road Transport Workers (NURTW) and those backing its renewed agitation to reclaim motor parks in the state against taking the law into their hands.

The governor's comments came amid renewed tension over the control of motor parks and garages in the state, following reported threats by some NURTW members to reclaim the facilities.

Makinde, however, cautioned transport workers against allowing themselves to be used to destabilise the state or revive the violent clashes that previously characterised struggles over control of motor parks.

The governor gave the warning during a radio programme while reacting to threats by some NURTW members to take over motor parks and garages across the state.

The governor, who spoke partly in Yoruba, questioned why the children of ordinary residents should be exposed to violence and dangerous confrontations while those allegedly promoting the agitation had their own children travelling abroad and pursuing higher education.

Makinde, who recalled the period when control of motor parks was marked by violent confrontations, said that those seeking to return the state to such an era were no longer involving their own children but allegedly using the children of others to advance their interests.

He challenged those behind the agitation to reconsider their actions, insisting that the lives and future of young people should not be sacrificed over struggles for control of motor parks.

The governor, therefore, declared that his administration would not tolerate any attempt to undermine public peace, warning that anyone who engaged in violence or violated the law would face the consequences.

He maintained that the Park Management System (PMS), introduced by his administration to regulate activities at motor parks, remained the framework for managing the transport sector in the state.

2027: Sanwo-Olu, APC leaders rally support for Tinubu, Hamzat

- Say continuity, experience, devt projects key to Lagos future
- NDC accuses Tinubu of turning Lagos into tax collection empire

From **Gbenga Salau, Kehinde Olatunji** (Lagos) and **John Akubo** (Abuja)

LAGOS State Governor, Babajide Sanwo-Olu, has urged residents of the state to vote massively for President Bola Tinubu and the All Progressives Congress (APC) governorship candidate, Dr Obafemi Hamzat, in the 2027 general elections, saying that their leadership experience, development records and commitment to the state's progress make them the best choices for the country's commercial capital.

Sanwo-Olu appealed at the APC campaign rally for Lagos Central Senatorial District, held at the Mobolaji Johnson Arena, Onikan, Lagos, where he urged party supporters to mobilise voters across the state for Tinubu, Hamzat and other APC candidates.

MEANWHILE, the Nigeria Democratic Congress (NDC) has launched a blistering attack on Tinubu's governance record in Lagos State, accusing him of building a revenue collection machinery that squeezed residents without delivering commensurate infrastructure, industrial growth and social welfare.

The party said that Tinubu's much-touted Lagos legacy was built more on aggressive taxation, opaque revenue arrangements and mounting debt than on genuine economic transformation, warning Nigerians not to mistake revenue extraction for development ahead of the 2027 presidential election.

Aiyedatiwa will be remembered for his vision to industrialise Ondo, says Ajanaku

ONDO State Commissioner for Information and Orientation, Idowu Ajanaku, has said that the administration of Governor Lucky Aiyedatiwa will be remembered for laying the foundation for industrial transformation and generational prosperity of the state.

Ajanaku, who spoke while featuring on a radio programme tagged "Ondo Path to Progress," sponsored by the state government through the Ministry of Information and Orientation, noted that the President and Chief Executive of Dangote Group, Aliko Dangote, had continued to demonstrate a keen interest in the state, recognising its enormous natural resource potential and strategic economic advantages.

The commissioner said that the current administration had continued to partner with genuine investors to ensure that resources in the coastal area and other parts of the state are fully developed, noting that the state is richly endowed with resources capable of transforming its economic base.

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Woman charged to court for assaulting, tearing police officer's uniform in Abia

By **Bertram Nwannekanma**

A woman who allegedly assaulted a police inspector and tore his uniform during a police operation at a church in Aba, Abia State, is to face prosecution following her arrest.

The Abia State Police Command said the suspect, identified as Ettoh Barkerk, was arrested on November 22 after allegedly attacking the officer who responded to a distress call over the activities of hoodlums disrupting a church service at CKC Church, Aba.

According to the police, the Ndiegoro Divisional Police Headquarters received a distress call reporting that some hoodlums were throwing fireworks indiscriminately within the church premises, causing panic among worshippers and threatening public peace.

Following the report, a patrol team was deployed to the scene to contain the situation and restore order.

The police said Barkerk was apprehended at the scene with fireworks in her possession but became violent when officers attempted to carry out their duties.

She allegedly assaulted an inspector attached to the patrol team, tore his uniform and attempted to forcibly retrieve the recovered fireworks.

The suspect was subsequently subdued and arrested, while the fireworks and other relevant exhibits were secured for investigation.

In a statement issued yesterday, the Police Public Relations Officer, Abia State Command, DSP Maureen Chinaka, said the suspect would be charged to court after the conclusion of investigations.

The command condemned the incident, describing the alleged assault as unacceptable conduct that undermined respect for law enforcement officers and the rule of law.

It added that normalcy had been restored within the church premises and adjoining areas, while police surveillance would continue to prevent a recurrence.

The command warned that it would not tolerate assaults, obstruction or interference with officers performing their lawful duties.

It urged residents to remain law-abiding, exercise restraint and respect law enforcement officers as they discharge their responsibilities of protecting life and property.



Suspect with fireworks

Niger NLC chapter urges unity after bandits kill five, burn houses in Borgu

From Bala Yahaya, Minna

THE recent killing of five people, including a community leader, and the burning of several houses by armed bandits in Borgu Local Council of Niger State have prompted the chairman of the Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC) in the state, Idris Abdulkareem Lafeni, to call for unity and peaceful coexistence among residents.

Lafeni condemned the attacks and reprisal violence in the area, warning that continued insecurity could undermine peace, development and the wellbeing of communities in Borgu Kingdom.

In a statement issued to journalists in Minna yesterday, the NLC chairman said peace and development were inseparable, stressing that meaningful progress could not be achieved in an atmosphere of violence, insecurity and social unrest.

He appealed to residents, irrespective of their ethnic and religious backgrounds, to embrace dialogue, mutual understanding and peaceful coexistence to prevent further bloodshed and restore confidence among communities.

Lafeni said the labour movement was committed to promoting peace and harmony across the state, noting that a secure environment was essential for civil servants to discharge their duties effectively.

Ashoka mobilises religious, traditional leaders against gender-based violence

From **Segun Ayinde**, Abeokuta

FOR victims of gender-based violence (GBV), speaking out against abuse can be difficult, particularly in communities where family disputes are often settled behind closed doors and cultural or religious beliefs sometimes discourage survivors from seeking help.

Recognising the influence of religious and traditional leaders in shaping community values and resolving family disputes, Ashoka West Africa has trained religious and community leaders in Ogun State on strategies to prevent gender-based violence and improve responses to reported cases.

The training, held in Abeokuta under the theme, "Guardians of Faith and Heritage: Mobilising Community Leadership for Primary GBV Prevention," was aimed at bridging the gap between legal protections and grassroots efforts to prevent violence.

Participants were equipped with knowledge to educate their congregations and community members about the dangers of GBV, provide appropriate counselling and establish platforms where victims could seek help without fear of intimidation or stigmatisation.

The organisation said the involvement of religious and traditional leaders was critical because of their influence in resolving domestic disputes, shaping societal values and promoting moral standards. It noted that more than 80 per cent of personal, marital and community disputes were referred to such leaders for resolution.

Speaking at the training, the guest lecturer, Bunmi Ekundayo, said religious and community leaders had important roles to play in preventing GBV, responding appropriately to reported cases and using their platforms to educate their followers about the menace.

She urged them to make churches, mosques and traditional gatherings safe spaces where people could openly discuss gender-based violence, seek counselling and learn how to prevent abuse.

According to her, the training was designed to equip faith leaders with practical knowledge to address GBV within their respective communities and encourage their congregations to challenge practices that promote violence.

The Regional Director of Ashoka West Africa, Josephine Nzerem, said the initiative was aimed at engaging traditional, religious and community leaders in building a sustainable grassroots prevention system.

She explained that the fight against GBV should go beyond supporting survivors after abuse to addressing the attitudes, practices and inequalities that make violence possible.

1,190 Delta constituents benefit from Ibori-Suenu's empowerment scheme

From **Monday Osayande**, Asaba

FOR 1,190 residents of Ethiope Federal Constituency in Delta State, access to business equipment and financial support could mark a turning point in their efforts to earn a living and become economically independent.

The beneficiaries received various empowerment items, including 80 minibuses, 150 tricycles, 150 motorcycles, 100 sewing machines, 100 grinding machines, 300 refrigerators and cash grants of N100,000 each to 300 people.

The intervention, facilitated by the member representing Ethiope Federal Constituency in the House of Representatives, Erhiatake Ibori-Suenu, is aimed at helping constituents establish businesses, expand existing enterprises and improve their livelihoods.

The programme attracted commendation from Delta State Governor, Sheriff Oborevwori, who described the initiative as a demonstration of responsive representation and commitment to the welfare of the people.

Unveiling the items, Oborevwori said the intervention would provide beneficiaries with practical tools to become self-reliant, create economic opportunities and contribute to the development of their communities.

He noted that the programme aligned with his administration's MORE Agenda, particularly its focus on economic empowerment, prosperity and inclusive growth.

The governor praised Ibori-Suenu, popularly known as the Niger Delta Amazon, for extending the benefits of representation to the grassroots and promoting political harmony in the constituency.

Festac residents accuse council chairman of meddling in association's affairs

By **Isaac Taiwo**

THE Festac Town Residents Association (FTRA) has accused some political interests of attempting to undermine its leadership structure, alleging that the Chairman of Amuwo-Odofin Local Council, Prince Lanre Sanusi, is backing parallel caretaker committees outside its constitutional provisions.

The association, which is preparing for the 50th anniversary of Festac Town in 2027, said the alleged interference threatened its independence, democratic principles and the unity of residents.

Speaking at a press conference held at Rockview Hotel, Festac, the FTRA President, Mohammed Kamal Adegbenro, insisted that the association's leadership must emerge through constitutionally recognised elections at both community and central levels.

Adegbenro said the association's constitution made no provision for caretaker committees, warning that attempts to introduce such arrangements could create divisions and destabilise its established leadership structure.

He appealed to Sanusi and other political stakeholders to refrain from supporting individuals or activities capable of disrupting the association's operations, urging the council chairman to respect its autonomy and allow residents to determine their leadership through democratic processes.

When contacted, Chairman of Amuwo-Odofin Local Council, Prince Lanre Sanusi, said his responsibility was to ensure peace in the area and prevent any situation that could lead to a breakdown of law and order.

Plateau Fulani coalition alleges killings, cattle rustling, seeks Tinubu's intervention

From **Isa Abdulsalami Ahovi**, Jos

THE Coalition of Fulani Registered Organisations in Plateau State has raised the alarm over alleged persistent killings, cattle rustling, destruction of property and intimidation of its members, calling on President Bola Tinubu to establish an independent investigative panel to address the situation.

The coalition alleged that at least 95 Fulani herders had been killed or injured between April and November 2026, while 1,240 cattle were either rustled or killed in different parts of the state.

It also claimed that more than 22 houses belonging to Fulani communities had been burnt or demolished, while vehicles, motorcycles, water-pumping machines and other valuables worth millions of naira were stolen, destroyed or damaged.

The allegations were made on Sunday at a press conference held at Sharna Place Conference Hall, Jos, by the coalition's State Chairman, Garba Abdullahi, alongside leaders of other Fulani associations.

The group identified Bassa, Jos South, Jos East, Riyom, Barkin Ladi, Bokkos and Mangu local councils as locations where the alleged attacks and destruction occurred.



IGP Tunji Disu

It attributed the incidents to armed groups and individuals allegedly operating around some Berom, Mwaghavul, Irigwe and Ron communities, while accusing some security operatives, including personnel of the Department of State Services (DSS), mobile police and the state-owned Operation Rainbow, of harassment, intimidation and human rights violations.

The coalition expressed particular concern over the killing of Alhaji Wada Abdullahi at Maraban Kantoma, Barkin Ladi Local Council, on Friday, November 20, and the alleged subsequent burning of more than five houses in the community by security personnel.

It also alleged that Fulani settlements had been subjected to one-sided security patrols and raised concerns over reported drone surveillance of their communities.

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TheMetroSection

Building collapse in Abia school raises calls for standards, compensation

From **Gordi Udeajah**, Umuahia

THE death of an eight-year-old pupil following the collapse of a dilapidated school building in Aba, Abia State, has triggered calls for urgent rehabilitation of public schools, structural safety inspections and compensation for victims of building collapses.

The victim, Master Vincent Chiedozie Dim, a Basic Two pupil of Ehere Primary School, Ogbor Hill, Aba, died on Friday, November 20, 2026, after a wall of a reportedly condemned school building collapsed on him.

The incident has renewed concerns about the safety of pupils in public schools, particularly amid claims by the state government that substantial funds have been committed to the rehabilitation and reconstruction of educational facilities.

Among those who visited the school and paid condolence visits to the bereaved family at the weekend were the All Progressives Congress (APC) deputy governorship candidate in the 2027 election, Dr Godswill Agu Egbe; the People's Democratic Party (PDP) candidate for Aba Central Constituency in the state House of Assembly, Mrs Anastasia Odochi Uchechi; and the Commissioner for Social Protection and Poverty Alleviation, Mrs Ngozi Blessing Felix.



The collapsed school building

Vincent, an orphan who lived with his elder sisters at 10 Uwakwe Street, Ogbor Hill, was reportedly at a corner of the school premises to ease himself when the wall collapsed on him.

His death has raised questions about why pupils were still exposed to a building said to have been declared unsafe for habitation and academic activities.

Egbe described the incident as avoidable, blaming the state government for allegedly failing to rehabilitate or remove the dangerous structure despite claims that more than N130 billion had been appropriated for school rehabilitation.

He said the tragedy exposed the gap between the government's claims of massive investment in education infrastructure and the condition of some public schools.

"It is difficult to see in clarity where adults are failing their responsibilities, where what we would have done to mitigate a risk, we didn't do it," Egbe told journalists during his visit.

He expressed sadness that a building reportedly adjudged to have failed an integrity test and declared unfit for use was allegedly left standing, exposing pupils to danger.

The APC chieftain also faulted the relevant ministries, departments and agencies (MDAs) for allegedly neglecting their responsibility to identify and remove dangerous structures in public schools.

Lagos power crisis sparks return of phone charging booths

By **Glory Sunday**

RESIDENTS of several Lagos communities are increasingly turning to commercial phone and power bank charging centres as worsening electricity supply disrupts daily activities, creates additional household expenses and opens up new business opportunities for traders.

In some neighbourhoods, the centres are witnessing a surge in patronage, with residents sometimes waiting in queues for others to retrieve their devices before they can charge their phones and power banks.

For Fikayo James, a resident of Ejigbo, the growing demand for charging services reflects the severity of the electricity crisis in her neighbourhood, where supply has become increasingly unreliable.

She said residents around Omiyale and Abuna streets sometimes received electricity for barely 30 minutes every two to three days.

According to her, electricity supply had never been particularly stable in the area, but residents previously managed because power, whenever restored, usually lasted between five and six hours. At some point, supply alternated between days, giving households some opportunity to plan their activities.

However, she said the situation had deteriorated in recent weeks, leaving residents uncertain about when electricity would be restored.

The development, she added, had forced more households to depend on generators and commercial charging centres to keep their mobile phones and power banks functional.

James said charging a mobile phone costs N200, while power banks attract between N400 and N500, depending on their capacity.

Power banks with capacities of 200mAh and above, she said, are charged N500.

She added that the charging centres were often crowded, forcing customers to wait until those who arrived earlier retrieved their devices.

Beyond the inconvenience and additional expenses, James said the poor electricity supply had worsened water scarcity and made it difficult for households to preserve food.

The increasing heat has further compounded residents' discomfort, particularly for families struggling to cope with prolonged outages.



(Front row) Chief Femi Adeniyi Williams (left) ; Mrs Tope Williams, Managing Director, Eleganza industrial City Limited, Mrs Shade Okoya, husband and Chairman, Eleganza Group of Companies, Chief Rasaki Akanni Okoya Standing: Mr Usman Okoya (left); Dr Oluwatoyin Smith, Modupe Ladipo;Omolara Ladipo and Omowunmi Ladipo Children of late Chief Rasheed Adegboyega Ladipo during the 8th days Fidua prayer of Late Chief Ladipo held at The Hall Victoria Island, Lagos on Monday November 23, 2026.

HURIWA warns against exposing corps members to overcrowded NYSC camps

By **Ayonote Clement**

• Tasks states to expand facilities • Sagamu camp accommodates over 4,300 prospective corps members

THE Human Rights Writers Association of Nigeria (HURIWA) has warned state governors against exposing National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) members to overcrowded, unhygienic and unsafe living conditions, urging them to urgently expand and rehabilitate orientation camps across the country.

The association said the recent overcrowding at the NYSC orientation camp in Sagamu, Ogun State, was a disturbing indication of years of inadequate investment in camp infrastructure, warning that the situation could endanger the health, safety and dignity of young Nigerians undertaking national service.

In a statement signed by its National Coordinator, Comrade Emmanuel Nnadozie Onwubiko, HURIWA called on governors to treat the welfare of corps members as a priority, rather than wait for public outrage or embarrassing footage of young graduates struggling for sleeping space before taking action.



Exposed NYSC members at the Sagamu camp.

The group aligned itself with the position of the NYSC Director-General, Brigadier General Olakunle Nafiu, that the increasing number of graduates mobilised annually has placed enormous pressure on existing orientation camp facilities.

According to HURIWA, yearly mobilisation has risen from about 400,000 in 2025 to approximately 450,000 in 2026 and could reach between 500,000 and 600,000 within the next three to five years.

It said the figures should compel governments to plan ahead and provide facilities capable of accommodating the growing number of participants, rather than continue to rely on emergency interventions when camps become overwhelmed.

HURIWA commended Nafiu for acknowledging the accommodation challenges, apologising to affected corps members and calling for stronger collaboration with state governments.

However, it maintained that apologies, temporary arrangements and emergency donations of mattresses could not replace adequate infrastructure.

The association expressed particular concern over the situation at the Sagamu camp, where a facility designed to accommodate slightly above 2,000 people reportedly struggled to house more than 4,300 prospective corps members.

It warned that forcing thousands of young Nigerians to share inadequate accommodation and sanitation facilities could expose them to communicable diseases, poor hygiene, physical discomfort and other preventable health risks.

Human traffickers targeting students online, NAPTIP warns

From **Joseph Kanjo**, Benin

THE National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP) has warned secondary school students in Edo State against falling victim to human traffickers who exploit social media platforms to recruit unsuspecting children.

The agency said traffickers were increasingly using online platforms to lure young girls and boys with promises of well-paid jobs, modelling opportunities and sports careers, many of which turn out to be fraudulent schemes designed to exploit their victims.

The Head of the Public Enlightenment Unit of NAPTIP's Benin Zonal Office, Mrs Joan Ojiewa, gave the warning during the inauguration of Anti-Human Trafficking Vanguard Clubs in 12 secondary schools across Benin City, including Asoro Secondary School and Ogheghe Secondary School.

The Guardian learnt that the initiative, organised in partnership with the International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD), involved the inauguration of 30 students from the junior and senior secondary school classes in each of the 12 schools.

Ojiewa said school-age children were particularly vulnerable to human trafficking, making it imperative to equip them with the knowledge and skills to recognise recruitment tactics and protect themselves.

She cautioned students against accepting friend requests and engaging indiscriminately with strangers on social media, explaining that traffickers often establish online relationships before offering seemingly attractive opportunities.

"You should be careful about who you relate with online using your smartphones because these traffickers are now online. What they do is send a friend request first. It can be through Facebook, Twitter, Instagram or WhatsApp, as the case may be.

"As soon as you accept their request, they chat you up and claim they want to help you. They ask what you can do, and once you tell them your skills or interests, they use that information to lure you," she said.

Ojiewa also warned students interested in modelling and sports to exercise caution, noting that traffickers often exploit young people's ambitions in these fields to deceive and recruit them.

She urged the newly inaugurated vanguards to take the anti-trafficking campaign beyond their schools by educating their siblings, parents, extended families and communities about the dangers of human trafficking.



Members of the Anti-Human Trafficking Vanguard Club during the event.

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APOSTOLIC ASSEMBLY OF THE WORLD CHURCH

OFFICIAL ANNOUNCEMENT OF REGISTRATION AND INTRODUCTION TO THE PUBLIC

PUBLIC NOTICE

A New Christian Ministry with a Worldwide Divine Gospel Mandate To Uphold Holiness

APOSTOLIC ASSEMBLY OF THE WORLD CHURCH is pleased to announce its official registration with the Corporate Affairs Commission (CAC), Nigeria, in 2026.

Following several spiritual encounters, revelations and visions in which the Lord Jesus Christ instructed him to establish this ministry, **Mr. Effiong Sunday Akpanimowo**, its Founder, established the Church with a clear spiritual mandate: to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ worldwide and uphold holiness as the central principle of Christian faith and conduct.

THE CHURCH'S SPIRITUAL EMPHASIS CENTRES ON HOLINESS AS A FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLE OF CHRISTIAN LIVING.

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FOUNDER
Mr. Effiong Sunday Akpanimowo
(08030665072)

TEMPORARY HEADQUARTERS
34 Robert Street, Uyo, Off Oron Road, Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria.

A CALL TO THE PUBLIC
You are warmly invited to become part of this Christian ministry as it begins its journey of faith, holiness, worship, evangelism and service to humanity.

APOSTOLIC ASSEMBLY OF THE WORLD CHURCH — *Propagating the Gospel of Jesus Christ throughout the world and upholding the call to holiness.*

Further information and worship schedules will be announced in due course.

Further information and worship schedules will be announced in due course.

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TO: ALL SHAREHOLDERS

NOTICE OF THE EXTRAORDINARY GENERAL MEETING OF INFRASTRUCTURE CREDIT GUARANTEE COMPANY PLC

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the Extraordinary General Meeting (**"EGM"**) of Infrastructure Credit Guarantee Company Plc (the **"Company"**) is scheduled to be held on **Thursday, 17th December 2026**, at the **Lagos Continental Hotel, Plot 52A, Kofo Abayomi Street, Victoria Island, Lagos, at 12:30pm (WAT)**, to transact the following business:

SPECIAL BUSINESS

To consider and, if thought fit, pass the following special resolution:

1. **IFC SUBORDINATED LOAN FACILITY**

   1.1. That the subordinated loan facility of up to Fifty Million United States Dollars (the "Facility") made available by the International Finance Corporation ("IFC") pursuant to the Subordinated Loan Agreement dated 7th August 2026 entered into between the Company and IFC, be and is hereby approved.

   1.2. That the Company be and is hereby authorized to draw down the Facility in such tranche or tranches as may be determined by the Board.

   1.3. That the Board and Management be and are hereby authorized to take all such actions and execute all such documents as may be necessary or desirable to give effect to the drawdown of the Facility and to comply with the terms and conditions of the Facility.

2. **GENERAL AUTHORITY TO IMPLEMENT THE RESOLUTION**

   That the Board, Management and Company Secretary be and are hereby authorized to take any further action and perform such lawful acts as may be necessary to give effect to the resolutions above, including but not limited to the execution of any agreement, notice or document; appointment of any professional parties and advisers; obtaining regulatory approvals including the approval of the Securities and Exchange Commission, NASD OTC Securities Exchange and Corporate Affairs Commission where required; complying with the directives of any relevant regulatory authority; and filing within the statutory timeline.

NOTES

1. **ATTENDANCE AND VOTING BY PROXY**

   1.1 A Member of the Company entitled to attend and vote at the EGM is entitled to appoint a proxy to attend and vote in his/her stead. Such an appointed proxy need not be a member of the Company.

   1.2 For the instrument of proxy to be valid, it must be completed, duly stamped and deposited at the office of the Registrars, CardinalStone Registrars Limited, 335/337 Herbert Macaulay Street, Sabo, Yaba, Lagos or sent by email to **registrars@cardinalstone.com** not less than forty-eight (48) hours before the time fixed for the meeting. The instrument of proxy shall be stamped at the instance of the Company.

   1.3 A blank Proxy Form can be downloaded from the Company's website **www.infracredit.ng**.

2. **RIGHT TO ASK QUESTIONS**

   It is the right of Members to ask questions, not only at the EGM but also in writing before the meeting. Such questions should be sent by email to the Company Secretary via **conwubere@infracredit.ng** no later than one (1) week before the EGM.

3. **LIVE STREAMING**

   The EGM will be streamed live. This will enable Members and other Stakeholders who will not attend the meeting physically to follow the proceedings. Please log on to the Company's website, **www.infracredit.ng**, for the live streaming.

