The Guardian

Conscience, Nurtured by Truth

www.guardian.ng

Vol. 43, No. 18,267 ■ Wednesday, November 25, 2026

Guardian Nigeria GuardianNigeria 08136370421 Guardiannigeria N300



Tinubu trims 2026 spending by N3.15tr amid fiscal governance gaps

NEWS PAGE 6



IGP: Nigeria must design its own model of state police, not copy others

NEWS PAGE 3



MPC retains 23% interest rate as CBN commits to naira stability

BUSINESS PAGE 15

IGP, Ariwoola raise alarm as political violence threatens 2027 polls

PAGE 6

NEDC North-East Development Commission

FG Launches Electric Mobility Initiative, Unveils 50mw Mini-Solar Grid

...expands NEDC strategic development interventions across North-East

The NEDC current deployment plan comprises 10,000 electric tricycles, 300 electric taxis and 30 electric buses, supported by solar-powered battery-swapping hubs to ensure efficient and sustainable operations. The initiative is also creating green employment opportunities in driving, vehicle maintenance and battery-swap hub management.

Under its scale-up plan, the NEDC targets the deployment of 100,000 electric tricycles, 2,000 taxis and 1,000 buses across the North-East.

The Commission also plans to expand solar-powered battery-swapping infrastructure to 100 hubs per state while supporting local electric vehicle and renewable energy supply chains through skills development, technical training and vehicle assembly.

These interventions are designed to promote clean energy, affordable transportation, job creation and sustainable economic growth across the region.



L–R: Minister of State for Regional Development, Uba Maigari Ahmadu, Minister of Regional Development Engineer Abubakar Momoh, Managing Director/CEO of the North-East Development Commission (NEDC), Mohammed G. Alkali; the Chairman of the NEDC, Maj. Gen. Paul Tarfa (rtd); the Vice-President, Senator Kashim Shettima; Gombe State Governor Inuwa Yahaya; Borno State Governor Babagana Zulum; and the Deputy Governor of Bauchi State, Mohammed Auwal Jatau, during the commissioning of the 180-metre, nine-span Fori–Galtimari bridge, linking the Fori, Galtimari and Konduga communities by NEDC on Tuesday



30 new fleets of electric buses procured by the North East Development Commission (NEDC) to ease residents' transportation hardships in the North-East region



Fori/Galtimari bridge was destroyed by the 2024 Maiduguri floods, which was newly reconstructed by NEDC and commissioned by Vice President Kashim Shettima on Tuesday in Maiduguri



Some of the NEDC electric tricycles deployed as part of the Commission's electric mobility initiative across the North-East region



NEDC electric taxis deployed to improve transportation, enhance mobility, create economic opportunities and stimulate sustainable economic growth across the North-East region



30 new electric buses deployed by NEDC to enhance mass transit, ease transportation challenges and improve connectivity across the North-East region.



Some of the newly distributed ambulances to health institutions across the region.



The NEDC has provided MRI, CT scan and Interventional Radiology equipment across the six North-East states to strengthen healthcare delivery and improve access to advanced medical diagnosis and treatment.

The intervention also includes the construction and rehabilitation of MRI housing units with full solar power systems, alongside 200kVA and 100kVA generators to ensure reliable power supply

Panorama

www.guardian.ng
Guardian Nigeria GuardianNigeria 08136370421 Guardiannigeria

SPOTLIGHT

FG unveils N30 billion fund for youth, women

By **Tobi Awodipe**

THE Federal Government yesterday announced the approval of a N30 billion Youth and Women Empowerment Fund in partnership with the Bank of Industry(BoI) to finance micro, small and medium enterprises across the region.

Also unveiled was a new phase of reconstruction and economic recovery in the North-East, with the deployment of 10,330 electric vehicles and plans for a 50-megawatt solar power project.

Vice President Kashim Shettima who launched the initiatives yesterday in Maiduguri, Borno State, said the government is committed to rebuilding communities, restoring livelihoods and expanding economic opportunities in the region.

Speaking at the presidential launch and commissioning of multi-sectoral development projects executed by the North-East Development Commission (NEDC), he said years of insecurity and hardship had not diminished the region's determination to rebuild.

CBN defends reserves decline, says $55b buffer remains strong

By **Isaac Chibuife**

THE Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) has defended the recent decline in the country's external reserves, saying the drawdown reflects the use of accumulated foreign exchange buffers to manage market pressures rather than a weakening of the economy's external position.

CBN Governor, Olayemi Cardoso, who spoke at the media briefing on the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) meeting in Abuja yesterday, said Nigeria's gross external reserves, estimated at about $55 billion, remained strong enough to meet the country's foreign exchange obligations and provide liquidity to the market when necessary.

External reserves, which comprise foreign currencies and other foreign assets held by the CBN, serve as a buffer against external shocks, support international payments and help maintain stability in the foreign exchange market. However, increased demand for foreign currency and market volatility can put pressure on reserves, particularly when the central bank intervenes to address liquidity shortages.

Cardoso said Nigeria had significantly improved its external buffers over the past year, making a modest reduction in reserves less concerning.

He identified the country's positive trade balance, improving export performance, rising diaspora remittances and increased foreign exchange inflows through formal channels as factors strengthening its external position.

He also said improved transparency in the foreign exchange market and stronger investor confidence had enhanced the economy's capacity to withstand temporary external pressures.



Head, Communication and Language Arts Department, University of Ibadan, Prof. Babatunde Ojebuyi (right); Vice President (West), Nigerian Guild of Editors, Dr Kabir Alabi Garba; Prof. Beatrice Lanihun and Dr Ridwan Kolawole during the presentation of copies of the Guild's book, *Truth, Trust, and the Future of Journalism* in Nigeria to the department in Ibadan, yesterday.

Lagos announces return of *Ounje Eko* food discount market

By **Gbenga Akinfenwa**

AS part of moves to develop a food system that is commercially viable and capable of meeting the needs of Lagos residents, the state government has announced the commencement of the *Ounje Eko* Food Discount Market Programme 2026, to help households stretch their food budgets a little further during the festive season.

As designed, the initiative, scheduled to commence on Sunday, November 29, 2026, is planned to allow purchase of selected essential food commodities at a 20 per cent discount on approved prevailing market prices.

The Commissioner for Agriculture and Food Systems, Ms Abisola Olusanya, who announced this during a press conference on Tuesday, said in determining the discount for this edition, the state had to balance the extent of the financial relief it can provide to individual households with the desire to reach as many Lagosians as possible within the resources available to the state.

She said: "Many of you are already familiar with Ounje Eko and the various forms the programme has taken since its introduction. Through the Food Discount Markets, we have supported consumers directly, while the Farmers' Subsidy Programme has allowed us to intervene on the production side, providing subsidised feed, agricultural inputs and mechanisation services to farmers.

Nigeria, Poland deepen ties as Oyedele highlights $1b Lagos ports upgrade

NIGERIA and Poland have explored opportunities to deepen economic cooperation, particularly in maritime infrastructure, port modernisation, fisheries and the marine and blue economy, with the Federal Government highlighting a planned $1 billion modernisation of Lagos ports as a major investment opportunity.

The Minister of Finance and Coordinating Minister of the Economy, Taiwo Oyedele, made this known while addressing the Second Polish-Nigerian Economic Forum in Lagos yesterday.

Oyedele said stronger economic relations between both countries could translate into increased investments, job creation and business opportunities.

He explained that the proposed modernisation of Lagos ports would improve infrastructure, reduce trade costs for importers and exporters, and strengthen Nigeria's position as a regional trade hub.