Dated this 23rd day of November 2026

By Order of the Board

Company Secretary
Chidinma Onwubere
FRC/2015/PRO/NBA/002/00000011359
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LAGOS

Dates: **Saturday, 30th January and 13th February, 2027**

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

Time: 10AM

ABUJA & PORT HARCOURT

Date: **Saturday, 13th February, 2027**

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

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

Time: 10AM



APPLICATION CLOSES: FRIDAY, 22ND JANUARY 2027

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

TIME: 9AM TO 12:30PM

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Editorial

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Port investment drive must begin with concession clarity

THE revelation that concessionaires continue to operate some of Nigeria's strategic seaport facilities under expired licences exposes another troubling weakness in the management of public assets. Beyond the potential economic losses from the situation, it raises fundamental questions about regulatory discipline, the government's commitment to extracting value from strategic infrastructure and the sincerity of its efforts to attract fresh investment into the maritime sector.

A recent report indicated that some port terminal operators have remained in control of facilities years after their concession agreements expired. Renewal decisions have reportedly been delayed, while performance audits remain unpublished, reflecting a worrying disregard for the principles of transparency and accountability underpinning the Infrastructure Concession Regulatory Commission (ICRC) Act. The continued operation of these concessionaires, without publicly established contractual clarity, undermines the credibility of Nigeria's port concession framework, which was designed to improve efficiency, attract investment and promote fair competition.

The situation is particularly troubling against the background of Nigeria's substantial losses in maritime transport payments to foreign operators. With foreign shipping companies reportedly controlling about 95 per cent of the country's maritime freight market, the economy loses an estimated $4.5 billion yearly in net transport payments. Reducing this outflow and retaining more value within the domestic economy requires substantial capital inflows, greater local capacity and the entry of new investors. Yet, by allowing expired concession arrangements to linger indefinitely, the government risks creating an uneven playing field that discourages prospective investors and erodes confidence in the regulatory environment. This is a troubling contradiction of the investment roadshows and promotion campaigns undertaken by port authorities in recent times.

Port concessioning was introduced to address years of inefficiency, inadequate investment, poor service delivery and the operational rigidities associated with government-controlled terminals. The policy was expected to attract private capital, improve operational efficiency, modernise facilities and make Nigerian ports competitive with their counterparts globally. Private sector participation has undoubtedly delivered some improvements. However, the arrangement was never intended to become an open-ended transfer of public assets or a licence for operators to function indefinitely without effective oversight. Allowing terminals to operate under expired agreements, without transparent interim arrangements or clearly established obligations, undermines the integrity of the concession regime.

Concession agreements define the rights, obligations, responsibilities, investment commitments and key performance indicators (KPIs) governing the use of public infrastructure. They are not mere administrative documents. Allowing operators to continue without resolving their contractual status creates regulatory ambiguity, weakens the government's capacity to enforce performance standards and potentially undermines the bargaining position of port users and other stakeholders. The government, which represents the public interest in these arrangements, must be able to demonstrate that the terms under which public assets are managed remain enforceable and that operators are delivering commensurate value.

Performance standards are not simply benchmarks for periodic assessment. They are essential safeguards for preserving public assets, sustaining service quality, preventing abuse and protecting users against arbitrary charges and exploitation. The persistent concerns about the quality of Nigerian port infrastructure, operational inefficiencies and allegations of corrupt practices make effective oversight even more urgent. It is also disturbing that contractual uncertainty could further compromise fresh investment and infrastructure maintenance. Concessionaires operating without clearly-defined and enforceable obligations may have little or no incentive to undertake substantial long-term investments, while government agencies could struggle to enforce performance targets or impose appropriate sanctions. Ultimately, port users and the wider economy bear the cost through operational inefficiencies, higher charges, delays and declining trade competitiveness.

Nigeria's ports are too important to be managed through administrative inertia. They are gateways for international trade, major sources of government revenue and critical infrastructure for translating the country's industrial ambitions into reality. At a time when the government is seeking to expand non-oil revenue, promote exports and deepen regional trade under the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), creating uncertainty in the administration of the port system is economically self-defeating.

Trade is where much of the value created across an economy is ultimately exchanged and realised. This explains why countries approach trade policies with deliberate intent and remain proactive in addressing institutional and infrastructural constraints that could undermine competitiveness. Nigeria cannot afford to do otherwise. An economy seeking to diversify production, expand exports and attract investment cannot neglect the efficiency of its gateways to international markets.

The Nigerian Ports Authority (NPA) and its supervisory ministry must, therefore, establish a clear timeline for resolving the expired concessions. Where operators have fulfilled their contractual obligations and demonstrated the capacity to deliver, renewals should be concluded promptly and transparently, with stronger performance benchmarks and measurable investment commitments. Where they have failed, the government should enforce the relevant contractual provisions and create opportunities for qualified new operators. Renewal must not become an automatic entitlement for incumbents, just as the termination of existing arrangements must not become an excuse for arbitrary transfers of public assets.

Nigeria has the potential to serve as a gateway to the African market. However, that prospect will remain largely unrealised unless its policies, institutions and market opportunities are aligned. The country cannot extract the full economic value of its large population and strategic position as a continental economic power while the infrastructure required to facilitate trade remains constrained by weak administration.

The concession renewal process should also provide an opportunity to review the framework itself, address infrastructure deficits, strengthen regulatory oversight and ensure that the government receives fair value from assets held in trust for the people. It must not become an avenue for rewarding complacency or extending privileges without measurable returns. Neither should political considerations determine who controls strategic public infrastructure. The overriding consideration must be the public interest and the economic benefits that efficient port management can deliver.

More importantly, the government owes Nigerians an explanation for the prolonged delay. It cannot reasonably claim ignorance of the contractual status of such critical national assets. Several questions demand answers. Why have the renewal processes stalled for so long? Have independent performance audits been conducted, and why have their findings not been made public? What interim arrangements have been put in place to ensure regulatory oversight, enforce compliance and protect government revenue? Have any individuals or interests benefited from the prolonged uncertainty? These are legitimate questions that demand transparent answers, not bureaucratic silence.

Port management policies are too important to be administered arbitrarily. They influence economic growth, create jobs, determine trade efficiency and shape the competitiveness of domestic industries. Nigeria needs efficient ports, not concession arrangements sustained by bureaucratic delays or administered to favour privileged interests. The current situation offers the government an opportunity to demonstrate that its investment ambitions extend beyond promotional campaigns and foreign roadshows. Attracting investors requires more than advertising market opportunities; it demands predictable rules, transparent contracts, credible regulators and demonstrable respect for existing agreements. No serious investor will be indifferent to how a government manages the contracts governing its most strategic infrastructure.

Ultimately, Nigeria cannot build competitive ports on expired promises. The country should move from investment scouting to institutional discipline, ensuring that those entrusted with public assets operate under clear obligations and deliver measurable economic value. Bureaucratic inertia must not be allowed to become the country's port management policy.



LETTER

Relevance and competitive status of Urhobo language

SIR: Reuben Abati on *Arise TV* programme, dismissed the Urhobo language as a language that is "not competitive". What exactly does Abati mean by claiming that Urhobo is not a language of competition?

Which indigenous African language is superior to or more "competitive" than the Urhobo language? There is no indigenous African language not Yoruba, not Igbo, not Hausa, nor any other that is used as a global medium for international commerce, science, technology, engineering, or mathematics in the manner of English, French, Chinese, Spanish, or Russian. Every indigenous Nigerian language holds equal cultural, ancestral, and human dignity. To single out the Urhobo tongue and brand it uncompetitive is chauvinism dressed up as commentary.

What triggered this entire conversation is the viral video of a courageous young Urhobo schoolboy that deserves national celebration. That young boy spoke truth to power when he recounted how teachers flog and punish pupils simply for speaking Urhobo in the classroom, yet he boldly declared that he is proud of being Urhobo and that nobody can stop him from speaking the language of his birth. He also rightly lamented how too many Urhobo parents have abandoned Urhobo names in favour of foreign English names. Anyone who is ashamed of his mother tongue, his culture, his history, and his identity has a severe psychological and existential crisis. I am unapologetically proud of the Urhobo language, heritage, and tradition, and nobody can intimidate us into feeling inferior.

Urhobo is the fourth-largest

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

Zik Gbemre, an Urhobo man, wrote from Lagos.

Opinion

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Manchester City blues: A clash of cultures

By Adekeye Adebajo

AFTER three years of investigation, an independent commission of the English Premier League recently found Manchester City football club guilty of the vast majority of the 134 disciplinary charges brought against it. The commission found that City had breached the League's financial rules by concocting "sham" sponsorship deals in a disguised funding scheme. Jonathan Wilson described the revelations as "the greatest fraud ever perpetrated on English football." The club has denied all the charges.

This has been a surreal experience for football fans globally, being told that what they witnessed for a decade was not real, but a rigged system. The situation appears to have been a stunning case of what Hull City's Turkish owner, Acun Ilicali, memorably described as "financial doping", undertaken on an industrial scale. This is a similar feeling to astonishing revelations of drug cheats in other sports such as multiple Tour de France winner, Lance Armstrong, and star athletes, Ben Johnson and Marion Jones, who all insisted for years that their having never failed any drug tests proved that they were clean.

The Age of the Sheikhs

Manchester City has been owned, since 2008, by Sheikh Mansour bin Zayed al-Nahyan, the crown prince and deputy prime minister of the absolutist monarchy of the United Arab Emirates (UAE), with his trusted royal adviser, Khaldoon al-Mubarak, serving as chairman. The club's value has increased 20-fold, from £200 million in 2008 to £4 billion today. City is, however, accused of having signed sponsorship deals with Abu Dhabi sponsors like the government-owned Etihad Airways. The sponsors, however, allegedly paid only a small portion of this fee to the club, with the bulk provided by the 81 per centmajority owner, the Sheikh Mansour-controlled Abu Dhabi United Group (ADUG). This arrangement essentially enabled the club to overstate its income and hide the huge "owner equity" infusions from ADUG. Manchester City has conceded that these cash injections were periodically provided to their sponsors, but implausibly claimed that the club was not involved in this process.

City is thus alleged to have recorded receiving £949.94 million from its sponsors in the nine seasons between 2009 and 2018, but only £119.25 million of this sum was actually paid directly by sponsors, meaning that £830.69 million was paid by ADUG: a staggering 30 per cent of the club's revenues over this period. This sum was much larger than the total revenues of most of City's rivals, clearly demonstrating an unfair advantage over other clubs. The £830.69 million did not appear anywhere in City's balance sheet, suggesting that the club had hidden these costs from its auditors and football regulators. City also allegedly disguised ADUG payments as the sale of players' image rights.

Furthermore, the club is accused of having made under-the-table tax-dodging consultancy payments – "double contracts" - to former manager, Roberto Mancini (which he has admitted), and former player, Yaya Touré, and possibly others. Many of City's witnesses were said to have deliberately lied to Premier League investigators. The club is also accused of having sought to halt and frustrate the investigation. Even after the damning verdict (which City is appealing), its chief executive, Ferran Soriano, dismissed the decision as a "Premier League conspiracy theory." The club's dissembling response further questioned the league's ability to "behave as an independent, impartial and fair-minded regulator." City's leadership has often acted like megalomaniacs drunk on power and money, using locust lawyers, prepared to destroy the very foundations of English football, to cover up allegedly corrupt dealings. Following this debacle, could Saudi-owned Newcastle United and Qatari-owned Paris St Germain also be vulnerable to charges of having used opaque funding to buy success?

UAE: The kingdom of repression

City's owners, the UAE, often likes to portray itself as a pristine, open tourist destination. However, scratching beneath the surface, this postcard image reveals an awful underbelly of state-sponsored repression. Human Rights Watch has long reported harsh restrictions on freedom of expression, the right of peaceful protest, and the conducting of unfair trials. There are few worker protections, trade unions are banned, and labourers are often unprotected from heat-related illnesses and death. Migrant workers - mostly from south Asia and the Philippines, as well as many from Africa - constitute around 90 per cent of the UAE's population. With few social and legal protections, many suffer widespread exploitation and abuse at the hands of their employers, and are vulnerable to arbitrary punishment, rape, and deportation. Further afield, UN investigators have consistently accused Abu Dhabi of arming and funding Sudan's genocidal Rapid Support Forces (RSF).

Pep Guardiola: Master of illusion

These revelations have further exposed Manchester City's overhyped former manager, Pep Guardiola (2016-2026), who has often been falsely praised as having "revolutionised" football. The fact that Guardiola appears to have had an illicit at least $900 million a year more than his rivals, actually shows just how good a coach Jurge Klopp was at Liverpool, to have won a championship and run a "financially doped" City so close twice. Genuinely elite coaches like Carlo Ancelotti and Jose Mourinho would surely have won more than one Champions League trophy in a decade with the limitless resources at Guardiola's disposal. In seeking to portray himself as a humanitarian at a charity event in February, Guardiola hypocritically condemned the atrocities committed by Sudan's warlords, without any apparent sense of the absurdity of his Emirati paymasters fuelling these abuses by supporting RSF rebels. Furthermore, two legendary African players that Guardiola coached – Yaya Touré and Samuel Eto'o – have publicly accused him of racial discrimination.

Sanctioning sinners

A decision on the outcome of this appeal is expected by January 2027, and sanctions will surely follow. This case could eventually end up in the English high court, and/or the Court of Arbitration for Sport. City's owners may well be forced to sell the club, as happened in 2022 with Roman Abramovich, Chelsea's Vladimir Putin-supporting billionaire oligarch. If City were to be stripped of their three titles won during the nine years in question, two would go to Manchester United and one to Liverpool. It is also likely that City will be relegated to a lower division, and the club could even face expulsion from English football. Other Premier League clubs who suffered financially as a result of the club's cheating, if proved, are also likely to sue for compensation.

The UAE has reacted in the predictable manner of an autocratic regime: voicing concerns to the British government about the Premier League's investigation, while darkly hinting that an adverse finding could jeopardise bilateral trade (worth £25 billion in 2025), investments, and the broader diplomatic relationship.

This scandal essentially represents a clash of cultures. The Premier League effectively allowed an absolutist Arab monarchy to buy one of England's oldest clubs. But this is a tyrannical oil-rich sheikhdom in which the rule of law is often optional for the rich and the powerful.

Abu Dhabi thus sought to apply its own domestic norms to a democratic environment in which regulations and the sanctity of the law usually reign supreme, regardless of wealth, status, or power. In its own society in which the UAE controls the judiciary, it can simply order judges to reverse decisions that it does not like. Unfortunately for City's Emirati royal owners, this option is simply not available to them in an English system in which the separation of powers is more strictly observed.

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

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ASCON to govt: Towards future-ready public service in Nigeria

By Tunji Olaopa

IN October 2026, the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, HE Bola Ahmed Tinubu sent an executive bill to the Senate asking that the Administrative Staff College of Nigeria (ASCON) Act of 1973 be repealed and replaced with another establishing the National School of Government (NSG). The objective of the new institution is to improve the capacities of public officials and to further strengthen the capability readiness of the civil service to implement government policies and ultimately boost the Renewed Hope Agenda.

This is one critical leg—indeed a commendable paradigm shift—in the government's desire to transform the quality of public service delivery to millions of Nigerians. By this move, the Tinubu administration has further signaled its intention of grounding the civil service as a strategic partner in national development.

When it was established, the ASCON immediately became Nigeria's first management development institute (MDI) that intervened broadly in all sectors of the Nigerian economy and public administration in its provision of management training, consultancy, research and other services meant to improve administrative and management performances. In its over five decades of operation, ASCON had remained preeminent in fashioning training and administrative development. The trainings were particularly structured to cater for senior public management and administrative as well as middle cadre staff. And they are meant to impact career development in terms of professionalisation and managerial efficiency.

The mandate of ASCON is subsumed under seven key objectives: (i) provide higher Management training for the development of senior executives for public and private sectors of the Nigerian economy; (ii) provide and arrange for a comparative study and investigation of the principles and techniques of Management and Administration, and for exchange of ideas and experience and for promotion of better understanding between persons connected with Management and Administration arising in different spheres of National life; (iii) award grants, scholarships or travel fellowship to research in public administration and allied subjects; (iv) conduct research into problems of Management and Administration arising in different sphere of National life; (v) establish and maintain a library; (vi) undertake and provide for the publication of journals and research papers and books in furtherance of the aforesaid objectives; (vii)undertake, organise and facilitate study courses, conferences lectures, seminars and the like and to promote the aforesaid objectives.

In seeking for the establishment of another institution, the Tinubu administration is paradigmatically enhancing the legal instrument that created ASCON in the first place, and stretching its institutional and structural capacity to make the civil service system more performance driven and productivity capable. The intention of the administration is for an institutional reengineering, within the ambit of global best practices, that will improve public policy training, executive education and governance innovation. Thus, the influence of the recent launching in the United Kingdom of the National School of Government and Public Services (NSGPS) is instructive as veritable reference. ASCON itself was modeled after the initial institutional structures represented by the Royal Institute of Public Administration and the Civil Service College (i.e. "Sunningdale"). These two structures, established respectively in 1922 and 1970, were meant not just to strategically blend academic and practical expertise in public administration and management, but to also articulate academic research that interrogate Whitehall and its administrative practices.

Both structures were mainstreamed into the National School of Government which was abolished by the Cameron administration in 2012 in the wake of cost-cutting austerity measures. However, the new body that replaced the School of Government, the Civil Service Learning, came under intense scrutiny in terms of its capacity to stand shoulder to shoulder with global best practices, especially from Australia, Singapore and France, that ought to make the UK civil service intentionally and strategically performance driven.

The establishment of the UK National School of Government and Public Services (NSGPS) "offers learning built around skills that every civil servant needs and provides leadership and collaboration support across the public sector…[and] learning built around Universal Skills such as this year's One Big Thing 'AI in Action', accelerated development schemes for high-potential staff including apprenticeships and the Fast Stream, and specialist upskilling such as that delivered by the College for National Security."

Essentially, the new institution is mandated to develop a range of internally motivated capacity and competency training thereby undermining the dependence on very expensive external management consultancy. This internal capacity development is intended to mine and adapt for public administration recent developments in data analytics and usage, artificial intelligence, economics, digital transformation, leadership training, financial management, strategic policy formulation, project delivery, and more.

In comparative analysis, the NSGPS is meant to mirror the significant achievements of Singapore's Civil Service College, and the triangulated relationship between research, training and consultancy which has placed Singapore at the top tier of administrative progress across the globe. The customised training modules of Singapore's CSC play strategic roles in investigating, attending to and resolvingserious bureaucratic and operational bottlenecks and red-tapes encountered by the government ministries.

The trainings on offer by the CSC are then strategically tied to career progression and national priorities that have impacts on the citizens. These modalities are more grounded within a more technocratic tradition within France's public administration context. In France, the responsibility of the École Nationale d'Administration (ENA), established in 1945, is to gatekeep the technical and administrative parameters of France's political and administrative establishments. Also abolished by President Macron in 2021, the ENA has been replaced by the Institut National de Service Public—the National Institute for Public Service (INSP) in 2022. The INSP is meant to integrate the reform objective of adapting "recruitment and training to the contemporary challenges of public action, emphasising the diversity of profiles, practical skills, and connections to institutional and social realities."

The challenge before the Nigerian NSG is to incorporate the best of the global best practices in school of government from the UK and Singapore to South Africa. The first challenge is to conceptualise a school of government (SoG) strategically, different from the mandate that established ASCON and its global equivalents as manpower training institutes.In terms of its scope, strategic intent and institutional methodology, the NSG will be different from these institutes, iterated into ASCON and the Public Service Institute of Nigeria.

ASCON and the MDIs were established with the minimal responsibility for baseline administrative, managerial and operational compliance that allows a regular public servant to function in terms of clerical skills, administrative processes and other procedural and vocational requirements. The mid-level and junior civil servants and public officials are taken through a rigid and standardised administrative curriculum, delivered through rote learning and classroom-bound instruction, which is meant to reinforce the understanding of the traditional administrative structures.

On the other hand, the SoG should necessarily be manned by a blended faculty made up of academic and administrators, global and national policy experts, top class industry and technology executives and other relevant administrative practitioners. This faculty is meant to adapt the curriculum of the school and the career progression of the civil servants to macroeconomic shifts in governance and new administrative developments. This implies a curricular dynamic that is flexible, agile, multidisciplinary, experimental, evidence-based and technology-driven in terms of its capacity to integrate ethics, digital transformation and strategic methodologies and innovation. The fundamental mandate of the SoG—is transformative, rather than transactional, i.e. leadership and strategic public policy redesign through data analytics, digital innovation and behavioral insights—is to be targeted at a cross section of audience including political appointees, private sector leaders and operatives seeking far more strategic and operational interfacing with the public sector, and most especially senior public service executives.

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

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Opinion

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Away with female boxing, weightlifting, wrestling, football

By Victoria Ngozi Ikeano

THIS is not a popular view. No doubt about it. However, I shall continue to say my truth because, 'to stand before the Truth and refute it is impossible'. Critics may lambast me as much as they want. It matters little to me. I shall not tire in opposing female boxing, female weightlifting, female wrestling, female football with the last drop of my pen, with the last tap of my keyboard. I state with all the energy that I can muster that women should avoid activities that involve extreme (physical) exertion such as female wrestling, weightlifting, boxing, football. These are coarse activities that are harmful to both body and soul for women.

Lamentably, the world's largely male sports administrators have conscripted even female youngsters, that are about to step out into real life, into these coarse activities by instituting age-grade competitions. Thus under-17 female football tournaments among others have been ongoing for years now at local, continental and global levels like the Olympics, etc. Those participating in these are girls aged below 17 years. These are 14, 15,16 year-olds and those that have not attained age 17 at start of the particular competition. This is the period in life when they are making the transition from childhood years towards becoming a self con

scious human being. In childhood years (sanguine stage of earth life), they live for the moment, carefree and are more aligned with nature. That is why children love natural environments — they feel at home at the countryside, they want to bathe in the rain, at streams, be at zoos admiring the animals, at recreation parks surrounded by flowers, trees, etc. They bear no responsibility so to speak.

At approximately teenage years which corresponds with period of physical maturity also known as melancholy stage of life, something dramatic happens, almost simultaneously. The blood radiation changes, generative power sets in. He/she is now grounded in the world. This is when life really begins. It is when the human being becomes responsible to both God and man. The responsibility he/she bears to God from thence till the end of his life on earth is to use this power only for what is good, pure and noble. Observe that in the beginnings when this generative power sets in within a youth he/she longs for the ideal. He/she becomes very respectful, pays attention to neatness, is enthusiastic about serving the community, in voluntary work; in brief the youth demonstrates a kind, unselfish attitude. Alas, as times passes by and without a strong anchor, the youngsters later gradually get corrupted by the larger society, through wrong societal values, engaging in wrong activities and so on. . . . .

My fellow women may say that I am pulling the carpet from under the feet of female boxers, female wrestlers, female weightlifters and female footballers by not recognising the "glory" and "prestige" these ladies have brought to womenfolk and the country at large. It is not true that what a man can do a woman can also do, much less do better. No. The physical stature of both sexes is different and this determines the activities they are cut out for by nature.

Men with their muscular build are made for rough, coarse, positive kind of activities and women with their own peculiar physical structure, for finer, negative types. In the wordings themselves, we find the right conception. For example we link the word 'men' with muscular and picture this as 'gra gra' 'gbam gbam' kind of things while the word female, feminine conjure up in our inner eyes, something soft, finer, finesse. This does not mean that women are the weaker sex as is generally believed. Women are indeed, stronger than men inwardly, psychically.

Both male and female are one specie, the splitting having occurred as we journeyed down from above; the male is the positive and the female negative. This gives rise to the equal armed vertical and horizontal beam representation that makes for balance. The two complement each other in their activities, which are, men in their positive (coarse) activity and women in negative, (finer) kinds. As stated earlier the types of activities both sexes are to engage in are ordained by nature and each has been equipped naturally through their body make-up to excel in those types of activities. None can perform the other's role as well as the other. Should a man or a woman defy natural order and engage in activities reserved for the other, it will result in caricatures, distortions. Sports experts will affirm that female football, female wrestling, female boxing are not as "interesting" as those of men and women cannot carry as much weight as men.

Should you yourself watch them, you will notice the huge difference arising from fact that women are not cut out for such activities. Watching in the midst of others, you will hear such unpremeditated comments as, "see how she played, headed that ball like a man; she boxes like a man; she is playing, fighting like a man"; you will further hear remarks in our local pidgin like, "she get power like man" This is by no means a compliment to the ladies to whom they are directed. It shows that everyone senses and is aware that this is not a woman's field.