... DAY 4595

OUR GIRLS STILL MISSING

Tope Templer Olaiya,
News Editor
@TopeTempler



RANDOM FACTS

- The quieter you become, the more you can hear.
- In Africa, it snows in South Africa, Lesotho, Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Egypt and Libya.
- A cockroach will live nine days without its head before it starves to death.
- If you place a raw egg in water and it floats, don't eat it. It's bad and should be thrown away. A fresh egg will sink to the bottom.

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

- A consumer must not be given a condition to fulfil first before entering into any transaction with the undertaking or a third party for the supply of goods and services.

TODAY'S QUOTE

"Education truly can change a person's story, it gave me everything. Whatever happens, get an education.

It is more important to secure human lives than to secure an economy.

ATIKU ABUBAKAR

My dynamite will sooner lead to peace than a thousand world conventions. As soon as men find that in one instant, whole armies can be utterly destroyed, they surely will abide by golden peace.

ALFRED NOBEL"

TODAY IN HISTORY

- Intl Day for Elimination of Violence against Women

• 2021 - Nigeria
Minister of Information, Lai Mohammed accused international media outfit, CNN of spreading fake news with its reports on Lekki tollgate shooting, accusing it of relying on fake social media sources and docto-red videos to compile both its first and second reports on the shooting incident during #EndSARS protest.

• 2020 - Argentina
Diego Maradona, Argentine footballer and manager died aged 60. He was widely regarded as one of the greatest players in history. He was one of two joint winners of FIFA Player of the 20th Century.

• 2016 - Cuba
Fidel Castro, Communist leader of Cuba, and revolutionary died aged 90.

• 2009 - S/Arabia
Jeddah floods:Rains swamped city of Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, during Hajj pilgrimage. 3,000 cars were swept away and 122 people perished in the torrents with 350 missing.

• 2005 - UK
George Best (59), one of the most dazzling players in soccer history who also reveled in a hard-drinking, playboy lifestyle, died in UK.

• 1999 - UN
UN established International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women to commemorate murder of three Mirabal sisters for resistance against Rafael Trujillo dictatorship in Dominican Republic

• 1999 - Nigeria
30 people died at Ketu-Mile 12 market when Yoruba and Hausa traders clashed.

• 1981 - Vatican
Pope John Paul II appointed Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger (future Pope Benedict XVI) Prefect of the Congregation for Doctrine of the Faith.

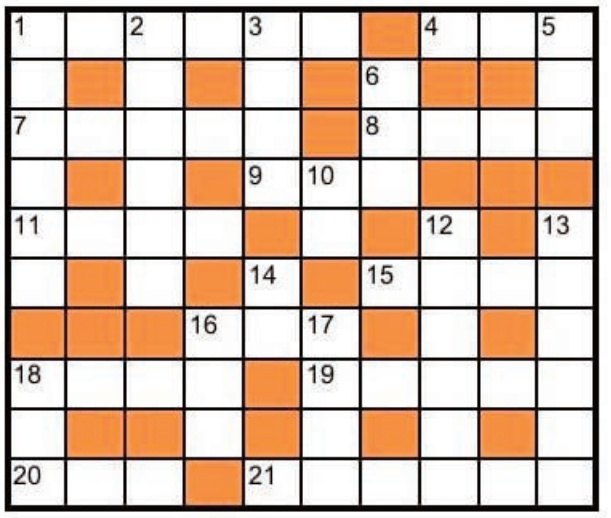
• 1975 - S'America
The dictators of Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Paraguay and Uruguay formed Operation Condor, which aimed to track down and kill anyone who expresses left-wing opinions.

• 1963 - USA
Assassinated Pres. John F. Kennedy was buried at Arlington National Cemetery

• 1946 - Nigeria
Atiku Abubakar was born in Jada, Adamawa State. One of the founding members of Peoples Democratic Party elected first Vice President of the Fourth Republic, serving from 1999 till 2007. He unsuccessfully ran for office of President in 2007, 2019 and 2023.

• 1867 - Sweden
Alfred Nobel, creator of the Nobel Prize, patented the dynamite.

CROSS WORD PUZZLE



• ACROSS

1. Muslim ruler, (6).
4. Keep criticizing somebody, (3).
7. What people are called, (5).
8. Heated compartment, (4).
9. Be financially in debt, (3).
11. Indecent, (4).
15. Fit and strong, (4).
16. Fossil fuel, (3).
18. Kind of pen, (4).
19. Excuse, (5).
20. Move head in agreement, (3).
21. Persuade to have sex, (6).

• DOWN

1. Various, (6).
2. The Emir of Kano, ___ Sanusi (6).
3. In addition, (4).
5. Colourless alcoholic drink, (3).
6. Female kangaroo, (3).
10. Warrant officer, abbr., (2).
12. Jigawa state ex-Governor, (6).
13. Ridicule, (6).
14. Gallium symbol, (2).
16. Obtained, (3).
17. Japanese rice drink, (4).
18. Large storage container, (3).

© Olulana Olukayode

Check page 31 for solution to the puzzle

News

www.guardian.ng
Guardian Nigeria GuardianNigeria 08136370421 Guardiannigeria

IGP: Nigeria must design its own model of state police, not copy others

From **Isa Abdulsalami Ahovi** (Jos) and **Johnson Eyiangho** (Abuja)

- Media, military urged to balance press freedom with operational security
- Plateau proposes recruitment of 7,000 personnel for state police

INSPECTOR-GENERAL of Police (IGP), Olatunji Disu, has said Nigeria cannot directly adopt the state policing models of countries such as the United States (U.S.), India and Pakistan, insisting that the country must develop a system that reflects its peculiar security and administrative realities.

Meanwhile, the Minister of Information and National Orientation, Mohammed Idris, called for stronger collaboration between the media and security agencies to address the country's security challenges and safeguard national security.

In Plateau State, the government has proposed the recruitment of between 5,000 and 7,000 personnel for the proposed Plateau State Police Service as part of efforts to strengthen security and tackle rising insecurity across the state.

Disu made the remarks yesterday at the ongoing Media and Development Conference 2026 in Abuja, where he addressed the debate surrounding the proposed establishment of state police in Nigeria.

The police chief described state policing as a futuristic development that requires careful consideration by the Nigeria Police Force (NPF), the National Assembly and other stakeholders to ensure it strengthens security across the country.

He said the police had carried out comparative assessments of countries operating decentralised policing systems but discovered that their circumstances differed from Nigeria's.

"On the issue of state police, just like the issue of cybercrime, actually, it is a new thing. It's futuristic. It's something that the police, the National Assembly, and even the nation in general are still working on to get involved in the kind of state police that will improve our nation," Disu said.

According to him, the police examined the state policing arrangements in India, Pakistan and the U.S. but concluded that Nigeria needed a framework suited to its own peculiarities.

THE minister, while declaring open the Defence Headquarters Strategic Communication Workshop 2026 in Abuja yesterday, emphasised the importance of responsible journalism, effective communication and the protection of sensitive military information.

The workshop was themed 'Enhancing Strategic Collaboration Between Spokespersons of Security Agencies and Media Stakeholders for Accurate and Responsible Reportage Towards Improved National Security'.

Represented by the Director-General of Voice of Nigeria, Jibrin Baba-Ndace, the minister said national security was determined not only by operational capacity but also by the quality, accuracy and effectiveness of information communicated to the public.