Ladies involved in these sports as a profession are tending towards masculinity. Overtime they develop male features and in a next incarnation they become what are called distorted souls. That is, their physique is male but their soul is female (its fundamental core from the very beginning). This results in social aberrations as LGBTQ that is, lesbianism, gay, bi-sexual, transgender, queer persons, etc. What is said of females also applies to males. Men that partake in feminine (negative) finer activities as a life-long profession at a later incarnation on earth become distorted souls (female physical body with male soul) with concomitant problems, same sexual pervasions cum orientation which also includes cross dressing. There are other consequences such as inability to conceive and birth a child for the females. Distorted souls are neither here nor there. They are neither genuine women nor genuine men and they end up not finding true happiness. I do not mean contentment which money can buy but inner peace.

You will also notice that some female footballers, female boxers, female wrestlers, female weightlifters have some male characteristics. Thus, you hear remarks like, "look at her, she looks like a man". In this case, the girls are tending towards becoming distorted souls. Same as men with female features also tending towards becoming distorted male souls. The distortion is a long process — overtime women that suffuse themselves in predominantly positive (coarse) activities first manifest male characteristics while still retaining their female physique and then at their next incarnation they are born as men, with male body but their soul (core) remain female, feminine. The two do not match; body and soul are not same and therein lay the distortion.

Such distortions whether it be distorted female soul or distorted male soul has adverse consequences for the person concerned as well as his/her environment. For ladies though, the consequences are far reaching (apart from those outlined) for, we thereby trample underfoot, a gift which the Creator bestowed on us as bearers of Light. What shall it profit a female boxer, female wrestler, female weightlifter, and female footballer to gain the whole world and lose her soul? I call on our womenfolk at all levels to use everything at their disposal to stop girls, present and future, from treading this path. It leads to perdition.

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vPASS: A biometric gate cannot replace a governance compass (2)

By Chiwuike Uba

Continued from yesterday

WE are also told that data will not be stored on kiosks or handheld devices. How reassuring, if the question were about kiosks. The real question is how the central database will be defended against cyberattack, insider misuse and unauthorised disclosure. Nigeria is hardly a stranger to digital vulnerabilities. A honeypot of biometric data does not need a sign saying "help yourself" to attract attention.

There must also be explicit, legally enforceable bars against repurposing this data for unrelated surveillance, commercial profiling or any other use without a proper legal basis. Citizens' personal information is not loose change to be pocketed by whichever institution or contractor happens to be holding the bag.

What the Constitution has to say

This initiative also stands on constitutional ground. Section 37 of the 1999 Constitution guarantees the right to privacy. Section 41 protects the freedom of movement throughout Nigeria, subject to permissible restrictions. Section 46 offers judicial redress where fundamental rights have been, are being or are likely to be infringed.

None of this forbids reasonable identity checks in the interest of aviation security, and not every mandatory administrative requirement is a rights violation. But the Constitution asks government to show its working. Does the measure have a proper legal basis? Does it pursue a legitimate aim? Is it proportionate? Is making enrolment in a particular biometric platform compulsory, without adequate alternatives, a proportionate answer to the security problems identified?

Security is a legitimate responsibility of the State. It is not a magic word that suspends scrutiny. When "security" is invoked to settle every argument, citizens are entitled to wonder what, exactly, is being secured, and from whom.

Who owns the gate?

The partnership between FAAN and VERXID raises its own questions. Private participation in public infrastructure is not a sin. Done well, public-private partnerships mobilise capital, expertise and innovation that public institutions may lack. This is not an allegation that the concession is defective.

The government says the project cleared the required approvals, including the Federal Executive Council and the Office of the Attorney-General of the Federation. The Director-General of the Infrastructure Concession Regulatory Commission has confirmed the Commission's involvement and its intention to monitor compliance with obligations and service standards. These are welcome. But approval is a milestone, not a moat. Regulatory clearance is the beginning of accountability, not a licence to retire it.

When a private company helps build and operate infrastructure that processes sensitive personal data and controls access to an essential public service, the public deserves answers. What is the concession model, and how long does it last? What investments has the partner committed, and how will it recover them? Will passengers bear charges, direct or indirect? Who owns the technology, the infrastructure and the data? What service standards apply, and what penalties follow failure? What are the terms for termination, data portability, continuity of service and transfer of assets at the end?

We have been told that any additional cost to passengers will be "minimal". Minimal to whom? A charge deemed trivial in the minister's pocket may be considerable in a student's. Nigerians deserve the actual charging structure and the basis on which "minimal" was determined, not an adjective doing the work of a figure.

There is also the risk of a private monopoly at the boarding gate. If one provider controls the technology through which every domestic passenger must be authenticated, government needs real safeguards against vendor lock-in, unreasonable charges and operational disruption. Whoever holds the key to the gate holds enormous leverage. Government can outsource technology, but it cannot outsource accountability.

Six weeks to the finish line

Then there is the calendar. The system was unveiled on November16, with airline integration due on December 31 and enforcement from 1 January 2027. That leaves roughly six weeks for passenger sensitisation, registration, airline integration, testing, staff training and the resolution of problems nobody has yet discovered. It is an ambitious schedule, if by ambitious one means optimistic to the point of fantasy.

Lagos and Abuja are the initial deployment sites, but success in two showpiece airports is not proof of readiness nationwide. Nigerian airports differ widely in connectivity, power supply, equipment, technical support and staff capacity. A system that purrs in Ikeja may stutter elsewhere.

What happens when the internet drops? How are passengers processed when authentication is unavailable? Do airline systems talk reliably to the verification platform? Have airport personnel been trained to handle failed authentication without subjecting travellers to arbitrary treatment, or will "the system has rejected you" become the new "come back tomorrow"?

And the timing could hardly be worse. The December Yuletide rush, when families converge on the airports in their thousands, will coincide with onboarding and the pilot phase. We are proposing to test the bridge by driving the heaviest traffic of the year across it.

A more prudent path exists. Begin with voluntary registration and controlled pilots across different categories of airport. Publish an implementation readiness assessment covering reliability, processing times, false rejection rates, cybersecurity vulnerabilities, airline integration and the effectiveness of alternative verification. Run a period of parallel operation in which existing identity checks remain available. Enforce only when independent assessments show the platform is reliable, accessible and sustainable. There is little public value in rushing to create avoidable chaos and then blaming passengers for being unprepared.

What government must get right

The answer is not to abandon vPASS. Nigeria needs modern passenger identification, and this is a genuine chance to improve security and service. But nationwide compulsory enforcement should be conditional on six safeguards.

First, publish the legal and regulatory framework governing compulsory enrolment and verification, spelling out the respective responsibilities of FAAN, airlines and the concessionaire, and distinguishing clearly between airline integration and individual passenger registration.

Second, let the Nigeria Data Protection Commission exercise visible, independent oversight. Conduct a comprehensive Data Protection Impact Assessment, publish its key findings and set clear rules for collection, storage, access, retention, sharing and deletion, consistent with Sections 28, 30, 39 and 40 of the Act.

Third, establish alternative identity verification for passengers who cannot complete biometric authentication or who meet technical failure. No one should be denied boarding solely because the platform fails, where identity can be satisfactorily established another way.

Fourth, disclose the concession appropriately, including its duration, investment obligations, cost-recovery arrangements, passenger charges, performance standards, risk allocation, termination provisions and data portability.

Fifth, phase the implementation, supported by independent readiness assessments across the domestic network and with time for public education and airline integration.

Sixth, create a transparent complaints and redress mechanism, so that wrongful denial of boarding or misuse of personal data has a remedy that does not require a miracle. These safeguards are not obstacles to innovation. They are the difference between responsible innovation and technological experimentation at citizens' expense.

The real test

vPASS offers Nigeria a chance to show that digital transformation can improve public infrastructure while respecting rights and strengthening accountability. Its objectives are legitimate and its technology has real potential. But its success will turn on the quality of the governance beneath it, and not on how many passengers it registers or how quickly its scanners blink.

Every new technology brings new governance duties: protecting personal information, managing cyber risk, securing competition and value for money in partnerships, preventing exclusion and guaranteeing redress. A biometric database can establish who a person is. It cannot establish whether the institution holding that information deserves to be trusted. A sophisticated platform can speed up the queue, but it cannot compensate for weak oversight, thin regulation or the absence of consequences.

Nigeria does not merely need smarter airports. It needs institutions capable of deploying technology responsibly, protecting citizens and answering for their decisions.

Government should use technology to make public services more accessible, not make access to public services depend on the flawless performance of technology. That is the line between digitalisation and good governance. By that standard vPASS, and indeed the nation's wider digital ambitions, must be judged.

Concluded.

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

The Guardian Business

www.guardian.ng Tuesday, November 24, 2026

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CRUDE OIL PRICE UPDATE Brent crude: $110.2| WTI crude: $103.5

FOREX MARKET UPDATE I&E window: N1,330.47

Foreigners retreat from Nigerian stocks by 38% over political risk concerns

By **Helen Oji**

FOREIGN investor transactions on the Nigerian Exchange Limited (NGX) fell by 38.33 per cent in October 2026, amid growing concerns about political and economic risks.

But the steep fall was overshadowed by rising interest from domestic investors, who increased their market activities to sustain overall turnover growth.

The latest NGX Domestic and Foreign Portfolio Investment Report for October 2026 showed that total market transactions rose by 13.7 per cent, from N1.816 trillion in September to N2.065 trillion in October.

The October figure also represented a 99.99 per cent increase over the N1.03 trillion recorded in the corresponding period of 2025, reflecting a significant spike in trading activity on the exchange.

Domestic investors accounted for the bulk of transactions during the month, with their participation significantly exceeding that of foreign investors.

A breakdown of the figures showed that domestic transactions increased by 19.82 per cent, from N1.62 trillion in September to approximately N1.94 trillion in October.

In contrast, foreign transactions declined by 38.33 per cent, from N191.14 billion in September to N117.87 billion in October.

However, retail investors' transactions also weakened, falling by 26.79 per cent, from N619.77 billion to N453.75 billion within the same period.

The figures indicated that institutional investors accounted for a larger share of domestic transactions, outperforming retail investors by 54 per cent in October.

The trend underscores the growing influence of institutional investors in the domestic equities market, even as retail participation weakened during the month.

On a longer-term basis, the report showed that domestic transactions increased by 160.83 per cent over 19 years, from N3.556 trillion in 2007 to N9.27 trillion in 2025.

Foreign transactions also recorded significant growth, rising by 329.87 per cent, from N615.6 billion in 2007 to N2.64 trillion in 2025.

Despite the increase in foreign transactions over the period, domestic investors remained the dominant participants in the market. They accounted for about 78 per cent of total transactions in 2025, while foreign investors contributed the remaining 22 per cent.

The year-to-date figures as of October 2026 further reinforced the dominance of domestic investors, whose transactions stood at approximately N15.463 trillion, representing 90.29 per cent of total market transactions.

Foreign investors accounted for N1.664 trillion, or 9.71 per cent, of transactions during the period.

The figures indicate that domestic investors continued to provide the bulk of trading activity on the exchange, while foreign participation remained below 10 per cent of year-to-date transactions.



Manager, Industry Fraud Desk, Nigeria Inter-Bank Settlement System (NIBSS), Oluwatosin Obadimu (left); Revenue Assurance and Fraud Management Manager, Globacom; Chairperson, Association of Chief Audit Executives of Banks in Nigeria (ACAEBIN), Aina Amah; Deputy Managing Director, United Bank for Africa, Chukwuma Nweke; Managing Director, WSC Technologies Limited, Wemimo Oluwalade and Assistant Commissioner of Police, Special Fraud Unit, Nigeria Police Force, during UBA Fraud Awareness Week 2026, themed "Fraud Dynamics: Staying One Step Ahead", at the UBA House head office in Marina, Lagos.

UBA seeks stronger intelligence sharing to combat digital fraud

THE United Bank for Africa (UBA) Plc has called for stronger intelligence sharing and collaboration among financial institutions, telecommunications operators, regulators and law enforcement agencies to combat the growing threat of digital fraud.

The call was made during a high-level panel session on 'The Changing Face of Digital Fraud: Staying Ahead of Emerging Threats', organised as part of activities marking the bank's 2026 Fraud Awareness Week, themed 'Fraud Dynamics: Staying One Step Ahead'.

The hybrid session, held at UBA's head office in Lagos on Friday, November 20, 2026, and streamed live on YouTube and Zoom, brought together regulators, law enforcement officers, telecommunications operators and industry leaders, alongside members of the bank's board, management and staff.

UBA's Group Managing Director/Chief Executive Officer, Oliver Alawuba, who was represented by the Group Deputy Managing Director, Chukwuma Nweke, said timely intelligence sharing among stakeholders was critical to identifying suspicious activities, preventing fraud and safeguarding customers.

He noted that the growing adoption of digital channels for financial transactions had created new opportunities for fraudsters to exploit vulnerabilities in banking systems and customer information.

These threats, he said, ranged from phishing emails and fraudulent text messages to account takeovers, SIM-related fraud and the abuse of digital banking channels.

"Consider a suspicious SIM change followed by an unusual transfer. The telecommunications provider will see the first warning sign, while the bank sees the second. Sharing intelligence promptly can help us act in time to protect customers," he said.

Agencies' poor attitude threatens MMIA N712b facilities, experts warn

By **Olusegun Koiki**

AVIATION industry experts have called for a change in the attitude, conduct and professionalism of airport workers and government security agencies to complement the ongoing infrastructure upgrade at the Murtala Muhammed International Airport (MMIA).

They warned that the new terminal could fail to deliver a world-class passenger experience if poor service culture, indiscipline, extortion and lack of accountability continue among personnel operating at the airport and other terminals across the country.

The Federal Executive Council (FEC) had approved N712 billion for the total reconstruction of MMIA 1 terminal, built in 1979. Work commenced on the terminal in 2026 and it is expected to be completed within 22 months.

The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Ibom Air, George Uriesi, in an interview with The Guardian at the weekend, said that Nigeria needed to learn from other neighbouring countries, especially Ghana, on how international terminals are managed.

Uriesi described the Kotoka International Airport, Accra, as a civilised facility whose passenger experience is comparable to what obtains globally.

He attributed the airport's performance to infrastructure and personnel, stressing that the attitude of workers could compensate for infrastructural shortcomings.

He expressed that the ongoing infrastructure development at the MMIA by the Federal Government and the Federal Airports Authority of Nigeria (FAAN) was commendable, but must be matched by a corresponding change in the behaviour and service culture of airport personnel.

He said: "We should all be very happy and thankful for the major infrastructure development happening at MMIA and give credit to the Federal Government and FAAN for finally taking the bull by the horns.

"I just pray that when it is all done, we move into it with a change in our behaviour and hopefully establish a new culture at our gateway that matches the level of infrastructure that we will have.

"A world-class terminal can be undermined by poor attitudes. The resulting passenger experience will fall short of the infrastructure and negatively affect the airport's competitiveness."

Unilever Nigeria exits foods business, to focus on personal, home care

By **Tobi Awodipe**

UNILEVER Nigeria Plc is set to exit its foods business and concentrate on beauty, personal care and home care products following a proposed transfer of its local foods business assets to MCK Nigeria Limited, a subsidiary of United States-based McCormick & Company Inc.

The company disclosed this in a notification to the Nigerian Exchange Limited (NGX) yesterday, stating that its board had agreed to recommend the proposed transaction to shareholders for approval.

Under the arrangement, Unilever Nigeria will transfer the assets of its foods business covered by the transaction to MCK Nigeria on a cash-free and debt-free basis.

The proposed divestment is part of a wider global transaction stemming from an agreement signed on March 31, 2026, between Unilever, the parent company of Unilever Nigeria, and McCormick to combine Unilever's global Foods business with the US-based food company.

Unilever Nigeria said it had received an offer for the transfer of local Foods business assets falling within the scope of the global transaction.

The board said its decision to recommend the offer followed an assessment of the proposal and its implications for the company and shareholders, with input from its fairness opinion adviser, financial adviser and legal adviser.

However, completion of the transaction is subject to shareholders' approval, the conclusion of the global deal and relevant regulatory clearances, including approval from the Federal Competition and Consumer Protection Commission (FCCPC). The proposed transfer must also satisfy or secure waivers for other applicable legal, regulatory and contractual conditions.

The company clarified that the arrangement involves only the transfer of the Foods business assets and does not constitute a sale of shares in Unilever Nigeria or a change in its ownership structure. Its existing shareholding structure will therefore remain unchanged after completion.

NPERA targets low port charges, improved services under new regime

By **Adaku Onyenucheya**

THE Nigerian Port Economic Regulatory Agency (NPERA) has commenced the implementation of its enabling law, seeking to address high port charges, poor service delivery and other factors driving up the cost of doing business in the maritime sector.

The agency also aims to achieve financial sustainability through revenue generation as it transitions from the Nigerian Shippers' Council (NSC) into a full-fledged regulatory institution.

The Director-General of NPERA, Dr Pius Akutah, disclosed this yesterday at the opening of a three-day strategic management brainstorming programme for the agency's directors, deputy directors and assistant directors in Lagos.

Akutah said the immediate priorities of the transition included ensuring financial sustainability, preventing regulatory gaps, protecting the interests of the maritime industry, strengthening stakeholder confidence and establishing a clear regulatory framework.

He noted that the transition required careful planning to position the agency to discharge its responsibilities effectively, communicate its regulatory expectations to stakeholders and establish the institutional, legal and operational structures needed to fulfil its mandate.

Akutah added that the agency was also working to sensitise port operators, users and other stakeholders on the provisions of its enabling law, particularly their rights, responsibilities and obligations under the new regulatory framework.

He said NPERA had the statutory powers to address persistent complaints about poor service delivery, high port charges and the lack of competitiveness in the maritime sector.

According to him, the establishment of the agency was partly driven by the need to tackle these challenges and create a more competitive operating environment for shippers and other port users.

"That is one of the reasons why NPERA, as a law, was passed. We are looking at several complaints regarding failure of service in the sector, regarding non-competitiveness of our port sector, regarding all of these issues and that is why the law was passed," he said.

Akutah said internal implementation activities were already underway, assuring stakeholders that the agency would provide further clarification on its regulatory responsibilities and ensure their participation in the transition

PRE-QUALIFICATION OF CORPORATE TRAVEL MANAGEMENT AGENCIES

Background.
Jhpiego Corporation, a health services organization, affiliate of Johns Hopkins University, is an international non-profit, nongovernmental organization that works to improve the health of women and families throughout the world.

In pursuit of continuous improvement and sustained service delivery in a fast-evolving environment, Jhpiego Corporation intends to pre-qualify **Corporate Travel Management Agencies**. Interested Agencies are encouraged to read the entire document to ensure that they have a clear understanding of Jhpiego requirements before making submissions.

1. Description of Service:

- Comprehensive end-to-end management of local and international travel for all Jhpiego staff and stakeholders. This includes operational ticketing management for both inbound and outbound trips.
- The Agency must ensure thorough understanding of visa requirements for international destinations, **offering guidance before, during, and throughout connecting flights**.
- Provide protocol service for both local and international travel
- Must be able to provide expertise in identifying the best routes for international trips and achieving cost-efficiency, ensuring value for money.
- One of the agency's primary responsibility is to issue and manage both local and international flight tickets. This includes overseeing all aspects of travel logistics, such as handling flight cancellations, rescheduling, rerouting, and date changes, ensuring seamless travel experiences for all travelers.
- Expression of interest should include service charge per ticket (local and international)
- Only shortlisted vendors will remain in our database for minimum of 12 months and will be point of call for required services listed above.

2. Eligibility
All applicants should provide the following;

- All interested agencies must provide current/active licenses e.g. **IATA** and other internationally recognized certifications
- Certificate of registration/incorporation, memorandum and articles of association and valid Tax Identification Number (TIN) if you have not submitted this before.
- The corporate agency must be a licensed/authorized vendor for services to be rendered (please provide supporting documentation).
- Company profile (briefly reflecting the core competencies, key management personnel and
  clearly stating the physical verifiable office address, mobile number and e-mail address).
- Minimum of three (3) reputable references within the last three (3) years from reputable International INGOs.
- Note that applicable government taxes will be deducted prior to making payments for service provided.
- Interested vendors must have financial capacity to deliver on contract(s) without upfront payment.
- Existing vendors who are still interested in doing business with Jhpiego must also reapply/submit expression of interest.

3. Submission process

- All submissions should be sent to: **Nigeria.Bids@jhpiego.org** . Subject of email should be ***"Invitation for EOI for Corporate Protocol and Travel Management Agencies".***

4. Communication:
Please direct all enquirer and communications via e-mail to
Admin-Nigeria@jhpiego.org

5. Closing date
The closing date for the submission of bids is **8th December 2026.**

PLEASE NOTE: NO PHONE CALLS OR PERSONAL EMAIL ENQUIRIES. USE ONLY THE EMAIL ID PROVIDED IN 3.

PREQUALIFICATION OF VENDORS FOR HOSPITALITY SERVICES

Background.
Jhpiego Corporation, an affiliate of John Hopkins University, is an international non-profit, nongovernmental organization that works to improve the health of women and families throughout the world.

Jhpiego Corporation seeks reputable vendors to provide hospitality services in the **(Plateau, Nasarawa, Benue, Ekiti, Niger, Bayelsa, Ogun, Rivers, Taraba, Oyo, Kogi, and Osun States)** (including hospitality providers in Local Government Areas).

The vendors should provide the most competitive fixed (NGO) rates for their services that will be valid for at least **six (6) months, but preferably twelve (12) months where possible.** Interested vendors are encouraged to read the entire document to ensure that they have a clear understanding of Jhpiego requirements before submitting a bid.

1. Hospitality Services Required:

- Room rate bed only
- Room rate (bed and breakfast)
- Conference tea break (AM & packed PM)
- Buffet lunch rate (various options where applicable)
- Packed lunch rate (various options where applicable)
- Buffet dinner rate (various options where applicable)
- Packed dinner rate (various options where applicable)
- Meeting/conference hall rate (please quote for different hall capacities)
- Service charge (please state what this covers)
- List all other complimentary facilities available. E.g., , internet facilities, business center facilities
- Airport drop-off and pick-up services

Quotation should include the following:

- Vendor MUST quote separately for room rate with breakfast, and/or without breakfast
- Quote must be valid for at least **six (6) months, but preferably twelve (12) months where possible.**
- Payment terms if different (preferably Net 30 days).

2. Eligibility
All applicants should provide the following:

- Certificate of registration/incorporation, memorandum and articles of association, and valid Tax Identification Number (TIN). ***This requirement is for new vendors only.*** *Existing vendors in our database do not need to resubmit, except where documentation was updated recently.*
- Vendor must be a licensed/authorized vendor for services to be rendered (please provide supporting documentation).
- Company profile (briefly reflecting the core competencies, and key management personnel and clearly stating the physical verifiable office address, mobile number, and e-mail address).
- Minimum of three (3) reputable references active within the last three years from clients/organizations
- Note that applicable government taxes will be deducted before making payments

3. Submission of bids:
All bids should be submitted via email with the subject of the email clearly stating **"Hospitality Services"** to: nigeria.bids@jhpiego.org

4. Communication:
Please direct all communications via e-mail to Admin-Nigeria@jhpiego.org

5. Closing date:
The closing date for the submission of bids is at 4 pm WAT on **8th December 2026**

PLEASE NOTE: NO PHONE CALLS OR PERSONAL EMAIL ENQUIRIES. USE ONLY THE EMAIL ID PROVIDED HEREIN

jhpiego

REQUEST FOR QUOTATION FOR PROVISION OF VEHICLE LEASING IN NIGERIA

BACKGROUND.

Jhpiego Corporation, an affiliate of Johns Hopkins University, is an international non-profit, nongovernmental organization that works to improve the health of women and families throughout the world. Jhpiego is inviting suitably qualified, experienced and duly registered **vehicle leasing and fleet management companies** to submit quotations for the provision of fully managed vehicle leasing services across Nigeria.

Jhpiego seeks vendors with strong corporate governance structures, adequate fleet capacity, reliable GPS tracking systems, financial stability and demonstrated experience in providing transportation services nationwide.

1.1 DESCRIPTION OF SERVICES:

Jhpiego lease vehicles according to its operational needs. Vehicle leasing is made monthly but stable for a period of one year. Vendors must be capable of operating in all Local Government Areas (LGAs) within any state where they accept deployment, including rural and hard-to-reach locations.

The leasing arrangement shall be inclusive of vehicle provision, professional drivers, driver remuneration, fuelling, maintenance, repairs, insurance, GPS tracking and emergency replacement vehicles.

Table 1.0

S/N	Type of vehicle	Passenger Capacity	Minimum year of Manufacture
1	Double Cabin Pickup (4x4)	4	2021
2	Mid-Size SUV (4x4)	7	2021
3	Executive Sedan	4	2021
4	Passenger Minibus	7 to 10	2021
5	Passenger Bus	12 to 15	2021
6	Coaster Bus	20 to 30	2021

2.1 Additional Information

The vendor will ensure that the general condition of the vehicles is good and that they remain in perfect condition for use throughout the rental period. All-inclusive monthly rates covering unlimited authorised travel within the assigned state, irrespective of distance, frequency of travel, number of LGAs visited or fuel consumption. No additional mileage or location-based charges shall apply. The rate must be valid for a period of 12 months

Vendors will provide qualified drivers, and be responsible for salaries, allowances, welfare, training and statutory obligations. Leasing services shall be invoiced monthly at the agreed fixed rate, without additional charges for authorised intra-state operations.

3.1. Eligibility

All applicants should provide the following

- Certificate of registration/incorporation, memorandum and articles of association, and valid Tax Identification Number (TIN).
- Vendor must be a licensed/authorized vendor for services to be rendered (please provide supporting documentation).
- Company profile (briefly reflecting the core competencies, and key management personnel and clearly stating the physical verifiable office address, mobile number, and e-mail address).
- Minimum of three (3) reputable references active within the last three years from clients/organizations
- Relevant transport licences and comprehensive insurance.
- Adequate fleet capacity, including standby vehicles and maintenance support arrangements.
- Functional GPS tracking and fleet management systems.
- Quote should reflect nationwide or multi-state reach
- Proven nationwide or multi-state operational experience.
- At least three verifiable client references for similar services, preferably from INGOs, development organisations or reputable corporate clients.
- All vehicle must be registered in the company name of the vendor

4.1 Delivery Address

All bids should be submitted via email with the subject of the email clearly stating **"Vehicle Leasing Services"** to: **nigeria.bids@Jhpiego.org**

5.1 Communication:

Please direct all communications via e-mail to **Admin-Nigeria@jhpiego.org**

6.1 Closing date

The closing date for the submission of bids is at 4 pm WAT on **8th December 2026**

PLEASE NOTE: NO PHONE CALLS OR PERSONAL EMAIL ENQUIRIES. USE ONLY THE EMAIL ID PROVIDED IN 3.1

unicef | for every child

INVITATION TO SUBMIT PROPOSALS

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS FOR SERVICES | LRPS-2026-9207404

ESTABLISHMENT OF LONG-TERM ARRANGEMENTS FOR CUSTOMS CLEARANCE SERVICES IN NIGERIA

UNICEF Nigeria invites qualified and experienced customs clearing and forwarding service providers to submit proposals for the establishment of non-exclusive Long-Term Arrangements for customs clearance services in Nigeria. The services cover UNICEF consignments at designated airports, seaports, free zones and approved inland customs locations, including document review, customs declaration and lodgment, coordination of examinations and regulatory processes, release

TENDER STATUS	ONLINE PRE-BID CONFERENCE	SUBMISSION DEADLINE
OPEN	Registration required	14 December 2026 23:59 hrs. WAT

SERVICE/LOCATION LOTS

Lot 1: Lagos Airport
Lot 2: Abuja Airport
Lot 3: Lagos Ports
Lot 4: Onne/Port Harcourt
Lot 5: Lekki
Lot 6: Inland/Border locations

Bidders may offer one or more lots, but must complete every mandatory pricing line and demonstrate the required authorization, staffing and operational capacity for each lot offered.

PRE-BID CONFERENCE REGISTRATION

Scan to register
https://forms.cloud.microsoft/e/YPq4usx077

The Microsoft Teams meeting details will be shared with registered participants. Registration does not constitute submission of a proposal

ACCESS TO TENDER DOCUMENTS AND SUBMISSION

The complete solicitation documents are available on the United Nations Global Marketplace (UNGM): **https://www.ungm.org/Public/Notice/323382**

All proposals must be submitted electronically through the UNICEF e-submission system accessible through UNGM. Email, fax and physical submissions will not be accepted. Interested bidders should use the Opt-In function to indicate their intention to submit.

Scan to access the tender

LATE SUBMISSIONS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED | Tender Reference: LRPS-2026-9207404
UNICEF Nigeria | LRPS-2026-9207404 | Customs Clearance Services LTA

NOTICE TO THE GENERAL PUBLIC

LOSS OF DOCUMENT

This is to inform the general public that the ***Deed of Sublease*** dated ***8day of November, 2010*** belonging to **DR. ROTIMI OLADIPO DOSEKUN** in respect of ***1571.289 Sq metres*** of land laying and being situated At ***Plot 31 Block IX of Oniru Chieftaincy Family Private Layout, Lekki Peninsula, Victoria Island Area of Lagos State***, registered as ***No. 28/2/2315*** dated ***8th November 2010*** and archived in Land Registry, Lagos Nigeria.

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

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

SIGNED
DR. ROTIMI OLADIPO DOSEKUN

€240b factoring market to bridge Africa's $300 billion SME financing gap

By **Tobi Awodipe**

THE African Export-Import Bank (Afreximbank) has called for increased investment, stronger regulatory frameworks and deeper partnerships in factoring and supply chain finance to help bridge Africa's estimated $300 billion annual financing gap for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).

The bank also set a target of raising Africa's factoring volumes to at least €240 billion, equivalent to 10 per cent of the continent's gross domestic product (GDP).

Speaking at Afreximbank's annual Factoring Workshop in Gaborone, Botswana, Group Managing Director, Client Relations at Afreximbank and Chairperson of the FCI Africa Chapter, Eric Intong Monchu, said factoring could provide an alternative source of working capital for businesses unable to secure sufficient traditional bank financing.

The workshop was held under the theme, 'Unlocking Working Capital for Africa's Growing Businesses through Factoring and Supply Chain Finance'.

Monchu, who represented Executive Vice-President, Intra-African Trade and Export Development at Afreximbank, Kanayo Awani, said SMEs accounted for more than 90 per cent of businesses in Africa and contributed over 60 per cent of employment and GDP.

He said the financing constraints facing the sector required a broader range of financial solutions beyond conventional lending.

"Factoring and supply chain finance are critical instruments for addressing Africa's working capital constraints and unlocking the growth potential of our SMEs. We cannot close the continent's US$300 billion SME financing gap through traditional lending alone," Monchu said.

He explained that factoring enabled businesses to convert outstanding invoices into immediate working capital, allowing them to manage cash flow, meet operating expenses and fulfil new orders without waiting for customers to pay.

According to him, combining factoring with supply chain finance could also improve supplier relationships and strengthen businesses' capacity to participate in domestic, regional and international trade.

Monchu said global factoring volumes increased from €3.1 trillion in 2021 to €3.9 trillion in 2025, while Africa's factoring volumes rose from €32 billion to €51.4 billion over the same period.

He added that African factoring volumes had more than doubled from €21.6 billion in 2017 to €51.4 billion in 2025, with nearly 200 factoring companies currently operating across the continent.

He said achieving the €240 billion target would require sustained financing for factoring institutions, stronger legal and regulatory frameworks, increased technical expertise and greater collaboration across the financial services industry.

Oando, NLNG demand structural reform to support women in energy

By **Abigail Ikhaghu**

CORPORATE institutions' leadership have been charged to dismantle structural barriers limiting women's participation, capabilities, advancement and contributions in the energy industry.

The call came as Oando Plc has targeted a 50-per cent increase in women-owned businesses across its energy supply chain.

Executive Director, Oando, and Managing Director, Oando Energy Resources (OER), Dr Ainojie 'Alex' Irune, called on organisations across the energy industry to dismantle structural barriers limiting women's participation and advancement.

He stressed that the responsibility for creating an inclusive industry rests with corporate leaders and the institutions they lead.

Irune made this call during the Executive Leadership Fireside Chat II, themed Corporate Leadership and Inclusive Transformation, at the Women in Energy Network (WIEN) Gala and Awards 2026, held in Lagos.

He argued that the industry's historically male-dominated structures have inadvertently created barriers to women's participation and progression, adding that organisations must take responsibility for dismantling these constraints.

"Rather than placing the responsibility on women to navigate these challenges, I would instead turn to the industry and ask that we dismantle the structures that make it difficult, or at least slow down the pace of women's development and advancement," he said.

He further challenged male leaders to take a more active role in driving meaningful change, observing that the energy industry has not fully benefited from women's capabilities and contributions.

"When you consider an industry like ours that has yet to fully benefit from women's contributions, it is clear that we are yet to realise the industry's full potential. As men, we have a significant responsibility to help drive the changes needed to create a more inclusive industry," he noted.

Nigeria to anchor IGNITE's African expansion

By **Adeyemi Adepetun**

IGNITE has placed Nigeria at the centre of its Sub-Saharan African (SSA) growth strategy, outlining plans for institutional partnerships, physical market expansion, artificial intelligence training, and wellness product distribution following a high-level stakeholder engagement in Lagos.

Speaking during a recent media webinar, senior executives of the Dubai-based direct-selling enterprise highlighted Nigeria's demographic strength, entrepreneurial drive, and fast-growing digital economy as critical pillars in the company's push to reach one million brand affiliates globally before December 31, 2026.

IGNITE's Chief Market Development Officer, Venu Johl, who brings more than 25 years of experience in the direct-selling industry, disclosed that the company has recorded over 800,000 brand affiliates across its database within just seven months of launching in April 2026.

Operating from its Middle East and North Africa (MENA) regional hub in Dubai, IGNITE has already established active operations across Malaysia, Ghana, Nigeria, Côte d'Ivoire, Syria, the United Arab Emirates, and Indonesia.

Following the opening of an office in Bali, Indonesia, in October, Johl revealed that IGNITE is preparing to launch physical offices in Ghana, Iraq, Spain, Kazakhstan, and Ethiopia by April 2027. Emphasising Nigeria's strategic weight in the company's continental roadmap, he expressed strong optimism that a dedicated Nigerian office will follow, noting that IGNITE's business development model prioritises direct, on-the-ground engagement over purely digital interactions.

"Our personnel are expected to engage directly with people in their respective markets to understand their needs and provide the necessary support," Johl explained, underscoring the company's commitment to building sustainable local leadership in Nigeria.

Chamber promises business support, grassroots development

By **Victoria Nwachukwu**

THE Alimosho, Agege, Ifako-Ijaiye and Ojokoro Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture (AAIOC) has pledged to support businesses, promote people's empowerment initiatives and partner with local governments to drive grassroots development.

The chamber said it would focus on businesses within the four local governments and beyond, with plans to assess the needs of businesses and communities and strategically partner with local governments to achieve outcomes beneficial to all stakeholders.

The pledge was contained in a statement signed by its President, Chief Duro Kuteyi, and Director-General, Babatola Adeyemi, ahead of its inauguration scheduled for December 1, 2026, in Lagos.

The statement said a bottom-up approach to national development, rather than a top-down approach, was long overdue, noting that local government development remained a major concern in the country.

According to the chamber, communities continued to suffer from inadequate grassroots development despite being home to businesses, people, land, business opportunities and raw materials.

"Every Nigerian belongs first to one of the 774 local governments in the country before being able to claim a state or being a Nigerian. So, our Chamber will focus on all the businesses in the local governments we are named after and uncommonly assist them to develop to great heights," the statement said.

It said it would facilitate people's empowerment initiatives, boost revenue generation and champion ideas aimed at transforming businesses and local governments, as well as repositioning the people.



Organisations commission assessments, run employee surveys, review results and prepare strategic reports. Governments publish indicators and monitor programmes. Yet information alone does not produce better decisions. The real test of measurement is what happens afterwards. What changes in the boardroom when evidence reveals weak leadership capability? What happens when research exposes barriers to women's progression, or an assessment identifies gaps in governance, execution or succession? What happens when public institutions discover their activities are not producing the outcomes citizens expect? Measurement should never become an administrative exercise. Its purpose is to improve the decisions, behaviours and systems that determine outcomes. This is the larger conversation emerging from The Peak Performance Summit & Honours 2026 and two complementary initiatives i.e.the No More Shrinking® Full Capacity Report and the Performance Leadership Index.

We have measured performance. Now, what will we do with the evidence?

WHAT WE HAVE CHOSEN TO EXAMINE

THE Full Capacity Report asks whether organisations are getting the full contribution of the women they employ. It examines the experiences, conditions and practices that shape women's progression. Representation figures alone cannot establish whether women have meaningful access to opportunity, strategic responsibility, influence and advancement.

The Performance Leadership Index asks whether organisations have the leadership capabilities and systems to sustain performance. It covers ten dimensions: strategic coherence, execution discipline, accountability, leadership capability, succession, governance, organisational alignment, adaptability, stakeholder confidence and enduring performance.

Together, they examine the capacity within a workforce and the institutional conditions required to convert it into results. The Peak Performer Awards add a further dimension: recognition supported by transparent standards and evidence. None claims to measure everything perfectly, but together they offer a more disciplined basis for asking questions that are often overlooked.

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR THE BOARDROOM

Financial performance, compliance and risk remain essential board concerns, but modern organisations demand a broader view of institutional performance.

A board should not be satisfied merely because management presents a strategy; it must examine whether the strategy is coherent, resourced and supported by execution discipline. A training budget does not prove leadership development. Succession policies do not prove succession readiness. Women in senior positions do not prove the organisation is unlocking women's full capacity; boards should examine progression, access to strategic assignments and workplace experience.

Above all, boards must ask whether the organisation is becoming stronger or simply larger. Such questions move directors from reviewing management activity to interrogating institutional capability.

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR POLITICS AND PUBLIC LEADERSHIP

The same principle must apply to government. Political leadership is often judged by visibility, announcements, promises and projects inaugurated, but citizens experience government through outcomes. A policy announcement is not a policy outcome. A budget allocation is not development. A completed project does not necessarily deliver its intended public value.

Are public services more accessible? Are schools producing better learning outcomes? Are health systems more reliable? Are infrastructure investments reducing the cost of doing business? Are institutions more responsive and accountable? These are performance questions.

The Performance Leadership Index is not a political scorecard and should not be presented as one. But its principles reinforce the expectation that public leadership be examined through evidence, capability and outcomes. Citizens deserve more than promises; they deserve institutions that deliver measurable public value.

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR THE MARKETPLACE

Reputation can be persuasive, but it should not replace examination. Investors need to understand the quality and sustainability of performance, not just headline earnings. Customers should expect consistency, integrity and value. Employees should be able to see whether stated values are reflected in practice.

Stakeholders need not become performance analysts, but their expectations should become more discerning. A company should be able to explain how it creates value, manages risk, develops people and prepares for the future. It should also be able to show that its performance rests on systems rather than individual heroics.

THE RESPONSIBILITY OF LEADERS

Measurement can expose uncomfortable gaps: between ambition and execution, representation and influence, profitability and productivity, governance structures and governance effectiveness. But evidence does not automatically produce improvement.

Leaders must accept what the evidence reveals. Boards must ask difficult questions. Management must translate findings into priorities, HR leaders must examine workplace systems, and public officials must connect policy intentions to measurable outcomes.

FROM EVIDENCE TO INSTITUTIONAL CHANGE

This work cannot end with a summit, report launch or awards ceremony. The Full Capacity Report's next step is to translate findings into practical interventions that improve women's opportunities and contribution. The Performance Leadership Index should encourage institutions to examine their evidence, identify capability gaps and strengthen the systems behind enduring results. The Peak Performer Awards must preserve the credibility of recognition through rigorous, evidence-based standards. These are continuing commitments, not one-day activities.

Visit www.tppafrica.com for the full article

About Dr. Abiola Salami

Dr. Abiola Salami is a World-Class Performance Strategist, leadership authority and founder of CHAMP Global Leadership Consulting. He is the originator of Performance Leadership™ and the driving force behind No More Shrinking®, platforms dedicated to advancing leadership excellence, human potential and transformative impact.

IGBINEDION UNIVERSITY

NIGERIA'S PREMIER & LEADING PRIVATE UNIVERSITY



The Vice-Chancellor,

Professor Lawrence Ikechukwu Ezemonye, PhD, FAS

On behalf of the Board of Regents, Council and Senate
Cordially Invites the general Public to the

24TH CONVOCATION CEREMONIES

Highlights

DAY 1 **VICE-CHANCELLOR'S PRESS BRIEFING**
Date: Mon. 23rd Nov., 2026 **Time:** 12:00Noon
Venue: Senate Chamber

DAY 2 **CONVOCATION PLAY**
Title: THE ALTINE'S WRATH
by Femi Osofisan
Date: Thurs. 26th Nov., 2026 // **Time:** 4:00PM
Venue: Arts Theatre Crown Estate, Okada

DAY 3 **SPECIAL JUMA'AT SERVICE**
Date: Fri. 27th Nov., 2026 // **Time:** 2:00PM
Venue: Central Mosque, Crown Estate

ALUMNI RE-UNION
Date: Fri. 27th Nov., 2026 // **Time:** 4:00PM
Venue: Sport Complex, IUO Crown Estate

DAY 4 **CONVOCATION LECTURE**
CONVOCATION GUEST SPEAKER
HIS EXCELLENCY, BRIGADIER GENERAL MOHAMED BUBA MARWA (RTD.) OFR, CON
Chairman/Chief Executive Officer, National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA)
CONVOCATION LECTURE TOPIC:
"Graduates Transition to Nation Building: A Case for Sustainable Entrepreneurship and Scalable Value Chains in the University"
CONFERMENT OF FIRST DEGREES, HIGHER DEGREES & AWARD OF PRIZES
Date: Sat. 28th November, 2026
Time: 10:00AM
Venue: University Main Auditorium, Okada

DAY 5 **THANKSGIVING SERVICE**
Date: Sunday, 29th November, 2026 // **Time:** 10:00AM // **Venue:** Chapel of Grace

CONVOCATION GUEST SPEAKER



HIS EXCELLENCY BRIGADIER GENERAL MOHAMED BUBA MARWA (RTD.) OFR, CON
Chairman/Chief Executive Officer, National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA)

R.S.V.P

Prof. Osaretin G. Izevbuwa, PhD, FICA
Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Administration)
Chair, Ceremonials Committee
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Strides

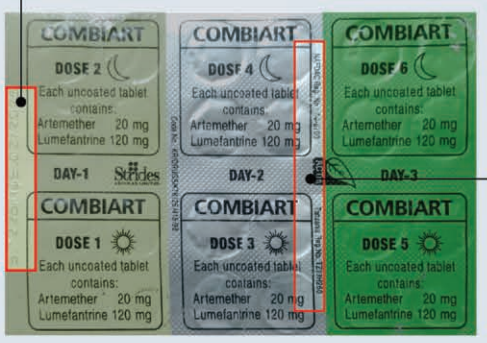
Public Notice: Beware of fake Combiart medicines.

Fake medicines are dangerous. They may not have the key ingredients or may contain harmful substances, putting you at serious risk. Here's how you can distinguish between fake and original Combiart medicines.

FAKE



Incorrect position of batch details, printing & font.



Incorrect mention of reg. no.



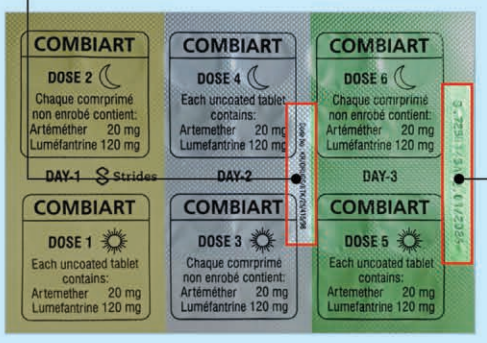
Scratch label **not available** on carton.

Incorrect mention of reg no.

ORIGINAL



Correct position of batch details, printing & font.



Correct mention of reg. no.



Correct mention of reg. no.

Correct font of batch/expiry date.

Combiart cartons supplied to Nigeria contain MAS-coded scratch-off labels. Scratch the label to reveal the PIN and send it via SMS to a toll-free number. You'll receive an SMS confirming the medicine's authenticity and its source. We request everyone to check for authenticity and to immediately report anything suspicious to health authorities or to us.

For more details, email on: sp@strides.com

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Nigeria to join next phase of $650m ECOWAS rice programme

By **Oludare Richards**

NIGERIA is expected to join the next phase of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Regional Rice Resilient Value Chains Development Programme (REWARD), following the launch of the regional initiative in Abuja.

The Coordinator of the ECOWAS Rice Agenda and REWARD Project, Boladale Adebowale, who disclosed this at the programme's launch, identified Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea-Bissau, The Gambia, Mali and Senegal as the five countries participating in the first phase.

Adebowale said other member states would be brought into the programme in subsequent phases, with Nigeria expected to participate in the next.

The announcement provides an indication of Nigeria's place in the regional initiative, although no date has been given for its entry, and details of the projects or funding expected to come to the country remain unclear.

The programme, known as REWARD, is designed to strengthen rice production, processing and marketing across West Africa as part of efforts to reduce the region's dependence on imports and improve food security.

ECOWAS Commissioner for Economic Affairs and Agriculture, Dehpue Zuo, said the broader regional rice development agenda had an investment portfolio of about $25b, with $1.5b in firm commitments mobilised at a regional financing conference in Accra.

The commitments are expected to support farmers, agribusinesses, agricultural production and the development of resilient rice value chains across participating countries.

ECOWAS had earlier valued the programme supported by the African Development Bank (AfDB) at approximately $650m, . The distinction is between the programme's stated value and the wider investment portfolio for the regional rice development agenda.

The regional bloc is targeting 100 per cent rice self-sufficiency by 2035. Adebowale said West Africa currently meets about 60 per cent of its rice requirements through local production and would need to produce approximately 35 million metric tonnes to meet projected consumption.

He said achieving the target would require increased agricultural productivity, expanded production capacity and improvements across the rice value chain.

The initiative will also focus on processing, marketing and increased trade in rice among West African countries. The ECOWAS Rice Observatory is expected to coordinate interventions and investments and help monitor progress across the regional sector.

Under REWARD, ECOWAS will lead a component covering policy and regulatory reforms, technical assistance and regional coordination. Its priorities include harmonising rice-related policies, improving regulations governing agricultural inputs and establishing digital monitoring systems linked to the Rice Observatory.

The ECOWAS-led component has a grant allocation of $12m over five years, with the regional body expected to work with AfricaRice and other partners.



Lagos canvasses change in agro policies to boost food production, safety

By **Gbenga Akinfenwa** and **Divine Yusuf**

A COUNTRY may harvest more crops, expand its farmlands and increase agricultural output, yet still leave millions of households struggling to afford their next meal.

The contradiction, according to the Lagos State government, lies in a food system that often concentrates on production, while overlooking the economic structures that determine what eventually reaches consumers and at what price.

Therefore, the state has called for a shift from conventional agricultural policies to a broader economic approach that connects food production with processing, transportation, storage, financing, technology and market access.

The Commissioner for Agriculture and Food Systems, Ms Abisola Olusanya, stated this at the Lagos Food Systems Nexus 2026, organised by the ministry in Lagos, under the theme, 'Food Security is Not an Agricultural Problem: Connecting the Dots,' where she argued that food security could not be achieved by farmers and agricultural interventions alone, but the businesses and institutions operating between the farm and the consumer are equally critical to the availability and affordability of food.

"A country can increase agricultural production and still struggle with food insecurity. And that contradiction should tell us that the problem demands a much broader understanding," she said.

Olusanya said the state's five-year Agricultural and Food Systems Roadmap was designed around the wider understanding, with emphasis on building partnerships between government, financial institutions, private businesses, technology companies and development organisations.

She also drew attention to young Nigerians building businesses across the food economy, arguing that their prospects depended not only on individual enterprise but also on an economic environment that provides access to infrastructure, finance and reliable markets.

The State Governor, Babajide Sanwo-Olu, described food as one of the most important security concerns confronting nations, saying his administration would sustain its commitment to the state's Food Roadmap through government funding and private-sector partnerships.

He said the participation of farmers, investors and other practitioners was necessary to translate government plans into practical outcomes, particularly as food remained central to household welfare and economic stability.

Other speakers at the event identified post-harvest losses, inadequate mechanisation, poor storage and inefficient transportation as factors increasing the cost of food, despite agricultural production efforts.

Meanwhile, the state has called on food business operators to adopt internationally recognised food safety management practices and comply strictly with established hygiene regulations.