He noted that although the military and the media had different professional responsibilities, their roles were not incompatible, stressing the need for mutual respect, professionalism and regular communication.

According to him, while the military is responsible for protecting the country and conducting security operations, the media has a duty to inform the public, express diverse perspectives and report matters of public interest.

He urged security agencies to provide timely and credible information, while journalists should ensure accurate reporting, provide context and avoid publishing information capable of endangering lives or compromising ongoing military operations.

THE proposal from Plateau was disclosed yesterday by the Chairman of the 14-member Plateau State Advisory Committee on State Police, Deputy Inspector-General of Police, Habila Joshak (rtd) during the presentation of the committee's interim report to the state government in Jos.

Read the remaining story on www.guardian.ng

Tinubu deserves second term, Osoba, Akpabio, govs declare

- President took risk, returned to Nigeria after Abacha's death – Omatseye
- 'Nigeria owes pro-democracy activists debt of gratitude'

From **Terhemba Daka**, Abuja

FORMER governor of Ogun State, Olusegun Osoba; President of the Senate, Godswill Akpabio and governors under the All Progressives Congress (APC) have endorsed President Bola Tinubu's second-term ambition, citing his pivotal role in the formation of the party, restoration of democracy and commitment to economic reforms.

The endorsements came yesterday at the presentation of *From AD to APC*, a book authored by veteran journalist Sam Omatseye, documenting Tinubu's political journey and the evolution of the progressive movement.

Speaking at the Banquet Hall of the Presidential Villa, Abuja, the political leaders recalled Tinubu's efforts to unite opposition parties, facilitate the emergence of former President Muhammadu Buhari as the APC's presidential candidate in 2015 and sustain the party through subsequent political challenges.

While Osoba declared that Tinubu deserved another four years, Kaduna State Governor Uba Sani described him as the father of modern-day Nigerian democracy, crediting him with supporting pro-democracy activists during military rule.

Imo State Governor Hope Uzodimma, on his part, reaffirmed the loyalty of APC governors to the President, pledging to translate their support into votes at the January 16, 2027 presidential election.

Akpabio praised Tinubu's political sagacity and called for the nationwide re-launch of the book to enable more Nigerians to understand the political struggles and negotiations that culminated in the emergence of the APC from the defunct Alliance for Democracy (AD).



Nasarawa State Governor, Abdullahi Sule (left); Senate President, Godswill Akpabio; Senate Leader, Opeyemi Bamidele; former governor of Ogun State, Olusegun Osoba; Imo State Governor, Hope Uzodimma; Kaduna State Governor, Uba Sani; Author of the book, Sam Omatseye; Ogun State Governor, Dapo Abiodun and Ekiti State Governor, Biodun Oyebanji, during the presentation of the book, *'From AD to APC: The Evolution of Nigeria Political Parties and the Exploits of One Man (1998-2015)'* in Abuja, yesterday.

Delta ANA flays political violence, urges security agencies to fish out culprits

From **John Akubo, Andrew Oota** (Abuja) and **Monday Osayande** (Asaba)

- NDC snubs IGP's security meeting, tags police pro-APC
- Disu orders probe as Omo-Agege counts attempts on life

THE Association of Nigerian Authors (ANA), Delta State Chapter, has strongly condemned the political violence that resulted in the death of four persons and left many others seriously injured in Uduere, Ughelli North Local Council.

This is just as the Nigeria Democratic Congress (NDC) launched a scathing attack on the Nigeria Police Force (NPF), boycotting the security meeting called by the Inspector General of Police (IGP) while accusing officers of standing by while NDC members were "slaughtered" across the country.

However, the IGP, Olatunji Disu, ordered an impartial investigation and prosecution of those involved in a series of attacks, as well as to ascertain the level of professionalism of officers deployed before the incidents occurred.

Former Deputy Senate President, Ovie Omo-Agege, has described the deadly attack on his campaign event in Delta as the fifth attempt on his life, accusing police officers deployed to the venue of failing to protect him and his supporters.

The authors described the incident as not only "anachronistic" but "barbaric", occurring in this 21st century where democracy ought to be played by the rules and every political party allowed to campaign and be protected by law enforcement agencies.

In a statement signed by its Chairman, Dr Peter Omoko, the association noted that the rising trend of political violence in Delta in recent times should be a thing of concern to all well-meaning Deltans, especially the political class.

Omoko added that in a democracy, power resides with the people through the ballot and not guns, thus challenging all those seeking political offices to woo the people through people-oriented programmes and policies, rather than resorting to violence.

He used the statement to call on youths in the state to resist being used by blood-thirsty politicians as instruments of political violence.

In a statement yesterday, NDC's National Publicity Secretary, Osa Director, said the NDC no longer feels "safe and protected by a police force that watches helplessly." He accused hired thugs of the ruling APC of carrying out the attacks.

The police had invited Omo-Agege, the Chairman of Ughelli North Local Council, Jaro Egbo, and five other persons for questioning over the deadly political violence that rocked Uduere community in Ughelli.

"We will not lend legitimacy to a process that has failed to protect us," the party declared.

The IGP particularly condemned the violent political campaign event in Ughelli.

Omo-Agege reportedly escaped assassination in the rising violence in Delta on Monday.

The IGP, in a statement issued by the Force Public Relations Officer (FPRO), Ani Iniedu, asserted that those involved in the act would be fished out and made to face the full weight of the law.

Read the remaining story on www.guardian.ng

Why I criticise Atiku but spare Obi, others, by Shettima

Atiku says Nigerians deserve good life as supporters chant 'Tinubu must go' at Kogi rally

From **Yusufu Idegu**, Lokoja

VICE President Kashim Shettima, yesterday, justified his persistent criticism of former Vice President Atiku Abubakar, while refraining from insulting other opposition figures such as Oyo State Governor Seyi Makinde, Peter Obi and his running mate, Rabiu Kwankwaso.

However, when Atiku's campaign train stormed Lokoja, Kogi State, yesterday, he maintained his advocacy for an affordable life for all Nigerians.

Shettima said he only responds when President Bola Tinubu is attacked, maintaining that his relationship with Atiku, whom he described as an elder statesman, was different because they were both Fulani, and he had the right to criticise him.

Speaking in Maiduguri, Borno State, at the presidential launch and inauguration of the North-East Development Commission's multi-sectoral development interventions, the Vice-President said, "He is an elder statesman whom we hold in very high esteem. But as a Fulani man, I have the right to throw stones at him, and he has to endure whatever stones I throw at him.

"So, some idiots without any sense of history will come out and say, 'Oh, he was a Vice President.' Keep your Fulani banter."