The Permanent Secretary, Lagos State Ministry of Health, Dr. Dayo Lajide, made the call at a one-day sensitisation workshop on Food Safety Management Systems and Regulatory Compliance, organised by the Ministry's Directorate of Environmental and Occupational Health Services at the Lagos Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI), Alausa, Ikeja.

She was represented by the Director, Environmental and Occupational Health Services, Dr. Yeside Shogbamimu.

Lajide noted that with Lagos being home to over 20 million people and millions of meals prepared, sold and consumed daily across restaurants, hotels, markets, eateries, bakeries, canteens and street food outlets, ensuring food safety had become an increasingly important public health responsibility.

She explained that unsafe food could transmit harmful microorganisms, chemicals and other contaminants, resulting in food-borne diseases, outbreaks and, in severe cases, loss of lives.

Green Growth Africa, Germany partner on circular agriculture project in Ibadan

From **Kingsley Jeremiah**, Abuja

THE Green Growth Africa is partnering the German Government to implement a Circular Agriculture Project (CAP) in Ibadan, Oyo State, as part of efforts to promote sustainable agriculture, reduce waste and strengthen Nigeria's transition to a green economy.

The partnership agreement was signed during a visit by the German Consul General in Lagos, Daniel Krull, to the Green Growth Hub in Lagbeja-Akingbile, Ibadan.

The project will deploy an integrated farming model combining poultry production, Black Soldier Fly (BSF) farming, fish production, duckweed cultivation and vegetable farming in a solar-powered system designed to recycle waste and reduce dependence on external agricultural inputs.

The Executive Director of Green Growth Africa, Dr Adedoyin Adeleke, who received the German delegation, led by Krull, on a tour of the organisation's facilities, including what the organisation described as Nigeria's first ultramodern building constructed with discarded plastic bottles.

The facility, built with 27,333 waste plastic bottles converted into bottle-bricks, demonstrates an alternative approach to construction while addressing the growing challenge of plastic pollution.

Unlike conventional buildings that rely on sandcrete blocks, the structure uses upcycled plastic bottles as building materials. It is also powered entirely by an off-grid solar photovoltaic system and has an automated borehole water system.

The organisation said the facility reflects the principles underpinning the circular agriculture initiative, particularly resource efficiency, waste recovery and the integration of renewable energy into development.

Under the five-component farming model, waste generated from one production unit will serve as an input for another, creating a closed-loop agricultural system.

Poultry droppings, for instance, will be processed through the Black Soldier Fly unit to produce protein-rich larvae for animal feed, while the resulting frass will be used as organic fertiliser.

Similarly, nutrient-rich wastewater from fishponds will be reused for crop irrigation, while duckweed cultivated on the ponds will help recover nutrients for reuse as poultry feed.

Vegetable residues will also be channeled back into the poultry production system.

The integrated approach is expected to reduce agricultural waste, lower dependence on conventional feed and fertiliser inputs, improve resource efficiency and reduce the environmental footprint of food production.

Labour & Appointments

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Care economy offers Nigeria new pathway to jobs, skills development

As Nigeria moves to formalise its emerging care economy and expand employment opportunities abroad, labour standards and workers' protection could unlock new jobs and economic growth, ***GLORIA NWAFOR*** *reports.*

ACROSS Nigeria, millions of households depend on relatives, domestic workers, nannies and professional caregivers to look after children, elderly parents, persons with disabilities and other dependants. For many families, these services enable working parents, particularly women, to pursue careers, run businesses, and participate in economic activities.

Yet, despite its importance to household welfare and national productivity, care work remains one of the least recognised forms of labour, with many workers enduring long hours, low pay, inadequate social protection, and limited opportunities for professional development.

From caring for newborns and children to supporting older persons, people with disabilities and those recovering from illnesses, caregivers perform responsibilities that sustain families, communities and the wider economy. However, much of this work remains outside formal employment arrangements, leaving millions of workers without the protections and recognition associated with decent work.

The growing demand for professional care services, driven by urbanisation, migration, changing family structures, and demographic shifts, has further exposed weaknesses in Nigeria's care infrastructure.

While the world marked the International Day of Care and Support recently, the International Labour Organisation (ILO) called for greater investment in comprehensive care systems and improved working conditions for those providing essential services.

In his message to commemorate the day, the ILO Director-General, Gilbert Houngbo, stressed that care was essential to societies and economies, insisting that care workers deserved decent work, dignity and respect.

He observed that millions of care workers provide daily support for children, older persons and persons with disabilities but continue to endure excessive working hours and inadequate labour and social protection.

Domestic workers, he noted, constituted an important part of the care workforce.

Predominantly women, they earn less than half the average wages of other employees.

The ILO chief called for investment in comprehensive, rights-based care and support systems, stressing that care workers must be adequately protected and remunerated.

He also highlighted the need to recognise, reduce and redistribute unpaid care work, while ensuring reward and representation for care workers, in line with the ILO's 5R framework for decent care work.

The framework identified recognition, reduction and redistribution of unpaid care work, alongside reward and representation for paid care workers, as essential pillars of a sustainable care economy.

For Nigeria, the message carries particular significance as the country grapples with the economic consequences of unpaid care responsibilities, which fall disproportionately on women, while its formal childcare and elderly-care industry remains largely underdeveloped.

The Federal Government has estimated that unpaid care work costs the Nigerian economy as much as $111 billion yearly, underscoring the enormous economic value of activities that largely take place outside conventional employment and productivity measurements.

The Minister of Women Affairs and Social Development, Imaan Sulaiman-Ibrahim, recently said the government is moving to formalise the country's care economy through a National Care Policy and Implementation Plan approved by the Federal Executive Council.

The plan includes the proposed establishment of a National Care Fund and the development of a National Care Digital Platform through a public-private partnership.

Speaking at a forum recently in Lagos, the minister said the policy would introduce standards for childcare and elderly-care services, establish an organised framework for service delivery and open investment opportunities for businesses, financial institutions and technology companies.

She described the initiative as an effort to move care responsibilities, which are largely performed by women without payment or formal recognition, into the formal economy.

The government's initiative signals growing recognition that care work is not merely a private family responsibility but an important component of national economic infrastructure.



Houngbo

Indeed, the ability of millions of Nigerians, particularly women, to participate fully in paid employment, entrepreneurship, and other productive activities often depends on whether reliable care arrangements are available for their dependants.

When affordable childcare and elderly-care services are unavailable, working women often have to reduce their working hours, turn down job opportunities, or leave the labour market altogether to attend to family responsibilities.

The economic consequences extend beyond individual households to businesses and national productivity.

Globally, the care economy is increasingly being recognised as a major source of employment, investment and economic growth.

The ILO has consistently highlighted the potential of care services to generate millions of jobs, particularly for women, while addressing growing demand for childcare, healthcare, elderly care and support services.

Its projections indicate that the number of care recipients could reach 2.3 billion by 2030, driven partly by increases in the population of older persons and children.

The global care workforce comprises approximately 381 million workers, including 249 million women and 132 million men, illustrating the scale of employment the sector already supports.

However, unpaid care responsibilities remained highly unequal. According to the ILO, women perform 76.2 per cent of total unpaid care work globally, spending 3.2 times more time on such responsibilities than men.

This imbalance affects women's economic participation, career progression, earnings, and financial independence.

The ILO has also identified care services as an important source of future employment, with the potential to create approximately 300 million additional jobs globally.

But the organisation has warned that expanding the sector without improving care workers' conditions could deepen existing inequalities.

Maternity Protection and Work-Family Specialist at the ILO's Gender, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Department, Laura Addati, previously highlighted the poor conditions many care workers operate under.

She noted that care jobs were frequently characterised by low wages, heavy physical and emotional demands, excessive workloads, insecure employment, inadequate training and limited career prospects.

In some extreme cases, she said, workers operated under conditions approaching slavery.

Her observations highlighted a challenge that Nigeria must confront as it begins to build a formal care industry.



Olugbodi



Sulaiman-Ibrahim

Although Nigeria's care sector is gradually attracting entrepreneurs, professional service providers and investors, the industry remains largely fragmented, with limited national regulation and inconsistent professional standards.

Across major cities, the growing demand for nannies, home-based caregivers, elderly-care assistants and specialised support services has encouraged the emergence of caregiving agencies and training institutions.

However, the absence of a comprehensive regulatory framework has raised concerns about professionalism, workers' welfare, service quality and the safety of care recipients.

For families engaging caregivers, the issue goes beyond finding someone to look after their children or elderly relatives. It involves entrusting the safety, health, and dignity of vulnerable people to individuals who must have the necessary skills, training, and professional ethics.

The Chief Executive Officer of Arrowshot Care Solutions, Dapo Olugbodi, said the growing demand for childcare and elderly-care services presented significant opportunities for Nigeria, but stressed that professionalism must become the foundation of the industry.

He called for adherence to established standards, adequate training and exposure of care providers to international best practices.

He also urged the government to establish a proper structural and regulatory framework to prevent unprofessional practices and the infiltration of unqualified operators into the industry.

The founder of BLE Caregivers Agency, Admisher Mimo, similarly highlighted the difficulties operators and workers in the industry face.

He said that although caregiving could be fulfilling, the occupation was stressful, particularly because some clients failed to treat caregivers with dignity and respect.

Mimo said the industry needed a national policy that could provide institutional support, regulate service providers, and improve working conditions.

However, he maintained that a broader national framework was necessary to ensure consistent standards across the country.

Founder of Nanny Academy, Amara Agbim, said the importance of care work extends beyond families' immediate needs to the functioning of the entire economy.

She argued that without adequate care infrastructure, including daycare facilities and properly trained nannies and other domestic care professionals, many people would struggle to balance employment with family responsibilities.

Similarly, OneHealth founder Adeola Alli described caregivers as an often-invisible workforce whose contributions sustain families and enable economic participation.

She argued that when women have adequate support at home, they are better positioned to pursue employment, business opportunities and other productive activities.

These perspectives reinforced the argument that investment in care services should be considered an economic priority rather than solely a social welfare intervention.

Beyond investment in workers' protection, the Federal Government's plan to establish a National Care Fund and a digital platform represents an important policy development; labour protection and professional standards will determine whether the emerging industry delivers sustainable benefits.

The proposed digital platform could help organise care services, connect providers with households and improve access to professional caregivers. The National Care Fund could also provide a financing mechanism to develop care infrastructure and support the industry's growth.

Shettima tasks financial institutions on job creation

From **Collins Olayinka**, Abuja

VICE President Kashim Shettima has urged financial institutions to deepen financial inclusion by expanding access to affordable credit, supporting small businesses, empowering young people and strengthening agricultural financing to create sustainable jobs.

He said access to financial services was critical to job creation, enterprise development and Nigeria's economic growth.

Shettima, who was represented by the Minister of Finance and Coordinating Minister of the Economy, Taiwo Oyedele, at the commissioning of Moniepoint Microfinance Bank's North Central Regional Headquarters in Abuja, said financial inclusion must go beyond opening bank accounts to creating economic opportunities for individuals and businesses.

He said the Federal Government's priorities of financial inclusion, agricultural development and affordable financing for small and medium-sized enterprises were interconnected. Businesses with reliable payment systems, proper financial records and access to appropriate credit, he argued, were better positioned to expand, employ more people and contribute to national prosperity.

The Vice President said women-owned businesses, young entrepreneurs, rural households and enterprises operating outside established commercial centres required greater attention in the design of financial products, customer support and lending decisions.

He noted that combining digital financial services with physical customer support would help address the needs of customers requiring guidance to navigate financial products.

Shettima also urged Moniepoint to strengthen financing for agricultural businesses across the value chain, noting that farmers, aggregators, processors, transporters and traders needed appropriate financial support to improve production, reduce losses and boost rural incomes.

He said agricultural financing must reflect the realities of farming, including production cycles, harvest periods, weather conditions and market risks.

The Vice President called on financial institutions to adopt improved risk-assessment systems and transparent pricing, adding that transaction records, with customers' consent and appropriate safeguards, could help lenders assess small businesses without conventional collateral.

Aluko earns global recognition at Women in Marketing Awards

UNION Bank of Nigeria's Chief Brand and Marketing Officer, Olufunmilola Aluko, has been recognised as Highly Commended Best Leader in Marketing/Brand at the 16th yearly global Women in Marketing (WiM) Awards held in London, recently.

The recognition places her among seven African women honoured across various categories at the global awards, which attracted senior female brand and marketing leaders from leading institutions across Africa and the diaspora.

Aluko was the only Nigeria-based professional recognised in her category, in acknowledgement of her contributions to marketing, brand leadership, innovation and the creative industries.

Reacting to the recognition, she said the award was a collective achievement of Union Bank's Corporate Communications and Marketing team.

"This recognition belongs as much to the Corporate Communications and Marketing team at Union Bank as it does to me. I am grateful to Women in Marketing, and to my team whose work on Endless Possibilities made this moment possible," she said.

The recognition was partly attributed to the bank's Endless Possibilities campaign, which won an award at the 2026 Pitcher Awards.

Under Aluko's leadership, the bank's communications and marketing team developed the campaign around the resilience and resourcefulness of Nigerians, celebrating the determination of people from different backgrounds to pursue their aspirations despite challenges.

Ashiru's Odu'a tenure earns recognition as CHAMP unveils magazine

By **Benjamin Alade**

FORMER Chairman of Odu'a Investment Company Limited (OICL), Bimbo Ashiru, has been recognised for his contributions to the growth and repositioning of the company during his four-year tenure.

He was honoured at the unveiling of The Peak Performer Magazine, published by CHAMP Global Leadership Consulting to document his leadership journey from June 2022 to June 2026.

Representing Lagos State Governor, Babajide Sanwo-Olu, the Permanent Secretary, Lagos State Primary Health Care Board, Dr Ibrahim Akinwunmi Mustafa, said Ashiru's tenure strengthened corporate governance, repositioned the company's investment portfolio and revitalised key assets, including Premier Hotel, Ibadan.

He identified Odu'a's record profit before tax of N23.58 billion in 2025 as evidence of progress recorded during the period.

Sanwo-Olu described Odu'a as an important institution jointly owned by the six South-West states, with millions of people having a collective interest in its success.

Speaking at the event, Ashiru attributed effective leadership to integrity, teamwork and openness to ideas, stressing that leaders must encourage collective decision-making.

"As a leader, you must carry your team along. You must work as a team, understand their needs and be very considerate," he said.

Ashiru, who disclosed that he currently serves on the boards of about 16 companies, urged aspiring leaders to remain honest, focused and passionate about their responsibilities.

The Principal of CHAMP Global Leadership Consulting, Dr Abiola Salami, said Ashiru's recognition followed an assessment using the organisation's Performance Leadership Index, which evaluates leadership based on defined performance indicators rather than popularity.

He said the magazine was also intended to preserve lessons from Ashiru's leadership experience for future generations.

Salami urged Nigerians to embrace leadership responsibility, noting that national transformation should not depend solely on those occupying political and executive positions.

CITN inducts 2,326 tax professionals, demands ethical practices

By **Gloria Nwafor**

THE Chartered Institute of Taxation of Nigeria (CITN) has inducted 2,326 new members into the taxation profession, urging them to uphold professional ethics, deepen their technical competence and support the effective implementation of the country's ongoing tax reforms.

The institute said the expanding responsibilities placed on tax professionals under the new tax regime required practitioners to demonstrate integrity, keep abreast of changing regulations and provide accurate guidance to taxpayers and businesses.

Speaking at the 55th induction ceremony in Lagos, the President and Chairman of Council, Innocent Ohagwa, said Nigeria had entered a critical phase of implementing far-reaching tax reforms, making the role of competent and ethical tax professionals increasingly important.

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Lawyers divided as NBA petitions LPDC over Kalu's criticism of judges

By Silver Nwokoro

THE Nigerian Bar Association's (NBA) decision to refer lawyer Kalu Kalu to the Legal Practitioners Disciplinary Committee (LPDC) over his description of a Federal High Court judge as a "coconut judge" has exposed divisions within the legal profession over the limits of professional conduct, freedom of expression and judicial accountability.

While some lawyers backed the NBA's intervention, arguing that personal attacks against judicial officers undermine the dignity of the legal profession, others questioned the consistency of the association's disciplinary approach, warning against the use of professional regulation to shield judges from criticism.

Kalu made the controversial remark during an appearance on Channels Television's *Politics Today*, where he discussed the November 5 judgment of Justice Peter Lifu of the Federal High Court in the leadership dispute within the African Democratic Congress (ADC).

The judgment invalidated the David Mark-led leadership and actions taken under it.

The lawyer, who is associated with the ADC and former Vice-President Atiku Abubakar, had argued that the judgment did not expressly invalidate Atiku's presidential candidacy.

He subsequently withdrew the remark after the programme's anchor, Seun Okinbaloye, challenged him.

In announcing the NBA's intervention, its President, Oyinkansola Badejo-Okusanya, said disagreement with judicial decisions could not justify personal attacks against judges, stressing that lawyers were bound to uphold professional standards both within and outside the courtroom.

She disclosed that she had forwarded a formal petition, alongside the relevant broadcast recording, to the LPDC for consideration.

She added that Kalu would have the opportunity to respond and that the committee would independently determine whether his conduct amounted to professional misconduct.

But the decision has triggered competing arguments about whether the NBA is consistently applying professional standards or responding selectively to controversies involving members of the Bar.

Public affairs commentator and lawyer, Dr Sam Amadi, and human rights lawyer, Prof. Chidi Odinkalu, have also raised questions about the NBA's intervention, particularly its implications for consistency and the association's credibility.

Amadi criticised what he considered selective enforcement of professional ethics, questioning whether comparable disciplinary attention had been given to other public statements about the judiciary.

He suggested that the NBA's decision could be interpreted as politically motivated, warning that selective application of professional standards could weaken confidence in the association.

Odinkalu similarly questioned the consistency of the NBA's approach, drawing attention to previous controversies involving public officials and members of the legal profession.

His intervention raised a broader question about whose conduct attracts disciplinary scrutiny and whether the same standards are applied irrespective of the individuals involved.

President of the Admiralty Lawyers Society of Nigeria (ALSN), Angus Obinna Chukwuka, questioned the apparent difference between the NBA's handling of Kalu's case and the earlier disciplinary controversy involving activist lawyer, Dele Farotimi.

Chukwuka argued that the substance of the statements, rather than the platforms on which they were made, should determine whether they constitute professional misconduct.

He said Farotimi's criticisms of the judiciary, published in a book, and Kalu's remarks on national television should be assessed against the same professional standards.

According to him, Farotimi made allegations of corruption against members of the judiciary, including Supreme Court justices, as well as senior lawyer, Afe Babalola, and his law firm.

He maintained that the allegations against Farotimi were wider in scope and potentially more damaging to the legal profession than Kalu's description of Justice Lifu.

Chukwuka, however, recalled that the LPDC had declined jurisdiction in the petition against Farotimi, questioning whether the committee could now entertain a similar complaint against Kalu without explaining the basis for the apparent departure.

"If the LPDC did not have jurisdiction to entertain the petition against Dele Farotimi, it cannot or should not have jurisdiction to entertain the petition against Kalu by the rule of precedent," he said.

He acknowledged that the committee could reconsider its position in the interest of professional discipline but warned that inconsistent application of ethical standards could undermine confidence in the disciplinary process.

The ALSN president also cautioned the NBA against actions capable of creating an impression of political alignment, arguing that the association must preserve its independence and remain responsive to the interests of ordinary Nigerians, particularly disadvantaged citizens who depend on it to defend their rights.

Similarly, lawyer and Principal Partner of The Chambers of Evans Ufeli, Evans Ufeli, warned against turning disciplinary proceedings into an instrument for protecting judicial officers from legitimate criticism.

CJN hails Pinheiro's contribution to legal scholarship, professional development

By Joseph Onyekwere



Abdulfatai Akin Kekere-Ekun (left); his wife and Chief Justice of Nigeria, Kudirat Kekere Ekun; Justice Atinuke Pinheiro; her husband, Kemi Pinheiro (SAN) and the Chief of Staff to the President, Femi Gbajabiamila, during the book presentation.

THE Chief Justice of Nigeria (CJN), Justice Kudirat Kekere-Ekun, has commended the contributions of Senior Advocate of Nigeria (SAN), Kemi Pinheiro, to legal scholarship and professional development, describing six publications presented in his honour as valuable resources that will enrich Nigerian jurisprudence and strengthen the intellectual foundation of the legal profession.

Kekere-Ekun, while chairing the public presentation of the books at the Civic Centre, Victoria Island, Lagos, said the publications reflected an impressive combination of legal scholarship, practical experience and engagement with contemporary developments in the administration of justice.

She noted that the collection, comprising four books authored by Pinheiro and two compilations produced in his honour, addressed significant areas of legal practice, including litigation, arbitration, insolvency, criminal law, technology and contemporary jurisprudence.

According to her, the publications were not merely a collection of books assembled to commemorate an accomplished legal practitioner but works that sought to make legal knowledge more accessible and useful to those responsible for applying, interpreting and developing the law.

The CJN said the publications were particularly commendable for their practical orientation and their engagement with emerging legal issues, adding that their relevance extended beyond the occasion of their presentation.

"Taken together, the works reflect an engagement with important areas of legal practice and scholarship, as well as an attempt to preserve the experiences and contributions of a distinguished member of our profession," she said.

Kekere-Ekun described Defining Moments: Chronicles of a Silk as particularly significant because it offered a personal account of the experiences, encounters, challenges and defining moments that had shaped Pinheiro's career spanning close to four decades at the Bar.

She observed that memoirs of this nature were valuable because they preserved aspects of professional life that might never find their way into law reports or formal institutional records.

Such accounts, she said, enabled younger practitioners to appreciate the human experiences behind professional milestones, including the uncertainties, disappointments and perseverance that often accompanied a successful legal career.

The CJN also highlighted the importance of the two publications on arbitration and insolvency, particularly against the background of Nigeria's increasingly sophisticated business environment and the need for effective legal responses to commercial transactions, financial distress and dispute resolution.

Prisoner transfer bill raises hope for Nigerians jailed abroad to serve at home

By Yetunde Ayobami Ojo

THE proposed Transfer of Convicted Offenders Enactment and Enforcement Amendment Bill, 2026, may enable eligible Nigerians convicted and imprisoned in non-Commonwealth countries to serve the remainder of their sentences in correctional facilities in Nigeria.

The bill, transmitted to the Senate by President Bola Tinubu on Tuesday, October 27, 2026, seeks to establish a comprehensive legal framework for the transfer of convicted persons between Nigeria and countries outside the Commonwealth.

Titled the Transfer of Convicted Offenders Enactment and Enforcement Amendment Bill, 2026, the proposed legislation seeks to amend the Transfer of Convicted Offenders Enactment and Enforcement Act, Cap 216, Laws of the Federation of Nigeria, 2004.

Examining the implications of the proposed legislation, a lawyer and founder of Zarephath Aid, a criminal justice and correctional reform organisation, Mr Ben C. Abraham, said the bill would empower the Federal Government to negotiate, execute and implement bilateral prisoner-transfer agreements with non-Commonwealth countries.

According to him, the proposed amendment would also empower the President to extend the application of the law to foreign jurisdictions through an order published in the Federal Gazette once a bilateral agreement has been concluded.

Abraham explained that the proposed legislation would provide the statutory backing for Nigeria to implement prisoner-transfer agreements with countries such as the United States, China, European Union member states and Middle Eastern countries.

He noted that Nigeria already had arrangements for the transfer of convicted offenders with some Commonwealth countries, adding that the proposed amendment would expand the geographical reach of such arrangements.

The lawyer said the bill would also provide a legal framework for foreign nationals convicted by Nigerian courts to be transferred to their home countries to complete their prison sentences, subject to mutually agreed conditions.

He explained that such arrangements could help reduce congestion in Nigerian correctional centres while allowing convicted persons to maintain closer contact with their families and prepare for reintegration into their societies.

Abraham, however, clarified that the proposed legislation would not provide for automatic release, amnesty or immediate repatriation of Nigerians serving prison sentences abroad.

He said any transfer would be subject to strict eligibility requirements, the terms of bilateral agreements, the consent of both the sentencing and receiving countries, the finality of the conviction and specific conditions relating to the offence and the remaining sentence.

He added that the transfer process would be considered on a case-by-case basis, with neither country compelled to approve a request that failed to satisfy the applicable requirements.

On the practical implications of the bill, Abraham identified the condition of Nigerian correctional facilities as a potential challenge to its implementation.

He noted that although transferring Nigerians convicted abroad could promote family contact and social reintegration, overcrowding and poor living conditions in some Nigerian prisons might discourage eligible inmates from consenting to return home.