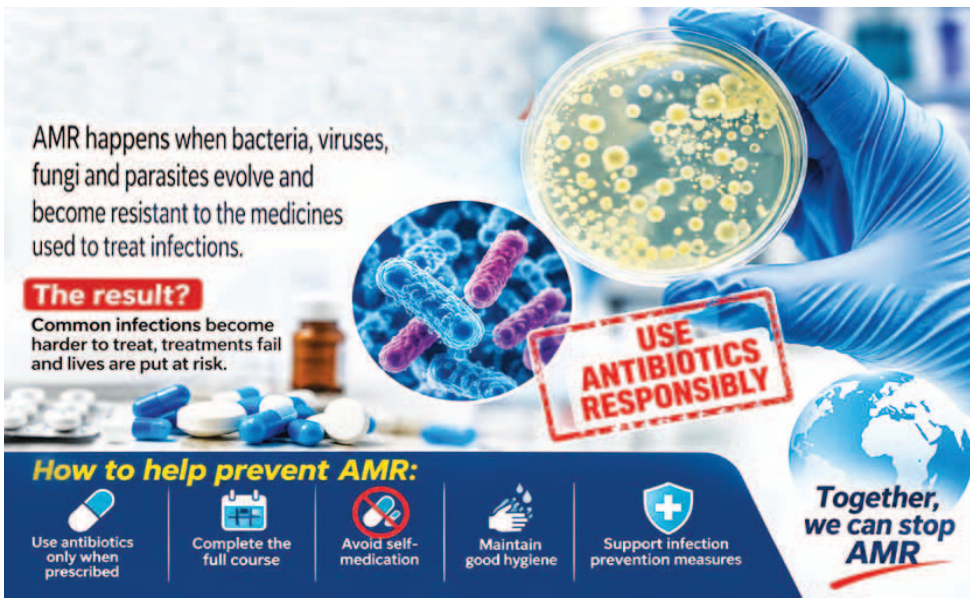
Read the remaining story on www.guardian.ng

TheGuardian
For Advert Enquiry, Call:
GUARDIAN COMMERCIAL/PRINT
0803 348 9497
0802 301 5115
0803 193 0899
GUARDIAN DIGITAL
0808 597 3490
ABUJA OFFICE
0802 319 5673
GUARDIAN LIFE
0803 056 7059

Antibiotics:

How poor regulation, self-medication worsen antimicrobial resistance

With approximately one in six laboratory-confirmed bacterial infections globally already resistant to antibiotics, Nigeria's widespread culture of easy and largely unregulated access to medicines risks worsening a crisis that is making once-treatable infections increasingly difficult to cure, **NKECHI ONYEDIKA-UGOEZE** *and* **IJEOMA NWANOSIKE** *report.*



FOR many Nigerians, getting an antibiotic can be easier than seeing a doctor. A cough, fever, stomach upset or sore throat can send a patient not to a hospital or laboratory, but to the nearest drug shop, where a description of symptoms may be enough to secure a strip of tablets.

In many communities, the transaction is straightforward. The buyer names the ailment, the seller recommends a drug, the tablets are counted out, and money changes hands, often without a medical consultation, laboratory test or prescription.

Antibiotics are among the greatest breakthroughs in medical history, revolutionising the way patients with bacterial infections are treated and contributing to reduced mortality and morbidity from bacterial diseases.

For millions of people with infections once considered life-threatening, a simple course of antibiotics could turn a serious bacterial infection into a manageable health problem.

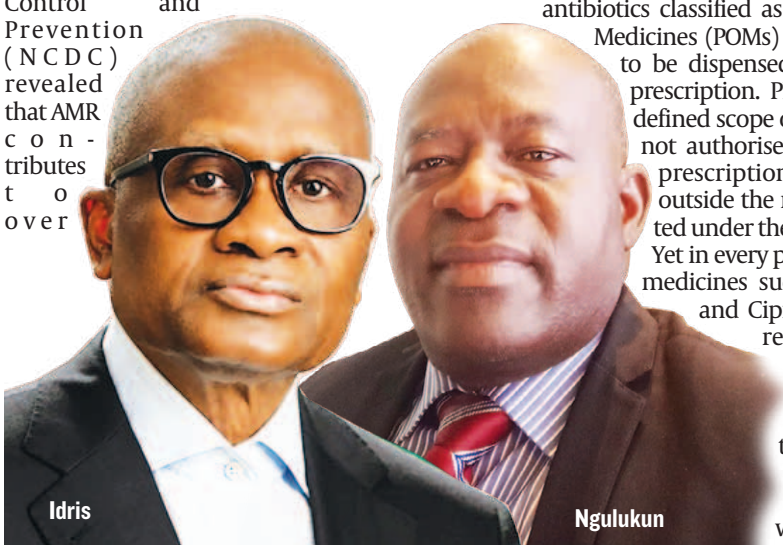
Unfortunately, bacteria are evolving, and some of the drugs used to treat them over the decades are becoming less effective due to the abuse and misuse of antibiotics, which are often unnecessarily prescribed for viral infections, against which they have no effect.

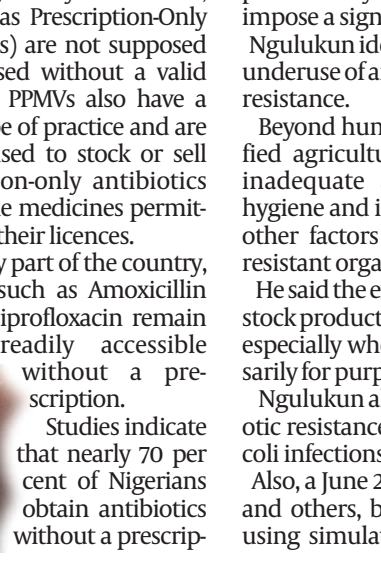
The phenomenon, known as antimicrobial resistance (AMR), is making infections harder and more expensive to treat, prolonging hospital stays and increasing the risk of severe illness, disability and death.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) reported that approximately one in six laboratory-confirmed bacterial infections worldwide were resistant to antibiotics in 2023. The agency also estimated that bacterial AMR was associated with more than 4.7 million deaths globally in 2021.

According to World Bank estimates, antimicrobial resistance could lead to a loss of around 3.8 per cent of global gross domestic product by 2050

A 2022 study by the Nigeria Centre for Disease Control and Prevention (NCDC) revealed that AMR contributes to over 250,000 excess hospital days annually, inflating health-care expenditure by billions of naira.


Idris


Ngulukun

What appears to be a convenient response to illness is contributing to a much larger public health problem.

In a policy brief titled, 'Safeguarding Nigeria's health security - addressing antimicrobial resistance using the One Health approach', the World Health Organisation (WHO) warned that antimicrobial resistance is a silent but escalating threat to public health in Nigeria, adding that since 1990, over 60,000 lives have been lost yearly, with children under five years bearing the greatest burden.

It noted that in 2021 alone, bacterial AMR was associated with more than 227,000 deaths nationwide and cautioned that drug-resistant infections, particularly from *Staphylococcus Aureus, Acinetobacter Baumannii and Streptococcus Pneumoniae* are becoming harder to treat.

The UN agency warned that without urgent and sustained action, AMR threatens to reverse decades of medical progress in Nigeria.

Experts said that the danger goes beyond taking the wrong drug for an individual illness. Repeated exposure to antibiotics when they are unnecessary, incorrectly selected or improperly taken creates conditions in which resistant organisms can emerge and spread, making infections increasingly difficult to treat.

> **"A 2022 study by the Nigeria Centre for Disease Control and Prevention (NCDC) revealed that AMR contributes to over 250,000 excess hospital days annually, inflating health-care expenditure by billions of naira."**

Under Nigeria's regulatory framework, antibiotics classified as Prescription-Only Medicines (POMs) are not supposed to be dispensed without a valid prescription. PPMVs also have a defined scope of practice and are not authorised to stock or sell prescription-only antibiotics outside the medicines permitted under their licences.

Yet in every part of the country, medicines such as Amoxicillin and Ciprofloxacin remain readily accessible without a prescription.

Studies indicate that nearly 70 per cent of Nigerians obtain antibiotics without a prescription, a practice that significantly contributes to antimicrobial resistance.

A study by Akpan et al. (2021) highlights high rates of inappropriate antibiotic recommendations for self-limiting viral and mild conditions by community pharmacists in Akwa Ibom State.

According to the study, 68 per cent of pharmacists recommended an antibiotic, even though the common cold is viral and does not require antibiotics; the top drug was azithromycin, recommended by 43 per cent of pharmacists.

For Acute Diarrhoea, 72 per cent recommended at least one antibiotic, with Metronidazole the most frequent choice at 82 per cent; the findings point to an urgent need for better antimicrobial stewardship and training to reduce the risk of resistance.

A Director at the National Veterinary Research Institute (NVRI), Vom, Plateau State, Dr Sati Ngulukun, told *The Guardian* that antimicrobial resistance is a serious global health threat affecting humans, animals and the environment, warning that the continued misuse and overuse of antibiotics could render essential medicines ineffective.

Ngulukun warned that Nigeria risks returning to an era when common infections could become deadly if urgent measures are not taken to curb antimicrobial resistance.

He emphasised that the consequences of AMR extend beyond deaths from untreatable infections, noting that it could also reduce productivity in humans and animals and impose a significant burden on societies.

Ngulukun identified the misuse, overuse, and underuse of antimicrobials as major drivers of resistance.

Beyond human medicine, Ngulukun identified agricultural practices, poor sanitation, inadequate access to clean water, poor hygiene and improper waste management as other factors contributing to the spread of resistant organisms.

He said the extensive use of antibiotics in livestock production was particularly concerning, especially where the drugs are used unnecessarily for purposes such as growth promotion.

Ngulukun also raised concerns about antibiotic resistance in the livestock sector, citing E. coli infections in poultry as an example.

Also, a June 2026 publication by Daniel Tizhe and others, based on a cross-sectional study using simulated patients in 315 PPMV shops across 10 local councils in Adamawa State, found widespread dispensing of antibiotics without prescriptions.


Pate

Of the 315 outlets visited, 78.4 per cent were PPMV-operated, while 45.4 per cent of vendors had more than 10 years of practice experience. Antibiotics were dispensed without prescription in 85.1 per cent of visits. Among these, 54.9 per cent were WHO "Watch" antibiotics, including Azithromycin, Ciprofloxacin, Vdefixime and Ceftriaxone, while 8.2 per cent were "reserve" antibiotics, including oral Colistin and Levofloxacin.

Experts said that a strategic approach, including mandatory health insurance schemes, prescription and dispensing policies, and enforcement of antimicrobial stewardship regulations by the Nigerian government, is necessary to improve ethical practice and address the irrational dispensing and use of antibiotics in Nigeria.

Ngulukun criticised the widespread availability of antibiotics without prescriptions in Nigeria, describing it as a major contributor to AMR.

He argued that antibiotics are prescription medicines and should ordinarily be obtained after consultation with qualified health professionals, but regretted that people can still walk into pharmacies and medicine shops to purchase antibiotics without a prescription.

Ngulukun further identified open drug markets as another area requiring urgent attention, while also expressing concern over fake or substandard medicines, noting that such products may contain less active pharmaceutical ingredient than indicated on their packaging.

Ngulukun called for stronger enforcement of existing laws regulating the sale and use of antimicrobials and urged authorities to ensure that prescription-only antibiotics are not freely sold without appropriate medical or veterinary prescriptions.

The Director-General of the National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control (NAFDAC), Prof. Mojisola Adeyeye, acknowledged that Nigeria does not yet have a strong culture of prescription medicine use, noting that medicines classified as prescription-only can still be found and sold in many places.

She said the problem also involved PPMVs, which sometimes sell medicines they are not authorised to dispense.

According to her, patent medicine dealers are expected to sell simple medicines that are unlikely to cause serious side effects rather than prescription-only medicines.

Adeyeye said NAFDAC was addressing antimicrobial resistance through a One Health approach, stressing that AMR was not limited to medicines used directly by humans. The approach, she explained, also covers veterinary medicines and agricultural chemicals.

According to her, NAFDAC's veterinary medicine and applied products directorate trains farmers on the appropriate use of pesticides and advises on the need for a washout period after animals are given medicines before they are slaughtered.

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

FG plans $500m yearly research fund, targets innovation, jobs

From **Owede Agbajileke**, Abuja

- Akume urges TETFund, varsities to commercialise research findings
- TETFund to fund one product from each polytechnic from 2027, says NBTE

FEDERAL Government plans to establish a National Research and Innovation Development Fund with a yearly funding commitment of nearly $500 million to strengthen research, drive innovation, create jobs and commercialise home-grown technologies.

The Minister of Education, Dr Tunji Alausa, disclosed this yesterday at the second Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) National Research Fair and Exhibition 2026, held at the Abuja Trade and Convention Centre, Airport Road, Abuja.

According to Alausa, the proposed fund, expected to secure the necessary legislative approval before the end of November, will provide sustainable financing for research that addresses national challenges, generates economic value, and creates employment opportunities.

He said the initiative was part of the administration's determination to transform Nigeria from a consumption-driven economy into a production-based economy anchored on research, technology and innovation.

The minister explained that the proposed fund would provide researchers with access to substantial competitive grants to equip laboratories, finance research activities and support the personnel needed to translate ideas into practical solutions.

He said the funding arrangement, expected to commence in 2027 subject to necessary approvals, would be modelled on internationally recognised research financing systems.

Alausa stressed that the government would prioritise research with measurable economic and social impact rather than academic publications that failed to translate into practical solutions.

He challenged university administrators, professors, lecturers, and researchers to rethink their approach to academic research, insisting that research outcomes must deliver tangible benefits to the country.

The minister also called for greater private-sector investment in research and innovation, disclosing that the government was exploring provisions under the tax reform framework to encourage businesses to invest in research, development and innovation through tax incentives.

He said the government was working with relevant academic and research bodies to develop guidelines that would enable businesses to access the incentives.

Alausa explained that greater private-sector participation would help bridge the research funding gap, strengthen collaboration between universities and industry, and accelerate the commercialisation of research findings.

In a related development, the Executive Secretary, National Board for Technical Education (NBTE), Prof. Idris Bugaje, has announced that TETFund would begin funding the development of one product from each polytechnic in 2027 under a new initiative designed to commercialise innovations from technical institutions.

NHRC, UN warn media against electoral misinformation

- Monarch urges journalists to sustain watchdog role

From **Ameh Ochojila** (Abuja) and **Adewale Momoh** (Akure)

NATIONAL Human Rights Commission (NHRC) and the United Nations Information Centre (UNIC) have warned journalists against spreading misinformation, hate speech and politically motivated narratives ahead of the 2027 General Elections.

This is as the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) and a traditional ruler warn that Nigeria's democratic credibility hangs on the media's ability to resist political propaganda and subject electoral institutions to scrutiny ahead of the 2027 general elections.

The Executive Secretary of the NHRC, Tony Ojukwu, SAN, gave the warning at the Commission's 2026 Annual Media Parley in Abuja, where stakeholders examined the role of ethical journalism in promoting peaceful elections.

Court freezes N135.5b in Paris Club refunds linked to Governors' Forum

From **Ameh Ochojila**, Abuja

FEDERAL Capital Territory (FCT) High Court, Abuja, has ordered an interim freeze on N135.5 billion paid to the Nigerian Governors' Forum (NGF) as a stakeholder in the Paris Club refunds dispute.

Justice Charles Agbaza granted the interim injunction following an *ex parte* application brought by the judgment creditor, Dr Ted Iseghohi-Edwards.

The order restrained the Incorporated Trustees of the NGF from withdrawing, transferring, dissipating or otherwise dealing with the funds.