HEDA demands investigation, accountability over alleged graft in FG agency

By Silver Nwokoro

HUMAN and Environmental Development Agenda (HEDA) Resource Centre has called for a thorough investigation and accountability over allegations of corruption involving a purported federal government agency and four serving public officials accused of receiving gratification to facilitate its operations.

HEDA's chairman, Olanrewaju Suraju, said its demand follows the decision of the Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC) to expand its prosecution of Adeniyi Adeyemi, the alleged Director-General of the purported Presidential Foreign Investment Promotion Council, by filing an amended 36-count charge and joining four serving civil servants as co-defendants.

The newly named defendants are Aminu Abdullahi, an Assistant Chief Technical Officer in the Office of the Secretary to the Government of the Federation; Ogaba Harry, a Chief Accountant in the Office of the Chief Economic Adviser to the President; Florence Omameh, an officer in the Inspectorate Department of the Office of the Accountant-General of the Federation; and Patricia Akhigbe, an Assistant Director in the Federal Ministry of Budget and Economic Planning.

According to the ICPC's amended charge, the officials allegedly received various sums of money from Adeyemi to facilitate access to government offices, release official vehicles, secure administrative approvals and facilitate the inclusion of the purported agency in the 2026 national budget.

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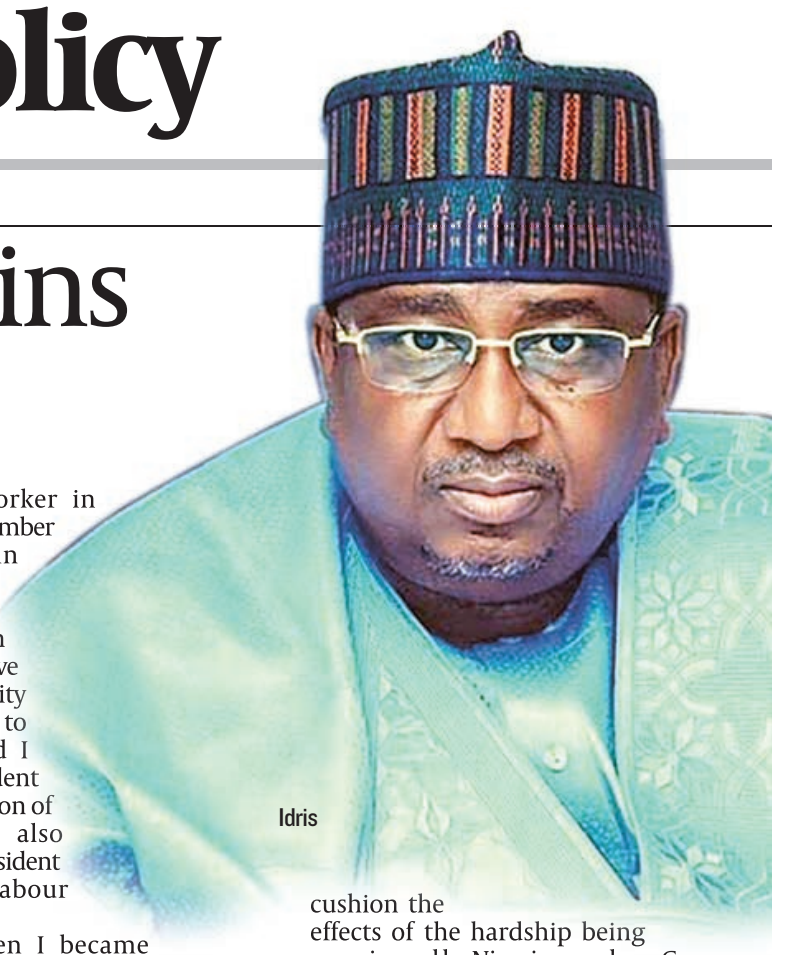
Securing Kebbi State remains my priority, says Idris

*Kebbi State Governor, Nasir Idris, speaks with journalists on his transition from labour leadership to partisan politics, workers' welfare and the 2027 elections. He also challenges former Attorney-General of the Federation and African Democratic Congress (ADC) governorship candidate, Abubakar Malami, to account for his contributions to the state during his tenure. **SODIQ OMOLAOYE** was there.*



Idris

Do you think the APC will retain Kebbi State, particularly given the political activities of opposition figures, including former Vice-President Atiku Abubakar and the African Democratic Congress (ADC)?

WE are confident. An election is something you can assess based on your performance and what you have done for the people. It is not simply about belonging to the APC or any other political party. There is no administration that has introduced as many different programmes and interventions for Nigerians as the present Federal Government under President Bola Ahmed Tinubu.

Let me speak specifically about Kebbi State. I believe we have never had it so good in terms of development as we have under the present administration. Kebbi State has benefited tremendously from the infrastructure development taking place under President Tinubu's administration.

For instance, there is an ongoing road construction project linking Yauri to Ngaski Local Government Area. The road is known as Malando Road. These are the kinds of development projects that people can see and appreciate.

Was the former Attorney-General's exit from the APC orchestrated by your second-term ambition or predicated on his grievances against President Bola Tinubu?

I do not want to go into that matter. But if he (Malami) left the APC, is he not someone who benefited immensely from the party? Since Nigeria gained independence, has there been any Minister of Justice who has enjoyed the kind of opportunities and privileges he enjoyed while serving in that position? I believe that is enough for people to reflect on.

You raised concerns about people sitting in Abuja and presenting inaccurate figures about Kebbi State without properly investigating the situation. Are you worried about misinformation and fake news?

Fake news is a general problem in this country. Nobody can shy away from that reality. However, I do not believe our people will simply accept fake news because they know what an administration has brought to the table.

You can be a minister, even the most powerful minister in the country, but if you have not attracted any meaningful project or development to the people of Kebbi State, what exactly are you asking them to judge you on?

Even as a minister, you should be able to use your position to attract development to your state. For instance, the Federal High Court lacked its own permanent building in Kebbi State. It was operating from a temporary facility provided by the state government.

It was through my appeal to President Tinubu that the construction of a permanent Federal High Court building in Kebbi State commenced under this administration. That is a practical example of what political leadership should be about. People should therefore look beyond political propaganda and examine what those seeking their votes have actually done for them.

Are you overwhelmed by the spate of security threats in your state?

The truth is that Kebbi State is also experiencing its own share of insecurity. However, we have taken deliberate measures to strengthen security and protect our people.

As part of our interventions, we procured about 3,000 motorcycles and distributed them to vigilante groups and security personnel, including soldiers, to enhance their mobility and improve their response to security threats. We did this because I am committed to ensuring that Kebbi State is secure.

That was why I disagreed with the former Attorney-General of the Federation, Abubakar Malami. Whenever there are security challenges in other parts of the country, he comes out to make statements suggesting that Kebbi State is also completely insecure.

I have asked him: When you were the Attorney-General of the Federation and there were security challenges in some local government areas of Kebbi State, as well as in Katsina and Zamfara states, did you ever come out in your capacity as the Chief Law Officer of the Federation to sympathise with the affected communities or offer support?

He never came out to support the affected people or even acknowledge the efforts of the security agencies. It is therefore unfortunate that, whenever security challenges arise, he rushes to the media to make allegations against my administration.

Unfortunately, he has neither offered meaningful assistance to people affected by insecurity nor demonstrated any commitment to supporting the security agencies. Instead, because he wants to contest the governorship election, he is more interested in portraying my administration in a negative light.

However, the security of the people of Kebbi State remains a priority for my administration, and we will continue to support the security agencies and do everything possible to protect our people.

Coming from a labour background, how has the transition from being a labour leader to becoming a politician and governor been?

As a labour person, even though I am now on the other side of the divide, there is no way I can forget the labour movement. It was the labour movement, particularly the Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC) and the Nigeria Union of Teachers (NUT), that made me what I am today. Therefore, I have no reason whatsoever not to appreciate these organisations and their leaders.

My ambition in life, throughout my journey in the labour movement, was to become the number one worker in Nigeria and the number one teacher in Nigeria. By the grace of God, I achieved both ambitions. God gave me the opportunity to subject myself to an election, and I emerged as President of the Nigeria Union of Teachers. I was also elected Deputy President of the Nigeria Labour Congress.

> "You can be a minister, even the most powerful minister in the country, but if you have not attracted any meaningful project or development to the people of Kebbi State, what exactly are you asking them to judge you on?"

Honestly, when I became governor, I did not find it difficult to adapt to the responsibilities of governance because of the experience I had acquired over the years. God has helped me, and that is why, when I assumed office, I assured the people of Kebbi State that they had no cause to worry.

I was born in Birnin Kebbi, grew up there, worked there and led teachers and workers in the state. Therefore, I understood their challenges and aspirations. I made several promises during the electioneering campaign, and by God's grace, I have fulfilled almost 90 per cent of them. I cannot claim 100 per cent because no leader is perfect.

Before the election, I established a five-man committee to document every promise I made during our campaigns. Wherever I went and whenever I made a promise, the committee recorded it.

When we eventually formed the government, the committee submitted its report, reminding us of the promises made to the people in different local government areas. For instance, I promised workers that I would provide a conducive working environment by bringing all government workers under one roof.

At the time, the existing secretariat could no longer accommodate all the workers. I assured them that I would construct a befitting secretariat that would bring them together, promote synergy and cooperation, and create a more conducive working environment.

But despite implementing the N75,000 minimum wage, workers are still struggling with rising living costs. What interventions are you planning?

I have just returned from a journey, and I am aware of the intervention the Federal Government has approved for workers.

As a former labour leader, I believe something should also be done for workers in Kebbi State. I am returning to the state tomorrow, but because of this interview, I decided to ask you to come today before I depart.

I can assure you that workers in Kebbi State will not be left out.

What are the essential features of the intervention?

I have already constituted a committee in writing under the leadership of the Head of Service. The committee is working, and by God's grace, when I return, I will communicate with the Head of Service.

I have already made my position clear. Whenever the Federal Government increases workers' salaries or approves an intervention for workers, Kebbi State will be among the first states to implement it. We cannot shy away from the truth. I understand that the purchasing power of the minimum wage has been significantly eroded by the prevailing economic situation.

The President has done well by approving an additional N70,000 transport allowance to cushion the effects of the hardship being experienced by Nigerian workers. Governors must also demonstrate responsibility by ensuring that appropriate measures are taken to reduce the hardship facing their workers.

So, yes, I can assure you that workers in Kebbi State will benefit from an additional intervention.

How do you think the 2027 general election will turn out for the people of Kebbi State and Nigerians as you seek another term and support President Bola Tinubu's re-election?

Our people know what we have done, particularly in the agricultural sector.

Kebbi State is the largest producer of rice in the country, and we have maintained that position. These interventions were introduced to support agricultural production and improve the livelihoods of our farmers.

We have continued with these programmes. We do not restrict agricultural support to the rainy season alone; we also provide interventions during the dry season. This is because we understand the importance of agriculture to our economy and the contribution Kebbi State makes to food production in Nigeria.

Our state has played an important role in efforts to reduce food prices, particularly the price of rice. We have therefore continued to support farmers through the provision of agricultural inputs, equipment and other necessary assistance.

In my first year in office, we procured 10,000 solar-powered water pumps and 25,000 CNG-powered water pumps for farmers. We also purchased tractors, distributed 150 truckloads of assorted fertilisers and provided 10,000 units of herbicides free of charge to farmers.

We have continued these interventions in both the rainy and dry seasons because we understand the importance of agriculture and food production.

Kebbi State has played a significant role in food production, particularly rice, in this country. The people of Kebbi know what we have done, and they have also seen the interventions of President Bola Tinubu's administration in the state.

During the Argungu International Fishing and Agricultural Festival, I brought the President to Kebbi State so that he could personally see what we were doing.

The President has visited Kebbi about three times, while the Minister of Agriculture has visited the state several times. These visits demonstrate the relationship between the Federal Government and Kebbi State.

We will continue to support President Tinubu because of what his administration has done for our people. I was the first governor in the country to endorse President Tinubu for a second term. That was not an empty declaration.

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At World PR forum, experts call for responsible communication in AI age

By **Sunday Aikulola**

PUBLIC Relations and communication professionals and other stakeholders from over 126 countries, who recently gathered in Abuja for the 13th World Public Relations Forum, havesaidin the age of Artificial Intelligence (AI), responsible communication will need to address misinformation and disinformation.

Themed, 'Responsible communication: The voice of the world,' the participants expressed concern over rise of misinformation, disinformation, malinformation, deepfakes, polarisation and declining public trust in institutions, governments, media and business.

They argued that communication is power - the power to unite or divide; build trust or destroy it; advance peace or fuel conflict.

They further affirmed that responsible communication is not propaganda, spin or manipulation, but a democratic, development and peace imperative, grounded in shared humanity, mutual responsibility and the philosophy of human interconnectedness.

To this end, the participants declared and committed themselves to the following 12 priority principles, truth and accuracy; public interest above private gain; transparency and accountability; fight against misinformation and disinformation; green and sustainable communication; media literacy and empowerment of citizens.

Other priority principles are, ethics, professionalism and self-regulation; responsible use of AI and technology; communication for peace, democracy and development; inclusion, diversity, culture and listening; women, youth and student participation; supporting and strengthening traditional leaders and institutions; inclusion, diversity, culture and listening.

Concerning truth and accuracy, they affirmed, "we commit to truth as the foundation of our profession. We shall communicate only what is accurate, verifiable and evidence-based. We shall not knowingly spread falsehood, exaggerate, or conceal material facts."

In the area of public interest above private gain, the participants noted, "we commit to serve the public interest first. Our loyalty is not to the client alone, but to society. Where private interest conflicts with public good, the public good and collective wellbeing shall prevail."

As regards transparency and accountability, they added, "we commit to openness in our sources, funding, interests and methods. We shall disclose conflicts of interest, disclose the use of AI, and accept accountability for the consequences of our messages. Trust is built by action, not by words alone."

Concerning fight against misinformation and disinformation, they noted, "we commit to actively combat misinformation, disinformation and malinformation. We shall verify before we publish, correct errors promptly, and refuse to act as mercenaries of falsehood for any political, commercial or personal gain."

As regards ethics, professionalism and self-regulation, they affirmed, 'we commit to a professional, licensed and accountable profession, governed by enforceable codes of ethics and grounded in competence, character and conscience. We shall pursue continuous education, protect whistleblowers, and sanction unethical practice."

On responsible use of AI and technology, they noted, "we commit to the ethical use of AI and digital technology. We shall ensure human oversight, disclose AI-generated content, reject deepfakes, manipulation and algorithmic bias, and protect data privacy and human dignity."

They also called on governments to protect freedom of expression, media freedom and access to information; international bodies, including the United Nations, must recognise Responsible Communication as the 18th Sustainable Development Goal; businesses must communicate honestly to consumers, investors and employees; media and platforms must prioritise truth over virality, and accountability over engagement; educational institutions must embed ethics, AI literacy and responsible communication in curricula; professionals must sign, adopt and live this Declaration in their daily practice; government of the people, by the people, for the people shall not perish from the earth if communication remains truthful, responsible and human.

Fellowship equips journalists to scrutinise development interventions

From **Ann Godwin**, Port Harcourt

JOURNALISTS covering the Niger Delta have been urged to broaden their perspectives, independently monitor development interventions and hold governments, development partners and other stakeholders accountable for their impact on communities across the region.

The charge was given when the Foundation for Partnership Initiatives in the Niger Delta (PIND), in partnership with the School of Media and Communication (SMC), Pan-Atlantic University, launched a six-month media fellowship to strengthen development journalism and promote evidence-based reporting on the oil-rich region.

The fellowship is designed to equip journalists with the skills and resources to investigate development interventions, economic opportunities and efforts to address longstanding challenges confronting the Niger Delta.

Six journalists drawn from media organisations across Nigeria were selected for the inaugural cohort. They are Ann Godwin of *The Guardian,* Ekemini Simon of *PREMIUM TIMES,* Isaac Eranga of The Nigerian Observer, Joseph Kunde of TVC News, Kpono-Abasi Jackson of Akwa Ibom Broadcasting Corporation and Jennifer Orugbo of Delta Broadcasting Service.

This followed a five-day residential Impact Journalism Academy held at the School of Media and Communication in Lagos from November 2 to 6, where participants received intensive training in development reporting, solutions journalism, impact storytelling, ethical interviewing, multimedia production and evidence-based reporting.

At the end of the academy, the fellows expressed optimism about applying the knowledge gained to produce more impactful stories and contribute to changing narratives about the Niger Delta.



South-South Bureau Chief, *The Guardian*, and PIND Media Fellow, Ann Godwin (left); Director, Professional Education, School of Media and Communication (SMC), Pan-Atlantic University, Isaac Ezechukwu; Executive Director, PIND Foundation, Mr. Sam Daibo; Dean, SMC, Pan-Atlantic University, Dr Ikechukwu Obiaya; Manager, Knowledge Management and Communications, PIND Foundation, Anne Ihugba and Newscaster, Delta Broadcasting Service, Orugbo Jennifer at the launch of the PIND Media Fellows Programme for Narrative Change in the Niger Delta, held at SMC, Pan-Atlantic University, Lagos.

Centre calls for release of detained FIJ reporter, Ojukwu

By **Sunday Aikulola**

EXECUTIVE Director/Chief Executive Officer Wole Soyinka Centre for Investigative Journalism (WSCIJ), Motunrayo Alaka, has expressed serious concern over continued detention and prosecution of an investigative reporter with the Foundation for Investigative Journalism (FIJ) Daniel Ojukwu.

In an interview with The Guardian in Lagos yesterday, Alaka argued it is an aberration for journalists to be walking on the streets and picked up for doing their work.

Saying journalism is not meant to be a crime, she added any country that does not uphold freedom of expression and the press cannot be said to be upholding the values of democracy.

Speaking further, Alaka observed increasingly, journalists are self-censoring and it is becoming unsafe to be a journalist in Nigeria, because based on a report, a reporter can be picked up and remanded in prison.

To her, "this is an issue that we must look into because any threat to press freedom is a threat to democracy. For us at WSCIJ, we have done four reports concerning status of the civic space in Nigeria and we see that the space is increasingly becoming unsafe for journalists and the citizens."

Alaka added, "we consider this an existential threat, not just to journalists, but democracy. As Nigeria builds up to 2027 general elections, it is important that journalists are safe.

Firm unveils new platform to boost transparency

By **Benjamin Alade**

RETINAAD Limited has unveiled RetiBazaar, a digital Out-of-Home (OOH) advertising marketplace designed to improve transparency, accountability and efficiency in Nigeria's outdoor advertising industry.

The platform was launched at the Lagos Marriott Hotel, Ikeja, during an industry event themed, "Built for Certainty," attended by advertisers, media owners, industry executives and other stakeholders.

It was developed in response to persistent challenges in the OOH advertising market, particularly unreliable data, limited audience measurement and inadequate independent monitoring of campaigns.

According to the company, the gaps have made it difficult for advertisers to accurately assess outdoor media opportunities, determine campaign reach and independently confirm whether advertising campaigns were executed as agreed.

It said the platform seeks to address the challenges by providing a technology-driven marketplace connecting advertisers and media owners through a transparent process.

The tool andenables users to discover, plan, book and manage OOH advertising inventory, while providing access to verified media locations and data-driven insights.

The platform is also linked to the fim's wider technology ecosystem, including RetiMetrix, its audience measurement platform, and RetiTrak, its campaign monitoring solution.

Speaking at the launch, Chief Executive Officer and Co-founder of Retinaad Limited, Manoj Vashisht, said the platform was designed to give advertisers stronger evidence for making media investment decisions while allowing media owners to demonstrate campaign delivery.

"Advertisers can use audience and location data to judge, which verified sites merit their investment. Media owners can keep availability current and manage bookings, and RetiTrak helps buyers verify that the campaign ran as agreed.

"Trust grows when both sides can point to the same evidence," he said.

The company said the platform would also enable media owners to maintain current inventory and manage bookings, while giving advertisers greater visibility over transactions and campaign execution.

Delivering the keynote address on behalf of the Director-General of the Advertising Regulatory Council of Nigeria (ARCON), Dr Emme Akande, said RetiBazaar was consistent with the regulator's push for a more structured and technology-driven advertising marketplace.

"RetiBazaar aligns perfectly with ARCON's vision of a structured, transparent and technology-driven marketplace. It will empower media owners, buyers and brands while strengthening trust across the Out-of-Home advertising industry," she said.

World Report

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Russian warship hit by Ukrainian drones in Libya, says Zelenskyy

A RUSSIAN warship was sunk by Ukrainian drones at a port in Libya, President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said.

There was an explosion on the warship at the Benghazi naval base in the early morning, while it was docking for fuel and supplies ahead of its return to Russia, the government that controls eastern Libya said.

Zelenskyy added that Ukraine's attack hit a second Russian vessel, a cargo ship which he claimed was being used to transport weapons.

The health ministry said it had received injured people from a commercial ship that was targeted off the coast of the port. It is not clear whether this is the same vessel as the one Ukraine has claimed responsibility for.

Following the strikes, the Kremlin warned of an escalation of tensions in the region, but declined to comment directly on the attacks in Libya.

In a statement on Monday, Zelenskyy praised an exemplary Ukrainian operation in response to Russia's war.

Seven naval drones were deployed to target and sink the corvette Merkury, one of Russia's newest ships, Zelenskyy wrote. He added that a Ka-27 combat helicopter was also destroyed.

The Ukrainian president said the second ship was the MV ANGARA, a Russian container carrier.

The attack came the day after a Russian cargo vessel was hit by a drone attack in the eastern Gulf of Finland. The Sparta II had been bound for Russia's Baltic exclave Kaliningrad when it was hit on Saturday morning.

Finnish defence forces said Ukraine was likely behind the attack. Kyiv has not commented.

Kremlin spokesman, Dmitry Peskov told reporters on Monday that the "expansion of terrorist activity in the Baltic" was a dangerous trend and has said it is, of course, leading to an escalation of tensions in the region.

When questioned over the attacks in Libya, Peskov said information would be provided by the country's defence ministry and added: "We paid attention to Zelensky's statements about it".

Peskov declined to comment on the strikes on Russian ships in Libya and said that that information would be provided by Russia's Defence Ministry.

The UN mission in Libya expressed serious concern over the attacks, calling for an immediate, independent and transparent investigation.

"Libya cannot afford, and must not become a battleground for foreign conflicts," the UNSMIL wrote on X (formerly Twitter).

Videos posted on social media and geolocated by BBC Verify show the ship that was struck in the morning engulfed in flames and smoke. Satellite imagery from Planet Labs PBC also shows a boat on fire at 05:47 GMT at the Benghazi port.

U.S.-based intelligence firm Vantor collected high-resolution images that it said showed Project 20380 Steregushchiy-class corvette (Merkury) - a Russian navy ship - moored in the port on Saturday, and on Sunday showed most of the same ship capsized and sunk with only the forward bow still visible.

The eastern-based Government of National Stability (GNS) said the Russian ship - which it did not name or identify - was using the Benghazi port within the framework of an existing maritime agreement.

The incident is under investigation, and authorities are coordinating with their Russian counterparts to determine the source of the suspected attack and who is responsible for it, GNS added.

GNS condemned the attack on a ship inside a Libyan port, and called it a violation of maritime safety and an attack on their sovereignty. It said Libya was not party to the Russia-Ukraine war, or any other conflict beyond its borders.

Discarded shipping container turned into sensory therapy room in S'Africa

IN a South African township, parents have transformed a discarded shipping container into an underwater-themed sensory room, offering children with developmental conditions and their caregivers a place to find relief from stress and anxiety.

Located in Orange Farm, south of Johannesburg, the colourful space features recycled plastic bottles, handmade decorations, fairy lights, a ball pit, swings and textured materials designed to stimulate the senses and promote relaxation.

For Sisanda Hani, whose teenage son has ADHD and epilepsy, the centre has become an important source of emotional support as she navigates the challenges of caring for him.

"I don't know what to say, I don't what to say. Pressure is going down. Thinking too much is going down. Even if I enter, I scream because sometimes you feel like you want to scream, but when I come here, I scream like I feel like the he heavy (heaviness) on my shoulders has has gone down."

Originally designed to support children with conditions including ADHD, autism and epilepsy, the facility has also become a safe space for parents and young adults struggling with emotional and psychological challenges.

Nineteen-year-old Njabulo Ntombela, who is neurodiverse, says the sessions have helped improve her ability to manage emotions and communicate with others.

"Now I know how to relax. I know how to talk to other people when I come out of this room. I know to talk out my problems. I can talk out my problems, I can get help, but at the beginning I couldn't get help because everything that was happening to me, I keep it inside me," Ntombela said.

The initiative, run by nonprofit organisation Afrika Tikkun in partnership with Sensory-Space, relies on recycled materials and community participation to provide accessible support where professional therapy services are limited.

Health professionals say such community-led initiatives can help address gaps in mental health and developmental care, particularly in underserved areas.

"So having therapy rooms that have been initiated by the community is addressing a very big gap that we have, especially because we don't have enough therapists. So having that is really beneficial and I think kind of having more of those in other communities or replicating such in other communities would be of benefit", expressed Dr. Sibongile Mbatha, neurodevelopmental paediatricia.

The centre has served hundreds of schoolchildren, young adults and caregivers, offering free sessions alongside professional therapy and other support services.

Afrika Tikkun says it hopes to expand the initiative to more communities, including through another sensory facility already opened in Cape Town.

'Israeli attacks have turned Gaza into toxic wasteland'

GAZA has been turned into a toxic wasteland, with more than 99 per cent of the Palestinian territory showing indicators of environmental contamination from Israeli military attacks, a new report from the non-profit organisation Oxfam said.

Heavy metals, explosive residues, and asbestos from destroyed buildings, dioxins and biological contaminants in the air, soil and water supply are threats to Palestinians now and potentially for decades to come, it said.

Oxfam International's executive director, Amitabh Behar, accuses Israel of environmental war crimes as part of an ongoing genocide in Gaza.

"The destruction and contamination of Gaza will have fundamentally degraded the environmental conditions necessary for human safety and survival," he said.

Israel's government has been asked for its response to the report. It has rejected genocide accusations in an ongoing case at the International Court of Justice as baseless and distorted. Israel maintains that its military campaign in Gaza is an act of self-defence against Hamas in response to the group's deadly attack on Israel on 7 October 2023, and that it takes steps to mitigate civilian harm.

Oxfam and the UK-based Conflict and Environment Observatory (CEOBS) used satellite imagery, remote sensing, spatial analysis and other open-source data to draw their conclusions in the most comprehensive report to date on the severe environmental impacts caused by three years of intense war in Gaza.

The report details how munitions used in Israel's intense bombardment, as well as the debris from destroyed buildings and infrastructure, all have an impact on the environment. In February, a UN special rapporteur stated that more than 200,000 tonnes of explosives were dropped on Gaza in almost two years, the equivalent of the total energy of approximately 13 Hiroshima-type nuclear bombs.

Last year, the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) estimated that Israel's military operations destroying homes and infrastructure had generated more than 61 million tonnes of debris across the territory, with about 15 per cent potentially carrying a high risk of contamination from hazardous materials.

"There are going to be chronic health impacts that are long term because a lot of these contaminants are persistent in the environment," Oxfam report author Lama Abdul Samad told the BBC.

She said that now and in future Gazans are likely to suffer from increased respiratory diseases, cancers, organ damage and a rise in birth defects and stillbirths.



The UN estimates that Israeli forces dropped more than 200,000 tonnes of explosives on Gaza in almost two years.

Chinese envoys sue for peace in Horn of Africa

AS Middle East tensions threaten peace and stability in the Horn of Africa, Chinese envoys have visited Ethiopia, Djibouti, Egypt and Eritrea, urging closer cooperation to safeguard peace and promote development.

The visits by Liu Xianfa, special representative of the Chinese government on African Affairs, and Hu Changchun, special envoy of the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs for the Horn of Africa, took place in early to mid-November, while China's special envoy for Middle East affairs was conducting mediation efforts in the Gulf.

The Red Sea shipping route connects the Atlantic, Mediterranean and Indian oceans and is a key maritime corridor linking Asia, Europe and Africa. It carries about 12% of global maritime trade and 30 per cent of container traffic.

The U.S.-Iran war has disrupted passage through the Strait of Hormuz, adding to the Red Sea route's importance. Rising tensions in the Red Sea pose serious risks to the economies of Horn of Africa countries, particularly in trade, investment, energy and food security.

"Everything we do is aimed at helping regional countries independently take their security destiny into their own hands and lay a solid foundation for peace in the region and beyond", Hu Changchun said.

In a joint statement last month, China and Djibouti said the Horn of Africa must not become an arena for geopolitical rivalry.

Daily transaction volumes spike by over 1,800 per cent in November

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

More importantly, there are clear signs that the FX market is experiencing significant demand pressure. Whether driven by election spending, year-end activities or other sources of demand, interbank turnover has spiked since the beginning of November. Last Friday, the figure hit $815.57 million, nearly 3,800 per cent higher than the trading volume recorded on the first day of the month.

This month, the daily volume has averaged $114.45 million, the highest since the beginning of the year and more than 18 times the figure recorded in October ($6,236,637.72). In September, daily volumes stood at $12,419,687.25, a small fraction of the current average, while the figure was $11,076,888.64 in August.

Market arbitrage, measured by the spread between the official and parallel exchange rates, also rose to N70/$, or five per cent, at the weekend. In mid-October, the spread was about N30/$, or below three per cent. Many advisory bodies consider a five per cent premium the threshold for an unhealthy parallel-market differential.

Following the June 2023 pro-market reforms, the spread narrowed to almost zero and has remained reasonably below five per cent. A wider differential between the official and parallel markets is associated with unbridled speculation, round-tripping and other forms of market manipulation.

In the dark days of naira debauchery under Godwin Emefiele's management, when both the elite and ordinary Nigerians took positions against the local currency, the spread widened to as much as 60 per cent. Personal and business travel allowances (P/BTA) became a common racket, with individuals falsifying overseas travel arrangements to access dollars from banks and resell them on the black market.

Bank chiefs and officials at FX desks also joined the scam that the CBN spent billions of dollars annually to finance. In 2022, the apex bank reportedly spent N6.2 trillion on FX subsidies. The amount was more than 35 per cent of the estimated fuel subsidy cost. Various policies have since been developed as follow-up measures to the 2023 market reforms, which created the template for ending the opaque regime.

For instance, the CBN imposed net open position (NOP) limits on banks, directed the recapitalisation of bureaux de change (BDCs), introduced the FX Code and created an electronic trading platform. Consolidated BDCs were subsequently granted access to the NFEM, while the FX manual implementation followed earlier this year.

There have also been aggressive campaigns to increase official diaspora remittance inflows, which have paid off. In July, the CBN reported monthly proceeds of $947 million, slightly below its $1 billion target for the end of the year. August and September figures were estimated at around $950 million.

Monthly inflows stood at about $200 million three years ago when Cardoso assumed office. There are concerns that a significantly wider gap between the official and parallel markets could reverse the trend, translating into slower external reserve growth.

Already, the external reserves are on a downward trajectory. For instance, liquid reserves, which are unencumbered, had dropped to $54.15 billion as of last week, losing $500 million in the past month. The gross figure also fell from $55.18 billion to $54.65 billion.

The prospect of continuously rising oil prices is losing traction by the day. A less bullish crude oil market means lower FX earnings for Nigeria, whose economy is still considerably sustained by petrodollar revenues. This places the CBN in a tight spot and threatens its grip on the market.

But a professor of applied economics and Executive Chairman of the Society for Analytical Economics, Nigeria (SAEN), Godwin Owoh, said there had never been a tighter grip on the market, arguing that the past three years had witnessed only cosmetic policies that failed to address the root causes of the FX market crisis.

A genuinely stronger naira, he argued, would have had a more significant impact on other macroeconomic prices, including interest rates and inflation. He noted that Nigerians had continued to pay heavily for the spiralling effects of uncontrolled increases in the prices of essential goods.

A stronger naira, indeed, came at a damning opportunity cost: what many considered a bonanza interest rate regime. Even after the recent steep cut, Nigeria's benchmark interest rate remains the third highest in Africa, behind Zimbabwe and Malawi. At some point between 2024 and last year, Nigerian bond yields were trending in the 20 per cent range, making the country a haven for global fund managers.

The ultra-high interest rates left the broader economy with severe knock-on effects. Bank treasuries gobbled up government securities as the appetite for easy earnings grew, while the real sector continued to bleed from a lack of funding.

Apparently, falling fixed-income yields will test the policy choices of which the CBN is so proud. But politics, and all it represents, is a major distortion for which the apex bank is not responsible and from whose effects it cannot, unfortunately, insulate its policy outcomes.

Four dead, several injured in attack on NDC campaign team

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

jured, saying 15 people were critically injured and hospitalised.

He, however, vowed to continue his campaign despite the attack, insisting that those responsible would fail to intimidate him into abandoning the race.

He appealed to his supporters to remain calm and avoid reprisals, warning against further escalation of tensions in the area.

The Omo-Agege Campaign Organisation had also demanded an immediate and transparent investigation, insisting that everyone involved in financing, directing or carrying out the attack should be brought to justice.

It called on the IGP, the Director-General of the Department of State Services and the Delta State Commissioner of Police to intervene.

The organisation also asked INEC, civil society groups and the international community to monitor the situation, warning that attacks on political campaigners could undermine the credibility and peaceful conduct of the 2027 elections.

When contacted, the Delta State Police Command spokesman, Bright Edafe, confirmed the incident and said he was awaiting detailed reports.

Delta government imposes curfew

MEANWHILE, the state government has imposed a dusk-to-dawn curfew across Ughelli North Local Government Area following reports of deadly violence and gunshots in parts of the council.

The restriction, which took effect yesterday, will run daily from 6:00 p.m. to 6:00 a.m. until further notice.

The Secretary to the State Government, Dr Kingsley Emu, announced the measure in a statement, saying it was intended to restore calm and bring the security situation under control.

The government urged residents to comply strictly with the directive.

INEC warns against 'rig and die' slogan

AMID growing concerns over political violence, INEC has warned that the slogan 'rig and die', increasingly circulating ahead of the 2027 general elections, could endanger electoral officials, voters, party agents and election observers.

The commission said inflammatory political rhetoric, particularly language linking electoral offences to death, could create an atmosphere of hostility and trigger violence at polling units.

National Commissioner and Chairman of INEC's Information and Voter Education Committee (IVEC), Mohammed Kudu Haruna, gave the warning yesterday in Abuja at a forum on ethical and professional standards in election reporting ahead of the 2027 general election.

Haruna, who was represented by the Deputy Director of Information and Publicity, Wilfred Ifogah, said although proponents of the slogan claimed it was directed at those involved in election rigging, its implications could extend to innocent Nigerians working at polling units.

He identified presiding officers, assistant presiding officers, collation officers and other ad hoc staff, alongside voters, party agents and observers, as those most exposed to the consequences of election-related violence.

"Consider the phrase 'rig and die', now widely repeated. Whatever its originators intend, and some insist it is aimed only at those who rig, a slogan that links an electoral offence to death is dangerous," he said.

Haruna warned that a charged crowd could mistake delayed results, technical difficulties or rumours for evidence of rigging, with potentially fatal consequences.

He urged political leaders and their supporters to abandon the slogan, while cautioning journalists against amplifying it through sensational headlines, hashtags and trending topics.

He said journalists should report the development within its proper context, alongside the legal provisions governing electoral offences and the need to protect electoral personnel.

According to him, electoral offences should be addressed through the law, transparent result transmission, formal complaints to the commission and security agencies, and, where necessary, the courts.

Commission insists on PVC, assures on mock exercise

HARUNA also raised concerns over misinformation on social media suggesting that Nigerians could vote in the 2027 elections without their Permanent Voter Cards (PVCs).

He dismissed claims that the Bimodal Voter Accreditation System (BVAS) had made PVCs unnecessary, citing Section 47(1) of the Electoral Act 2026, which requires every intending voter to present a valid PVC for accreditation at the polling unit where they are registered.

"The BVAS then verifies the card and the biometrics of the person presenting it. It confirms the voter; it does not replace the card. No PVC, no accreditation; no accreditation, no ballot paper," he said.

He warned that voters who believed the claims could fail to collect their PVCs or arrive at polling units without them, thereby risking disenfranchisement.

On preparations for the elections, Haruna disclosed that INEC would conduct a nationwide mock accreditation and voting exercise on Saturday, November 28, across the 36 states and the Federal Capital Territory.

The exercise will take place in two polling units per Registration Area to test BVAS and the uploading of results to the INEC Result Viewing Portal (IReV).

According to him, the selected polling units will open at 8:30 a.m., while accreditation will run until 2:30 p.m.

He urged voters in the designated polling units to participate with their PVCs, stressing that the exercise was a test and would produce neither winners nor losers.

The commissioner also expressed concern over low voter turnout, recalling that only 26.72 per cent of registered voters participated in the 2023 presidential election.

He urged media organisations to strengthen verification mechanisms and guard against misinformation, disinformation, fake accounts and artificial intelligence-generated content ahead of the elections.

Earlier, the Resident Electoral Commissioner for the FCT, Dr Gabriel Hale Longpet, described the media as an indispensable partner in delivering credible elections.

Longpet, who was represented by the INEC FCT Administrative Secretary, Bimbo Oladunjoye, said journalists played a critical role in shaping public opinion, promoting civic awareness and building citizens' confidence in the electoral process.

The President of the Nigeria Union of Journalists, Yahya Alhassan, represented by the union's Zonal Vice-President D, Hadeiza Momoh, urged journalists to uphold professionalism and ensure that accurate information took precedence over sensationalism.

The National Coordinator of the Nigerian Institute of Social Media Analysts, Dr Christian Eze, also warned that the speed at which social media content could circulate without verification placed greater responsibility on those creating and sharing political information.

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2027: Tinubu has earned support of Ndigbo, says Kalu

Minister seeks media support to sell administration's reforms

By **Seye Olumide**

DEPUTY Speaker, House of Representatives, Benjamin Kalu, has urged voters in Abia State and the South-East to support President Bola Tinubu's re-election in 2027, saying his administration has given the region reasons to back him.

Also, the Minister of Information and National Orientation, Mohammed Idris, appealed to media executives to help communicate Tinubu's achievements to Nigerians, arguing that the administration deserves a second term to consolidate its economic reforms.

Kalu spoke yesterday at the inauguration of the Abia State chapter of the PBAT Door-to-Door Movement, where its Grand Patron, Government Ekpemupolo, popularly known as Tompolo, donated 25 campaign vehicles and other mobilisation materials.

The former governor of Abia State said Tinubu had earned the support of Ndigbo through the establishment of the South-East Development Commission (SEDC) and appointment of prominent indigenes into key federal positions.

He listed the Minister of Works, David Umahi; Minister of State for Finance, Doris Uzoka-Anite; Minister of Foreign Affairs, Bianca Ojukwu; and the Chief of Air Staff, Air Marshal Sunday Aneke, among those appointed by the President.

He said the appointments and the creation of SEDC demonstrated the administration's commitment to addressing the South-East's development concerns.

Earlier, the Managing Director of Tantita Security Services, Kestin Pondi, who represented Tompolo, said the 25 vehicles were equipped with speakers, amplifiers, generators and microphones to facilitate the campaign.

He said the PBAT Door-to-Door Movement had inaugurated chapters in 31 states and provided them with resources to take Tinubu's message to voters.

Pondi urged Abia residents to vote for APC candidates at all levels, arguing that the state would benefit from aligning with the party controlling the Federal Government.

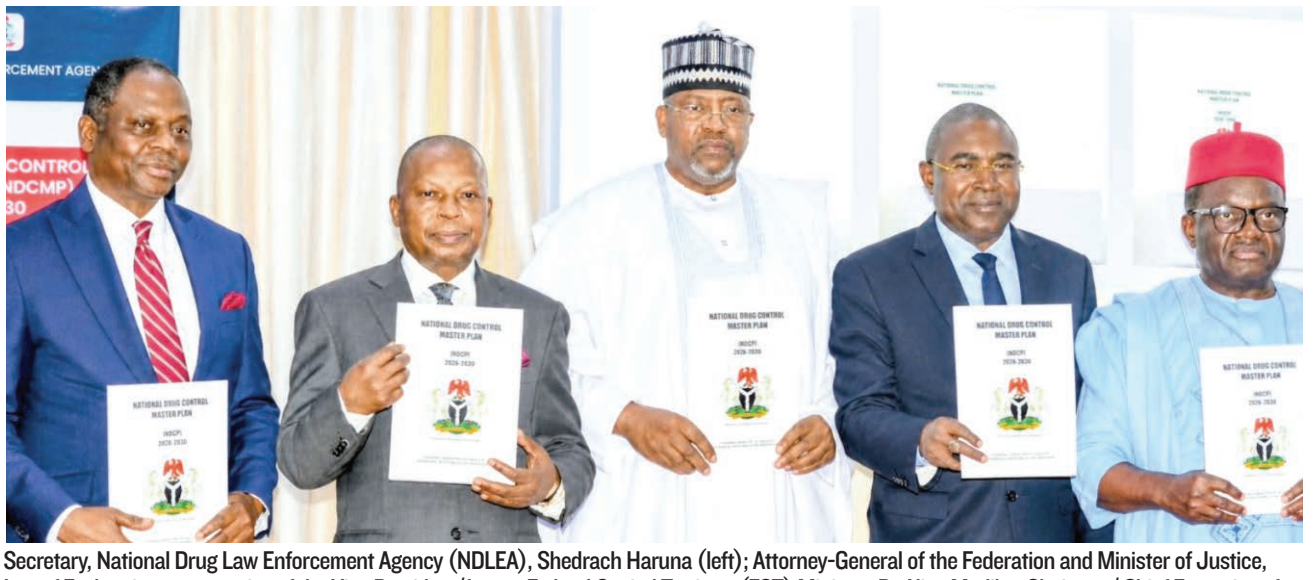
Idris, who defended the government's record amid widespread hardship, said yesterday in Lagos that the President had taken difficult but necessary decisions to reposition the economy and should be given another four years to deliver on his policies.

Speaking during an interaction with media executives, the minister said the media, given their reach and influence, had a critical role in informing Nigerians about government programmes, policies and achievements.

He argued that Tinubu's economic reforms, particularly the removal of fuel subsidy, were beginning to produce results despite the pains associated with their implementation, insisting that the decision was in the long-term interest of the country.

The minister dismissed comparisons between Tinubu and previous administrations, saying the present government had demonstrated the political will to tackle structural problems that successive governments had failed to address.

The minister, who was accompanied by members of the presidential media team, including Bayo Onanuga, Sunday Dare, Tunde Rahman and Tope Ajayi, said Nigerians had the right to criticise government policies but should also assess the administration against its economic direction and achievements.



Secretary, National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA), Shedrach Haruna (left); Attorney-General of the Federation and Minister of Justice, Lateef Fagbemi; representative of the Vice President/former Federal Capital Territory (FCT) Minister, Dr Aliyu Modibo; Chairman/ Chief Executive of the NDLEA, Brig.-Gen. Buba Marwa (rtd), and representative of the Chairman, House of Representatives Committee on Drugs and Narcotics, Dominic Okafor, during the official launch of the 2026 -2030 national drug control master plan in Abuja, yesterday. PHOTO: LUCY LADIDI ATEKO

Rival faction kicks as Abure-led LP endorses Tinubu in Abuja

From **John Akubo**, Abuja

THE Julius Abure-led faction of the Labour Party (LP) has endorsed President Bola Tinubu for a second term, pledging to mobilise at least six million votes for him in the 2027 presidential election.

However, another faction of LP alerted the police and the public to an alleged plot by some former members and other individuals to convene an unauthorised National Executive Committee (NEC) meeting in Abuja.

The faction said it had resolved to support Tinubu, whom it described as the most suitable candidate to lead the country beyond 2027, citing "the achievements" of his administration.

At the faction's NEC meeting yesterday in Abuja, Abure said the faction was prepared to deploy its political structures across the country, including ward, state, regional and national leaders, to secure victory for Tinubu at the polls.

TETFund attracts 14,000 research entries, selects 1,200 for exhibition

From **Owede Agbajileke**, Abuja

TERTIARY Education Trust Fund (TETFund) has said it has attracted over 14,000 research entries to its national portal and selected 1,200 from more than 7,000 submissions for its 2026 National Research Fair, scheduled to commence on Tuesday.

The Executive Secretary of TETFund, Sonny Echono, and Chairman, Research and Innovation Commercialisation Committee (RICC), Tamuno Okujagu, disclosed this at a press conference in Abuja yesterday, heralding the 2026 TETFund National Research Fair and Exhibition.

The four-day exhibition is scheduled to hold from November 24 to 27 at the Abuja Trade and Convention Centre.

The agency said the selection followed a countrywide and international call for entries, with submissions received from formal institutions, communities and individuals.

Ike Nwachukwu urges Igbo unity, South-East infrastructural development

FORMER military governor of old Imo State and convener of the South-East Stakeholders' Convergence, Maj.-Gen. Ike Nwachukwu (rtd), has called for unity among the Igbo at home and in the diaspora to give the South-East region a respected and influential voice in Nigeria.

Speaking at the convergence, held at the Imo State Government House, Owerri, he lamented that Igbo unity had been harmed by the prevalent insecurity, economic hardship, political tension and mutual distrust, warning that silence would no longer be an option.

Political affiliations notwithstanding, Nwachukwu expressed optimism that Igbo unity, structured chiefly on a shared linguistic identity, would engender "a peaceful and secure South-East where life, property and investments are protected.

He called for "a South-East driven by regional economic integration, infrastructure, women and youth empowerment; a politically united South-East that speaks with one voice, commands national, international respect and secures its rightful place in the Nigerian federation; and a South-East anchored on equity, justice and cultural heritage."

He reminded the Igbo to be assertive, rather than give the erroneous and self-destructive impression of a minority in a country which independence their forefathers fought for.

Meanwhile, as the 2027 elections draw near, Nwachukwu urged the Igbo to demand from the presidential candidates a commitment to infrastructure such as rail, gas pipelines and plants, ports, and solid, all-season roads to ease the movement of labour, capital, raw and processed agricultural and industrial goods, among others.

'90% of Nigerian founders self-fund or lean on family to start businesses'

Kano, Katsina and Kaduna top every southern state except Lagos for builders

By **Adeyemi Adepetun**

MOST of Nigeria's early-stage founders are building with their own money. Nine in 10 started with personal and family savings, typically N500, 000, according to a new study of more than 24,000 businesses in every Nigerian state, published by Magna Collective.

Nigeria's startup story is usually told through its biggest funding rounds.

Four companies took 69 per cent of the $635 million raised by Nigerian startups in the first nine months of 2026, and deals of that size shape how the sector is discussed, funded and supported. Far less is known about the much larger group of founders who start without venture capital, including where they are, what they sell and what kind of support moves them forward. Programme managers, investors and policymakers are designing for these founders with limited evidence to work from.

Health experts say antimicrobial resistance now a clinical, economic emergency

By **Adelowo Adebumiti**

To curb the escalating threat of antimicrobial resistance (AMR) across the country, healthcare experts have called on the federal government and healthcare stakeholders to urgently shift from policy formulation to strict clinical and community enforcement.

Speaking at the 9th Ladipo Mobolaji Abisogun-Afodu Annual Lecture in Pharmacy at the University of Lagos (UNILAG), the Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of Victory Drugs, Folasade Lawal, described antimicrobial resistance as a "silent pandemic" steadily eroding the foundations of modern medicine across Nigerian hospitals, communities, and homes.

The lecture was organised by the UNILAG Office of Advancement and the Board of Trustees in collaboration with the university's Faculty of Pharmacy, with the theme, "Addressing Antimicrobial Stewardship in Nigeria: Current Perspectives and Future Imperatives."

She emphasised that resistant infections were no longer a distant projection but an immediate clinical and economic emergency, pointing to routine infections such as uncomplicated urinary tract infections, which have increasingly failed to respond to first- and second-line antibiotics.

NCAA frowns on airport officials soliciting alms from passengers

By **Olusegun Koiki**

NIGERIA Civil Aviation Authority (NCAA) has condemned the growing practice of airport personnel soliciting money from passengers.

The regulatory agency, which described the act as harassment, warned that the practice could cause travellers to miss their flights.

The Director of Public Affairs and Consumer Protection, NCAA, Michael Achimugu, stated this in his verified X handle on Monday.

Achimugu expressed worries that some airport personnel demand money from passengers during routine security checks, even after they had completed other boarding procedures.

According to him, some of these officials give passengers their personal mobile money account details when travellers claim they had no cash left to give.

He recounted an incident involving a student who had passed through several airport screening points, but was allegedly asked to pay money during a final baggage check.

According to him, the passenger became confused and worried when the official purportedly refused to complete the process without receiving money, forcing the student to make a phone call while being held at the checkpoint.