The order also restrained 29 commercial banks from releasing, transferring, converting or otherwise dealing with funds belonging to the NGF in their custody.

The judge further directed the banks to disclose, within 48 hours of the service of the court order on them, whether the NGF maintained accounts containing the said funds.

The banks are required to identify such accounts, their currencies, available balances and amounts preserved under the court's order.



Director General and Campaign Manager, African Democratic Congress (ADC) Presidential Campaign Council, Austin Okwudiri Akobundu (left); ADC Presidential Candidate, Atiku Abubakar; former Senate President/ADC Chairman, David Mark; Vice Presidential Candidate, Rotimi Amaechi; and others during the Presidential Campaign of ADC in Kogi State, yesterday.

CAPPA urges Nigeria, others against climate financing loans

By **Bertram Nwannekanma**

- Failure of COP31 to reach agreement threatens global health, says WHO

CORPORATE Accountability and Public Participation Africa (CAPPA) has urged Nigeria and other African countries to reject climate financing arrangements that deepen their debt burdens and to demand accountability from wealthy nations for their climate change obligations.

The organisation called on African governments to use the period leading to the 32nd United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP32) in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, next year, to push for climate justice, accessible funding and corporate accountability.

CAPPA made the call yesterday in a statement signed by its Media and Communications Officer, Robert Egbe, following what it described as disappointing outcomes from COP31 in Antalya, Türkiye, which ended on Sunday.

It said the conference exposed the widening gap between wealthy industrialised nations and climate-vulnerable countries, particularly in Africa and the Global South, with developed nations continuing to evade their historical responsibilities for the climate crisis.

According to the organisation, the summit's emphasis on investment announcements, energy transition partnerships, and implementation plans failed to address the financial burden facing developing countries in funding climate adaptation, the energy transition, and recovery from climate-related disasters.

It noted that Africa accounts for less than four per cent of global greenhouse gas emissions but suffers disproportionately from climate change, losing an estimated two to five per cent of its Gross Domestic Product annually to climate-related extremes.

CAPPA's Associate Director and Climate and Environment Programme Manager, Olamide Martins Ogunlade, said commercial loans should not be presented as climate solidarity.

Ogunlade added that African governments should not be forced to borrow to address a climate emergency largely driven by the industrialisation and fossil fuel dependence of wealthy nations.

Citing figures reportedly presented by United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres at COP31, CAPPA said nine major oil companies earned about $95 billion in a single quarter, while the Fund for Responding to Loss and Damage had received only about $600 million.

CAPPA also called on African leaders to defend the 1.5°C global temperature limit and resist attempts to normalise temperature overshoot, warning that additional warming would increase risks to communities, ecosystems, food security and economies across the continent.

NAFDAC warns states against unauthorised enforcement on regulated products

By **Ijeoma Nwanosike**

- 'Failed authentication scans do not confirm products as counterfeit'

NATIONAL Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control (NAFDAC) has cautioned state governments against carrying out unauthorised enforcement actions on regulated products, warning that the seizure of goods, closure of business premises, imposition of fines and declaration of products as counterfeit fall outside their regulatory authority.

The agency's warning follows reports that the Edo State Consumer Protection Committee (ESCPC) had seized regulated products, sealed business premises, imposed fines and publicly declared some products fake, counterfeit or adulterated, allegedly using NAFDAC's product authentication platforms and claiming to act on the agency's behalf.

In a statement issued yesterday and signed by the agency's Director General, Prof. Mojisola Adeyeye, NAFDAC said that although it welcomed collaboration with state governments and other stakeholders in consumer protection, such partnerships must respect established regulatory boundaries.

According to her, the regulation of food, drugs and related products falls under the Exclusive Legislative List and is therefore a federal responsibility.

The agency also clarified that access to its product authentication platforms, including the NAFDAC Automated Product Administration and Monitoring System (NAPAMS), QR code scanner and SMS verification service, does not confer the authority to declare products counterfeit, adulterated, safe or unsafe.

The DG explained that a failed scan, missing registration details or irregular packaging should be reported to the agency for investigation, but that none of these findings alone establishes that a product is substandard.

According to her, NAFDAC is responsible for assessing such reports and determining whether further investigation or laboratory analysis is necessary, and she urges the public to await its findings before making pronouncements about the safety or authenticity of regulated products.

The agency expressed particular concern over reports that the ESCPC shut down the operations of Chepfets Mega Investment Nigeria Limited, manufacturer of Arden Table Water, imposed a fine on the company and made an arrest without first seeking clarification from NAFDAC.

SEC okays Dangote Refinery share allocation

By **Helen Oji**

DANGOTE Refinery has moved a step closer to listing on the Nigerian Exchange (NGX) following the approval of its share allocation plan by the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC), after its initial public offering (IPO) attracted applications for almost three times the number of shares initially offered.

The approval is expected to pave the way for the distribution of shares to successful applicants and advance the refinery's plan to become a publicly listed company on the Nigerian capital market.

According to a *Reuters* report published on Monday, November 23, 2026, citing three people familiar with the matter, the SEC approved the refinery's share allocation plan following the closure of the offer last month.

The regulatory decision comes amid strong investor demand for the shares and weeks of uncertainty over how the company would distribute the available shares among applicants.

'Nigeria can save millions from China's zero-tariff policy'

By **Ngozi Egenuka**

NIGERIAN businesses stand to save millions of dollars in export tariffs under China's zero-tariff policy, the new Consul General of China in Lagos has said, citing a 747-tonne shipment of Nigerian products that saved its exporting company more than N60 million in tariffs.

The Consul General of China in Lagos, Mr Zhou Bin, speaking yesterday at the Nigeria-China Trade and Investment Forum, themed, From Zero Tariff to Full Value: Turning China's Open Market into Nigerian Exports, Investment and Jobs, emphasised that the implementation of a zero-tariff policy for 53 African countries will boost trade, create jobs and improve livelihoods across the continent.

He said China officially implemented the policy on May 1, 2026, as part of efforts to deepen China-Africa cooperation and share opportunities in its large consumer market with African countries, particularly at a time of rising unilateralism and protectionism.

IGP, Ariwoola raise alarm as political violence threatens 2027 polls

- Ex-CJN warns of possible repeat of 2011 post-election killings
- Police vow to prosecute politicians sponsoring attacks, thuggery, intimidation
- INEC, Police, ADC, SDP sign peace accord as APC, NDC stay away
- EU earmarks N152.9m for women facing election-related threats
- Jonathan, CJN, Amupitan to headline conference on election adjudication
- NAJUC warns of rising electoral disputes, seeks greater judicial accountability

From **Sodiq Omolaoye, Ameh Ochojila** and **Andrew Oota**, Abuja

AHEAD of the 2027 general elections, former Chief Justice of Nigeria (CJN), Justice Olukayode Ariwoola, and Inspector-General of Police (IGP), Olatunji Disu, have raised the alarm over escalating political violence, warning that attacks on campaign activities, intimidation of opponents and inflammatory rhetoric could undermine the democratic process.

While Ariwoola cautioned against a repeat of the deadly violence that followed the 2011 general elections, Disu vowed to prosecute politicians financing or sponsoring violence, irrespective of their political influence or status.

The concerns come amid reports of attacks on political convoys, campaign rallies and gatherings in several states, with the National Peace Committee reportedly documenting 109 breaches of the National Peace Accord across 26 states and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) between August and October 2026.

Addressing journalists on behalf of the Savannah Centre's Council of the Wise yesterday, Ariwoola, who chairs the council, expressed concern over the increasing incidents of politically motivated violence, intimidation, killings and destruction of property.

He said political violence and thuggery accounted for 33 of the 109 breaches recorded by the National Peace Committee.

Similarly, he cited figures from the Centre for Democracy and Development (CDD-West Africa) and the Nigerian Civil Society Situation Room, which reportedly documented 70 election-related incidents and 27 deaths as of October 27, 2026.

According to him, reported attacks and disturbances have affected political activities in Kano, Katsina, Lagos, Edo, Delta, Enugu, Cross River, Sokoto, Bayelsa and Rivers states, as well as the FCT.

He said the incidents had left several people injured, claimed lives and resulted in the destruction of vehicles and other property.

The former CJN also expressed concern over inflammatory statements attributed to some political leaders, including threats to use firearms against opponents, warning that such rhetoric was heightening tension and instilling fear among voters.

He said: "It will be an unfortunate national shame if Nigerians collectively allow a repeat of what happened after the 2011 elections, where according to Human Rights Watch, over 800 people were killed in the election-related violence."

Ariwoola added: "The 2027 elections must be won at the ballot boxes, not on the streets through intimidation and bloodshed."

The council urged security agencies, including the police, Department of State Services, Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps and the armed forces, to deploy adequate personnel to major campaign venues and rallies nationwide.

It also called for the prompt arrest and prosecution of perpetrators of political violence and the confiscation of dangerous weapons at political gatherings.

The former CJN urged political parties and candidates to take responsibility for their supporters, publicly condemn violence and sanction members involved in electoral offences.

He called on governments at all levels to provide a level playing field for political parties, ensuring that opposition groups were not denied access to public or private facilities for campaigns.

Ariwoola also urged the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) to enforce electoral laws without fear or favour and coordinate with the police to investigate and ensure the speedy prosecution of electoral offenders in accordance with Section 148 of the Electoral Act, 2026.

He called on the National Assembly to strengthen its oversight of security agencies and electoral institutions, while urging the judiciary to ensure speedy trials of electoral offences.

The council appealed to young people not to allow themselves to be used as instruments of political violence and thuggery, stressing that no electoral victory should come at the expense of human life, national unity or public trust.



Governor of Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), Olayemi Cardoso (left); members of the committee, Philip Ikeazor; Yuguda Abubakar and Prof. Murtala Sagagi, during the Monetary Policy Committee meeting in Abuja, yesterday. PHOTO: NAN

Police threaten sponsors with prosecution

MEANWHILE, Disu has warned politicians against financing, sponsoring or directing acts of political violence before, during and after the 2027 general elections.

Speaking yesterday at a stakeholders' meeting with political party leaders and INEC in Abuja, the IGP said those found behind attacks on opponents, campaign venues and political gatherings would face the full weight of the law.

He identified violent clashes among political supporters, attacks on campaign convoys, the use of dangerous weapons, intimidation of political opponents and disruption of lawful political gatherings as serious threats to public peace and national security.

According to him, the police

CONTINUED ON PAGE 28

Tinubu trims 2026 spending by N3.15tr amid fiscal governance gaps

- Tinubu retains borrowing projections, deficit
- Economists back expenditure reduction plan, seek further scrutiny
- Senate approves $7.7 billion, N10.79 trillion borrowing plans
- Government quiet on MTEF 2027-2029, 2027 appropriation

From **John Akubo, Joseph Chibueze, Joel Oladele** (Abuja) and **Isaac Chibuife** (Lagos)

PRESIDENT Bola Tinubu's latest request to the National Assembly to amend the national budget has exposed deeper weaknesses in Nigeria's fiscal coordination, expenditure plan and public financial management framework.

The request to reduce the 2026 budget from N68.323 trillion to N65.176 trillion, while retaining the N31.457 trillion fiscal deficit and N29.218 trillion borrowing plan, comes amid the continued implementation of the 2025 capital budget, delays in presenting the 2027 Appropriation Bill and the unresolved legislation of the 2027-2029 Medium-Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF) and Fiscal Strategy Paper.

The development raises questions about how the Federal Government intends to maintain fiscal discipline and accountability when three successive budget cycles are at different stages of implementation and preparation, even with the administration seeking to amend an appropriation that has barely five weeks left before the end of its statutory validity.

In the face of a huge deficit, the proposed reduction in expenditure does not translate into a lower financing requirement. Despite cutting the budget by N3.147 trillion, the government has retained its deficit and borrowing projections, leaving stakeholders guessing the underpinning of the latest move.

Under the revised proposal, total expenditure would fall to N65.176 trillion, while the fiscal deficit remains at N31.457 trillion, representing 5.64 per cent of gross domestic product (GDP). The ratio is 2.67 per cent above the threshold allowed by the Fiscal Responsibility Act (FRC).

The Federal Government has also retained its N29.218 trillion borrowing plan, comprising N18.428 trillion in domestic borrowing and N10.79 trillion in foreign loans.

The Bola Tinubu administration projects revenue of N33.72 trillion, including earnings from government-owned enterprises (GOEs), while capital expenditure stands at N26.232 trillion.

Tinubu conveyed the request in a letter dated November 20, 2026, and addressed to the Speaker of the House of Representatives, Tajudeen Abbas, who read it during plenary. The President explained that the proposed adjustment was intended to align government spending with available resources and existing financial obligations.

According to him, the amendment would accommodate expenditures incurred by the Nigerian National Petroleum Company Limited (NNPCL) on behalf of the federation, address underprovided debt-service obligations, recognise issued capital warrants and supplementation commitments, and provide refunds to ministries, departments and agencies (MDAs) and special accounts.

The proposal also introduces additional capital and overhead provisions for selected national priorities, including the completion of critical road projects, protection of agricultural production, reduction of production costs, improvement of farm yields and enhanced market access.

However, the late recognition of some of the obligations exposes gaps in the original budget estimates, the quality of fiscal planning and coordination among the agencies responsible for preparing and implementing the national budget.

Beyond the immediate implications of the amendment, the timing has drawn attention to a broader problem: the continued operation of multiple appropriation cycles. The President had last year sought the reenactment of 2024 and 2025 appropriations as part of his commitment to ending overlapping budgets.

Still, the National Assembly had extended the implementation of the capital component of the 2025 Appropriation Act until thrice and ultimately to December 31, 2026. Consequently, the 2025 capital budget is running concurrently with the 2026 Appropriation Act, which took effect on April 1, 2026, but without clear communication about its implementation.

The overlapping arrangements create complications for expenditure tracking, project execution, cash management and accountability, experts have warned.

The implications extend beyond the implementation of existing appropriations to the preparation of the next fiscal framework.

Although the Budget Office had reportedly concluded the draft 2027-2029 MTEF and Fiscal Strategy Paper in July to support the September presentation of the 2027 budget, the National Assembly has not received the framework.

The Federal Government subsequently indicated that the 2027 budget would be presented before the end of December, leaving limited room for legislative scrutiny, public consultations and adequate preparations for implementation from January 1, 2027.

The FRC establishes a statutory framework for this process. Section 14 requires the Minister responsible for finance to present the MTEF to the Federal Executive Council before the end of the second quarter of each financial year for consideration and endorsement. The endorsed framework takes effect upon approval by a resolution of each chamber of the National Assembly.

Section 18 further provides that the MTEF shall form the basis for preparing yearly revenue and expenditure estimates presented to the National Assembly.

These provisions are intended to ensure that yearly budgets reflect a coherent medium-term fiscal strategy rather than being developed through successive adjustments to expenditure and financing commitments.