Achimugu said the practice had become increasingly widespread, exposing passengers to unnecessary delays, intimidation and the risk of missing their flights despite arriving early and complying with the required security procedures.

He also recounted his own sordid experience on the issue.

He said: "Some passengers have actually missed flights after passing screening, because of the vindictiveness of some of these horrible personnel. At the risk of sounding holy-sanctimonious, we will not allow this to fester beyond this point."

AGF, NBA warn against extra cost of justice as Appeal Court goes digital

From **Ameh Ochojila**, Abuja

THE Court of Appeal has launched an electronic filing and case management system, with the Attorney-General of the Federation (AGF), Lateef Fagbemi, SAN, and the Nigerian Bar Association (NBA) warning that the reform must ease access to justice rather than impose new burdens on litigants and lawyers.

The Nigeria Case Management System (NCMS) and electronic filing platform were formally launched yesterday in Abuja, marking a major step in the court's digital transformation.

Speaking at the occasion, Fagbemi and the NBA stressed that the success of the initiative would depend not only on deploying the technology but also on its ability to reduce delays, improve case management, and make the appellate process more accessible.

Meanwhile, President of the Court of Appeal, Justice Monica Dongban-Mensem, said the Abuja Division would serve as the pilot for the system, with implementation proceeding in phases across the court's divisions due to the project's capital-intensive nature.

In her address, delivered by the presiding Justice of the Abuja Division, Justice Mohamed Danjuma, Dongban-Mensem said the platform was designed to strengthen the security and accessibility of judicial records, streamline court and registry operations, and address the limitations of the paper-based system.

She urged lawyers, litigants and other court users to familiarise themselves with the Court of Appeal (Mandatory Upload of Electronic Copies of Processes, Record of Appeal, and Other Matters) Practice Directions, 2026, which would be made available to stakeholders.

However, Fagbemi, who described the launch as a decisive response to delays in filing and transmitting court processes, difficulties in tracking cases and the cumbersome management of physical records, said the reform must deliver measurable improvements in the administration of justice.

The AGF said the platform must be reliable, secure and user-friendly, with adequate infrastructure, continuous training and effective mechanisms for resolving operational challenges.

He warned that digitalisation should not create fresh obstacles for litigants and lawyers who lack the skills or resources to navigate electronic processes.

Fagbemi further called for sensitisation, technical support and transitional arrangements to ensure that no court user was disadvantaged by limited technological capacity.

He also urged the National Judicial Council (NJC), the NBA and other stakeholders to pursue digital integration across the judiciary as a coordinated national agenda, rather than through isolated institutional initiatives.

Speaking on behalf of NBA President, the association's Second Vice President, Nuhu John Egya, said the platform represented more than a technological innovation, describing it as a step towards a more efficient, transparent and accountable judiciary.

Egya identified accessibility, capacity building, and system reliability as critical to the success of the reform, stating that lawyers practising in remote locations must not be excluded, and that court staff and practitioners require adequate training and technical support.

The NBA also called for safeguards against technical failures, payment difficulties and breaches of confidentiality in judicial records.

Fulani coalition alleges killing of 95 herders, accuses SSS, police of intimidation

• MACBAN fears state police will worsen plight

From Isa Abdulsalami Ahovi, Jos

THE Coalition of Fulani Registered Organisations in Plateau State has alleged that no fewer than 95 Fulani herders, including Wada Abdullahi, were killed and 1,240 cattle were rustled, shot or killed in different parts of the state between April and November 2026.

Making the claims before newsmen in Jos on Sunday through state chairman, Abdullahi Garba, the coalition also accused operatives of the State Security Services (SSS), mobile police and the state-owned security outfit, Operation Rainbow, of constant harassment, intimidation and displacement of their members.

Against the foregoing, the state chairman of the Miyetti Allah Cattle Breeders Association of Nigeria (MACBAN), Ibrahim Babayo, said members are deeply worried about the state police's moves.

Uncertainty over NDC candidates' validity deepens as court adjourns Kano suit

From **Murtala Adewale**, Kano

YESTERDAY'S adjournment of the suit challenging the validity of the governorship candidate of the Nigeria Democratic Congress (NDC) in Kano, Aminu Gwarzo, and his running mate, Mustapha Rabiu Kwankwaso, till December 7, 2026, has deepened the uncertainty surrounding their inclusion on the ballot.

The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) omitted their names from the final list in early November, citing legal constraints.

This followed a suit by three members of the NDC - Garba Umar Isa, Yau Nasiru and Atiku Jamilu Abubakar - challenging the validity of Gwarzo and Kwankwaso's candidacy to bear the party's flag in the February 2027 governorship election.

The court had granted the plaintiffs' ex parte application restraining INEC from listing the names.



Chairman, National Research Fund of the Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund), Prof. Hayward Mafuyai (left); representative of the Chairman, TETFund Board of Trustees, Sanni Danladi; Executive Secretary of TETFund, Sonny Echono; and the Chairman, Organising Committee of the 2nd TETFund National Research Exhibition, Dr Umar Budir, during a news conference on its fair/exhibition in Abuja yesterday.

NSCIA condemns mosque attacks, seeks perpetrators' arrest

From **Sodiq Omolaoye**, Abuja

THE Nigerian Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs (NSCIA) has condemned attacks on worshippers in mosques, declaring that no grievance, however genuine, justifies violence or the violation of human dignity.

Stating that attacks perpetrated within and around mosques are reprehensible, unacceptable and fundamentally at variance with the teachings and values of Islam, it urged Muslims, political actors and religious leaders to exercise restraint and avoid actions capable of escalating tensions as the country prepares for the 2027 general elections.

Consequently, it called on mosques to facilitate the arrest of those who violate their sanctity and make available video clips of incidents to law enforcement agencies.

The warning comes amid recent incidents of violence and political hostility at mosques in Abuja, including the attack on popular Hausa musician and President Bola Tinubu's supporter, Dauda Kahutu, popularly known as Rarara, at the National Mosque on November 20.

Rarara was reportedly attacked by a crowd shortly after observing Friday prayers, with videos circulating online showing some individuals assaulting him before other worshippers and security operatives intervened to rescue him.

The incident occurred less than a week after Tinubu was booed by some worshippers and residents at the Shehu Shagari Central Mosque in the Garki area of Abuja on November 13, following Friday prayers.

Against this backdrop, a statement yesterday by the NSCIA Secretary-General, Prof. Is-haq Oloyede, described mosques as sacred places of worship, spiritual reflection, Islamic brotherhood and religious orientation, whose sanctity must be protected.

It said the lives, dignity, and safety of worshippers were equally protected by Islamic teachings, stressing that doctrinal differences, political disagreements and socio-economic grievances must never be used to justify attacks on people.

While acknowledging the right of individuals to express grievances, the NSCIA urged them to pursue such concerns through dialogue, constructive advocacy, lawful engagement, the courts and other legitimate mechanisms of justice.

HURIWA, Umar demand justice for tourist over alleged assault by Daura emir

From **Joel Oladele**, Abuja

THE Human Rights Writers Association of Nigeria (HURIWA) has called for justice for the foreign female tourist who was allegedly sexually assaulted by the Emir of Daura, Faruk Umar Faruk.

HURIWA described the allegation as disturbing, urging the Katsina State Government and the Nigeria Police Force to investigate it immediately and transparently and ensure justice for the complainant.

Similarly, a former military governor of Kaduna State, Col. Abubakar Umar (rtd), has called on Katsina State Governor, Dikko Radda, to immediately suspend the Emir of Daura, Faruk Umar Faruk, over the allegations of sexual misconduct by a female foreign tourist.

Umar, in an open letter dated November 22, 2026, urged the governor to suspend the traditional ruler pending the outcome of a thorough, impartial and transparent investigation into the allegation.

IN a statement yesterday, HURIWA National Coordinator, Comrade Emmanuel Onwubiko, said the incident, which reportedly occurred during an encounter between the tourist and the traditional ruler at his palace in Daura on November 14, 2026, had raised serious concerns.

It condemned the alleged exploitation of traditional authority and influence to subject women to unwanted sexual advances, as captured in the videos of the extant case circulating on social media alongside the tourist's account.

HURIWA insisted that traditional rulers must uphold high standards of dignity, discipline and respect for human rights. Therefore, it called on the Inspector-General of Police and the Katsina State Government to ensure an impartial investigation, warning against any attempt to allow the emir's position, age or influence to obstruct justice.

HURIWA also endorsed concerns by Amnesty International Nigeria over persistent sexual violence and the culture of impunity surrounding such offences, saying that Nigeria must move beyond public condemnation and demonstrate a genuine commitment to protecting survivors and prosecuting offenders.

Among others, the association also called on the National Assembly and state legislatures to strengthen existing laws against rape, sexual assault, child molestation and other forms of sexual exploitation.

DESCRIBING the development as disturbing, the former military governor said the allegations, if established, would constitute an abuse of the dignity, authority and responsibilities associated with traditional institutions.

Kwankwaso compelled me to join APC, says Governor Yusuf

• Kwankwasiyya refutes claim, demands proof

From **Murtala Adewale**, Kano

AFTER three years of silence, Governor Abba Yusuf has disclosed a secret agreement reached with the Presidency to join the ruling All Progressives Congress (APC) following the Supreme Court verdict on the 2023 gubernatorial election.

Yusuf, who disclosed this in an exclusive interview with the *BBC Hausa* service, also revealed that his political mentor and leader of the Kwankwasiyya Movement, Dr Rabiu Kwankwaso, not only propelled his defection to the APC but also compelled him to "swear by the Quran" to convince the presidency.

Refuting the governor's claim, however, the Kwankwasiyya Movement has requested from the governor verifiable evidence to support his claims, insisting that the governor must take responsibility for his political decisions instead of attempting to shift the blame for his defection.

NIS cautions on japa as over 17,500 Nigerians declared missing

From **Samson Kukwa-Yanor**, Makurdi

THE Nigerian Immigration Service (NIS) yesterday disclosed that over 17,500 persons had been reported missing since 2017 as a result of irregular migration, saying the figure was a source of concern requiring sustained public awareness and collective action.

Speaking in Makurdi during a sensitisation programme on irregular migration and the smuggling of migrants, Assistant Comptroller of Immigration, David Amanahu, identified partnership, prosecution, prevention and promotion as the four key strategies, popularly known as the four 'Ps' for tackling irregular migration.

He emphasised the need for stronger collaboration among relevant stakeholders, effective prosecution of offenders, preventive measures and the promotion of safe and orderly migration practices.

He also called for increased efforts to discourage dangerous migration practices and protect vulnerable persons from exploitation by human traffickers and smugglers.

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AFCON title: CAS to decide on Senegal's appeal today

By Christian Okpara

THE Court of Arbitration for Sports (CAS) will today decide whether Senegal will hold onto the Africa Cup of Nations (AFCON) title they won by beating Morocco 1-0 in January's final in Rabat or adopt the Confederation of African Football's (CAF) decision to disqualify the Teranga Lions and hand over the trophy to the hosts.

CAS confirmed yesterday that its decision would be made public today, although no specific time was provided.

CAS heard submissions from Senegal, Morocco and CAF in Lausanne in early October. The court had initially indicated that a decision would follow within days of the October 8 hearing. However, it later opted to prepare a full ruling, known as a CAS Award, which includes the legal reasoning behind its verdict. This process requires several weeks.

CAS Awards carry the same legal standing as national court judgments and can be enforced under the New York Convention on the Recognition and Enforcement of Foreign Arbitral Awards. Depending on the circumstances, enforcement can be carried out through sports governing bodies or national courts.

The controversy dates back to the final game in January when the Teranga Lions left the pitch for 14 minutes after a late penalty was awarded against them during normal time. Several players had returned to the dressing room in protest before the team eventually resumed the match.

Morocco failed to convert the penalty, sending the contest into extra time, where Senegal scored the decisive goal to claim a 1-0 victory.

However, two months later, CAF's Appeal Board ruled that Senegal had forfeited the match by walking off the pitch. The decision overturned the result and awarded Morocco a 3-0 victory, handing them the AFCON title.

Senegal subsequently took their case to sport's highest court, submitting an appeal to CAS on March 25. The central argument from the Senegalese side is that the referee's decisions are final and that he allowed the match to continue until its conclusion.



The 2025 AFCON final between Morocco and Senegal was marred by clashes between players of the opposing teams, as well as supporters at the stands.

Infantino: 'Why Nigeria can't host World Cup now'

By Gowon Akpodonor

NIGERIA lacks the facilities to host the FIFA World Cup or any other big international football competition, FIFA President Gianni Infantino has said.

Infantino, who is vying for a third term as FIFA president, said that Nigeria's infrastructure, including stadiums, hotels, airports and transportation facilities, is inadequate for a competition of the World Cup magnitude.

The FIFA boss, however, said that the country could host the tournament in the future if it invests in critical infrastructure.

Speaking on a television interview yesterday, Infantino explained that hosting the World Cup requires substantial investment in infrastructure, particularly stadiums, accommodation, airports and an efficient transportation system.

"The key to hosting a World Cup is obviously the infrastructure, the stadiums, the hotels, the airports, transportation. And this is where the investment is really necessary," he said.

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Leadership crisis: Olalere urges NSC to replicate judo's solution in gymnastics

By Gowon Akpodonor

THE chairperson of the Lagos State Gymnastics Association, Omowunmi Olalere, has urged the National Sports Commission (NSC) to replicate the decisive intervention that produced a peaceful judo election by resolving lingering leadership and electoral disputes in the Gymnastics Federation of Nigeria.

Congratulating the Inspector-General of Police, Olatunji Disu, on his election as president of the Nigeria Judo Federation on Thursday, November 19, Olalere called on sports authorities to extend the same institutional commitment to gymnastics.

Disu, a third-dan black belt holder, who began his judo career in 1986 and won silver at the 33rd U.S. Open Judo Championship in July 2022, polled all 13 votes at the National Elective Congress in Abuja organised by the Sheriff Hammed-led Caretaker Committee.

Olalere described Disu's emergence as a welcome milestone for Nigerian sports administration and an opportunity to strengthen judo's institutional structure for greater national and international recognition, while commending NSC Chairman, Shehu Dikko, Director-General Bukola Olopade and Hammed for delivering a credible transition.

Zenith Bank/Delta Principals' Cup

Official kickoff holds Thursday

From Monday Osayande, Asaba

MATCHES of the yearly Zenith Bank/Delta Principals' Cup have commenced across Delta State, but the official kick-off of the championship will hold on Thursday at St. Patrick's College, Asaba, the organisers of the championship have said.

The competition is being organised by the Delta State government and Hidea Plus, which disclosed at the weekend that the championship started on November 12, with the final holding on December 10 at the Stephen Keshi Stadium, Asaba.

According to the CEO of Hidea Plus, Tony Pemu, the preliminary games held across the 25 local councils of the state end on Nov 27, while the zonal playoff takes place at designated centres on November 29 and December 1, with the quarterfinals taking centre stage at designated centres on December 3.

The two semifinals will be played on December 7, while the grand finale is scheduled for the Stephen Keshi Stadium, Asaba, Delta State on December 10.

Idowu urges states to resuscitate grassroots sports

By Christian Okpara

NIGERIA needs all arms of government, especially states, to return to grassroots sports development if it is to regain its place among the world's top sporting nations, sports philanthropist Yemi Idowu said.

Idowu, who called for a major overhaul of Nigeria's sports development structure, urged the federal government to return grassroots sports administration and resources to state and local governments.

Addressing the audience at the National Grassroots Sports Summit at the weekend, Idowu argued that Nigeria's sports challenges are rooted more in policy deficiencies than a lack of talent.

According to him, the country possesses an abundance of gifted athletes, but inadequate policies and poor implementation have hindered the growth of sports at the grassroots level.



CIO Golf Championship:

Okafor announces incentive for record-breaking Okoko

By Christian Okpara



Okafor

FOR his outstanding performance at the just-concluded Seventh CIO Golf Championship in Port Harcourt, Godwin Okoko has earned more incentives from the sponsor of the championship, Keves Global Leasing, led by Chief Ikenna Okafor.

Okoko won the championship with a record-breaking score, and apart from the N17 million earmarked for first prize, Okafor believes the 21-year-old Nigerian's outstanding performance deserves to be incentivised.

Okoko produced an impressive four-round performance of 67, 63, 65 and 71 to finish on 22-under-par 266, smashing the previous course record at Python Golf Club by four strokes.

Impressed by the achievement, Okafor pledged an additional $15,000 incentive to the young professional, saying the reward would help him afford better coaches, improve his training and advance his golfing career.

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Retaining Ikeja championship trophy was due to hard work, says Kelani

By Gowon Akpodonor

WINNER of the 2026 Ikeja Golf Club Championship, Amusa Kelani, says he worked very hard to secure victory at the competition and retain the trophy.

The week-long championship, which began at the Ikeja Golf Club on November 16 with a record attendance of over 360 golfers, ended on Sunday with Kelani retaining the trophy.

Kelani won his maiden title in November 2023 by shooting 148 gross over two days against a main-draw field of 53 golfers.

That victory in 2023 snapped the streak of 11-time defending champion Muyiwa Olaitan.

Speaking on Sunday after receiving his trophy and Green Jacket, Kelani said: "Before the tournament began, I knew my swing was good but also decided to work hard. If it were just by training alone, I knew I had already won the tournament.

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TheGuardian
Conscience, Nurtured by Truth
Guardian Nigeria GuardianNigeria 08136370421 Guardiannigeria
Tuesday, November 24, 2026

Guest Writer

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The making of APC's unprecedented rally at Mapo

IBADAN did not just host a rally on Saturday, November 21, 2026. Ibadan spoke.

Since 1979, I have attended presidential rallies at the ancient Mapo Hall. I have seen the days of Awolowo, Azikiwe, Aminu Kano, Shagari, Abiola, Obasanjo, Yar'Adua, Jonathan, Buhari. I have seen mammoth crowds. I have seen rented crowds. I have seen real crowds. None has surpassed what we witnessed on Saturday.

Mapo Hall is not an ordinary ground. It is the political heart of Ibadan, the place where the city speaks. And yesterday, the city spoke with one voice, with one heart, and with one love.

It was not an accident. It was not money. It was the coming together of three powerful forces, all in full display before and during the rally: The full acceptance of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu, the vigour of Seyi Tinubu, and the love for Senator Sharafadeen Abiodun Alli. When you put those three together, you do not get a rally. You get a movement.

The full acceptance of President Tinubu

The full acceptance of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu in Oyo State is no longer a campaign slogan. It is a settled fact. It was best captured, not by a politician, not by a party spokesman, but by a king.

At the Ibadan Airport, the Olubadan of Ibadanland, in welcoming Mr President to his domain, said his performance as President has earned him more than 95 per cent of the votes.

Let us pause on that statement. A king does not speak for a party. A king speaks for his people. When the Olubadan says 95 per cent, he is not doing arithmetic. He is reading the mood of Ibadanland and Oyo State.

The people have watched President Tinubu. They have seen a President who took difficult decisions others avoided. They have seen a President rebuilding the economy, strengthening the states, and restoring Nigeria's dignity in the world. They have seen audacity.

Nigerians know reform is not always sweet in the beginning. And the people of Oyo State are very wise. They know the difference between a leader who is managing pain and a leader who is causing pain. They know President Tinubu is healing Nigeria, not hurting her.

That is why they came out. Not because they were paid. Not because they were forced. They came to say: We see what you are doing, Mr President. Continue. We are with you.

From Oke- Ogun to Ogbomoso, Oyo to Ibarapa, all the way to Ibadan, the message was the same. The President is fully accepted.

The vigour of Seyi and his City Boy Movement

If the President was fully accepted, his son prepared the ground for that acceptance to explode.

From Wednesday to Friday, Seyi Tinubu virtually locked down Ibadan and environs. He did not sit in a hotel room and issue instructions. He entered the city. He walked the streets. He entered the markets. He engaged thousands of Okada riders, taxi drivers, and bus operators. He acquired new mobile generating sets to power systems and equipment and other needs of his crew. Delightfully supported by almost all the DJs, hype men, MCs, artists and entertainers in the state, the City Boy Movement campaigned beautifully around the city.

He did not just campaign. He boosted the city. He gave work to young people. He made friends. And in making friends, he won more voters for his father and for other APC candidates.

It is on record that no other child of a President has been so positively involved in campaigns in Nigeria. None.

Others have stayed in Abuja. Others have stayed abroad. Others have come only to enjoy power. Seyi came to work.

He is a First Child to watch. He has been super exceptional — humble, energetic, respectful, resourceful, accessible, and everywhere at the same time. He listens more than he speaks. He gives more than he takes. He did not come to Ibadan to show power. He came to show love. And Ibadan loved him back.

By Friday evening, Ibadan was already in a carnival mood. The DJs were already playing. The okada riders were already wearing Tinubu. The city had already decided that Saturday would not be an ordinary day.

The son prepared the ground, and the father harvested the love in full.

The love for Alli

And then, there is the love for Sharafadeen Alli.

If you want to know a man's popularity, do not look at what his party prints for him. Look at what the people print for him themselves.

That love was visible everywhere in Ibadan on Saturday.

You could see it in all types of banners — done by the haves and the not-too-rich, by young and old, joyfully displaying his posters and banners. A market woman printing a poster from her own money. A young boy pasting Alli's picture on his Keke. An old man tying a banner in front of his house. A landlord painting his fence in APC colours.

This was not one man's billboard. This was a people's movement.

There were different kinds of signage everywhere — static billboards, mobile billboards, banners, posters, mobile LED fleet, photoluminescent displays, street branding, lamp post banners, and more. And as the Coordinating Director for Communications, I can authoritatively disclose that most of the signage was done for the President, for Senator Alli, and for other APC candidates by individuals — out of sheer love and belief in their candidacy.

Nobody was paid to love them. The people did it themselves.



President Tinubu



Alli



Seyi Tinubu

> "The people have watched President Tinubu. They have seen a President who took difficult decisions others avoided. They have seen a President rebuilding the economy, strengthening the states, and restoring Nigeria's dignity in the world. They have seen audacity."

That is why the allegation that we destroyed anybody's billboard is laughable. With this kind of love, with this kind of crowd, with this kind of voluntary support — why would we destroy anybody's billboard? We promised a decent and issue-based campaign, and that is exactly what we are doing.

It is Alli's time in Oyo State. The people have seen his character, his competence, his consistency, his humility, and his deep love for Oyo. They have seen a man who is serving in the Senate with distinction, who understands Ibadan and Ogbomoso, Oyo and Oke-Ogun, Ibarapa and every corner of the state.

Oyo people are tired of noise. They want work. They want a governor who will work with the President, not fight the President. They want a governor who will bring development, not drama. They have found him in Alli.

The Saturday Ibadan spoke

So, when the crowd filled Mapo Hall Ground and overflowed into Oritamerin-Foko-Agbeni; Bere- Kannike -Agbadagbudu- Adeoyo; Bere – Alekuso-iyana Ayeye-Agbeni; Bere- Agbede-Adodo- Oke- Are-OkeAremo; Ojaoba- Idi-Arere; Beyerunka- Aladorin, Odo'ye- Oje Roads, etc, it was not magic. It was Acceptance. It was Vigour. It was Love.

Digbí ni y wà. Oyo State is solidly behind President Bola Ahmed Tinubu and Senator Sharafadeen Abiodun Alli.

On Saturday, Oyo State did not just welcome a President. The Pacesetter State announced its position on the forthcoming general elections. Oyo State will massively vote for President Bola Ahmed Tinubu as President; Senator Sharafadeen Abiodun Alli as Governor; Senator Yunus Akintunde as Senator, Oyo Central Senatorial District; Remi Oseni as Senator, Oyo South Senatorial District; Mrs Hannah Ogunesan as Senator, Oyo North Senatorial District and all the other APC candidates in the January 16 and February 6, 2027 elections. APC *lo ni Oyo*.

Olaosebikan is the Coordinating Director, Communications of Senator Sharafadeen Alli Campaign Organisation (SSACO).

Published by The Guardian Group, Rutam House, Isolo, Lagos Tel: 01-4489600
Abuja Office: Plot 415 Olu Awotesu Street, Off Idris Ibrahim Crescent, Off Obafemi Awolowo Way, Jabi District, Abuja. Tel: 08065290744
Advert Hotlines: 01-4489619, 08023015115 08031930899, advert@guardian.ng; Circulation Hotline: 07038746449
All correspondence to Guardian Newspapers Limited, P.M.B. 1217, Oshodi, Lagos, Nigeria.
E-mail:Letters@guardian.ng; www.guardian.ng
Editor:
OLUWAFEMI F. ADEKOYA
ABC (ISSN NO 0189-5125)

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