The delay in completing the legislative process for the 2027-2029 framework, alongside the late presentation of the next budget, reflects Tinubu's administration's fiscal governance style and raises concerns about adherence to the statutory fiscal planning timetable and the institutional discipline required to sustain idea public financing.

The problem of overlapping appropriations also has significant implications for public-sector accounting, financial reporting and audit accountability.

Under established accounting and auditing principles, public expenditure must be traceable to approved appropriations, properly classified, supported by adequate documentation and reported within the appropriate financial period.

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

Tinubu seeks Senate's approval to repeal 268 obsolete laws

Upper Chamber moves to resolve 50-year land dispute between Army, Ogun communities

From **John Akubo** (Abuja) and **Segun Ayinde** (Abeokuta)

PRESIDENT Bola Ahmed Tinubu has urged the Senate to approve the revised and consolidated Laws of the Federation of Nigeria (LFN 2025), following a comprehensive review that recommended the removal of 268 obsolete, spent or repealed enactments and the retention of 664 principal laws.

The review covered 932 federal enactments and 731 subsidiary legislations, in what the President described as an effort to modernise Nigeria's legal framework and make federal laws more coherent, accessible and relevant to contemporary realities.

Tinubu, in a letter to the Upper Chamber, said an accurate and easily accessible compendium of federal laws was "indispensable to our democratic and economic growth, saying: "Once enacted, it would be a dependable reference for judges, lawyers, government institutions, domestic and foreign investors and the public.

This, he said, would also strengthen legal certainty, institutional efficiency and public confidence in the justice system.

Senators welcomed the proposal but raised concerns about its integrity and pace.

Akpabio urged the lawmakers to confirm that amendments were properly reflected and that no clauses had been tampered with by those who transmitted the laws as passed by the National Assembly.

Once satisfied, he said, the Senate would give formal approval, allowing the laws to be circulated and used immediately.

Yahaya Abdullahi, who represents Kebbi North, said the first update in nearly 21 years was consequential and should not be rushed, given its effects on the justice system.

Deputy Senate President, Jibrin Barau, supported the proposal and suggested the Senate could engage consultants to prepare a summarised version of the compendium for lawmakers.

The Senate President, therefore, referred the matter to the Committee on Rules and Business for further legislative action.

IN another development, the Senate Committee on Ethics, Privileges and Public Petitions has pledged to intervene in the decades-long land dispute between the Nigerian Army and communities in Ijebu-East and Ijebu-North-East local councils of Ogun State.

The Senate Committee's Chairman, Neda Imasuen, gave the assurance yesterday during an inspection of the disputed land in Apunren-Ijebu, Ijebu-Imusin and other affected communities.

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



Chairman, Senate Committee on Banking, Insurance and Other Financial Institutions, Adetokunbo Abiru (left); Deputy Senate President, Barau Jibrin; Deputy Chief Whip, Peter Nwaebonyi; Senate President, Godswill Akpabio, and Senate Leader, Opeyemi Bamidele, during presentation of the presidential request to repeal and re-enact the 2026 Appropriation Act at the Senate Chamber, National Assembly Complex, Abuja, yesterday.

Adebayo promises jobs for 40m Nigerians through agriculture

Pledges to tackle poverty, insecurity

By **Seye Olumide**

THE presidential candidate of the Social Democratic Party (SDP), Adewole Adebayo, has promised to create 40 million jobs in agriculture if elected president in 2027.

Adebayo gave the assurance yesterday during a courtesy visit to the palace of the Aare Ona Kakanfo of Yorubaland, Iba Gani Adams.

He also pledged to tackle poverty and insecurity, saying his manifesto could begin to transform the country within 18 months of assuming office.

He described his visit as significant, recalling that the late Chief Moshood Kashimawo Olawale (MKO) Abiola, who won the June 12, 1993 presidential election on the SDP platform, was the predecessor to Adams in the Aare Ona Kakanfo title.

The SDP candidate lauded Adams for his courage and contributions to the June 12 struggle and the campaigns for democracy during military rule, stressing the importance of truth and self-determination in the development of Yorubaland.

Adebayo blamed poor leadership for the worsening economic conditions in the country, lamenting that Nigerians who previously could afford three meals a day now struggled to eat even once.

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

Lagos Island plans installation of CCTV cameras to protect public institutions

By **Abigail Ikhaghu** and **Glory Sunday**

THE Lagos Central Senatorial District Office has initiated plans to install Closed-Circuit Television (CCTV) cameras along the Adeniji-Adele corridor on Lagos Island to strengthen security surveillance and protect public institutions from vandalism and other criminal activities.

The project, facilitated by Senator Wasiu Sanni Eshilokun, will cover strategic locations, including the Palace of the Oba of Lagos, Lagos Island and Lagos Island East Council secretariats, Massey General Hospital, City Hall and the Adeniji-Adele and Ebute-Ero police stations.

Eshilokun, while speaking during a stakeholders' meeting yesterday in Lagos, said the initiative was conceived following the destruction of public institutions during the 2020 #EndSARS protests, which left state and local councils with significant losses.

Government must be responsive to citizens' grievances, says Shettima

Makinde cautions people against sacrificing lives for politicians

From **Rotimi Agboluaje** and **Opeyemi Babalola**, Ibadan

VICE President Kashim Shettima has said that a responsible government must be people-centred and attentive to the concerns and grievances of the citizens it governs.

The Vice President, who spoke virtually yesterday at the launch of "Sitting on Two Hundred Needles" and eight other books by Dr Lasisi Olagunju, which include his collections of columns, book reviews, lectures and other writings, held at the International Conference Centre, University of Ibadan (UI), said that criticism should not be treated as hostility, but as an essential part of democratic accountability.

He said: "I have always believed that one of the greatest dangers facing those of us entrusted with public office is the temptation to hear only what pleases us.

"Human nature draws us towards agreement and reassurance, yet the voices that challenge our assumptions may sometimes be the very voices we need most. A government that listens only to praise risks losing touch with the people it was elected to serve."

Shettima, who was reacting to Olagunju's book presentation, praised him for holding public office holders accountable through criticism and scrutiny of government policies, describing his newspaper commentaries as an important contribution to public accountability.

He said that journalists, who ask difficult questions and scrutinise government actions, perform a valuable service to democratic institutions, noting that disagreement with journalists' views should not automatically be interpreted as disrespect, as critical voices are necessary to keep those in authority conscious of their responsibilities.

The Vice President also commended Olagunju for compiling 15 years of newspaper commentaries into books, describing the collection as a valuable historical record of the hopes, contradictions and debates of the generation.

Meanwhile, Oyo State Governor, Seyi Makinde, in his speech, urged Nigerians not to sacrifice their lives for any politician, noting that no life is worth any office politicians seek.

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

FG steps up consumer protection surveillance in Ogun

From **Azeez Olorunlomeru**, Abeokuta

THE Federal Ministry of Industry, Trade and Investment has intensified regulatory surveillance across Ogun State as part of its 2026 national surveillance exercise aimed at ensuring accurate measurements, promoting fair trade and protecting consumers from exploitation.

The exercise, being conducted through the ministry's weights and measures department, is designed to ensure that weighing and measuring instruments used in commercial transactions comply with established legal and technical standards.

The Department's Director of the ministry, Dr Salim Muktar Mohammed, said the initiative reflected the Federal Government's commitment to protecting the financial interests of consumers, businesses and the government.

He said that effective monitoring and compliance were essential to preventing undermeasurement, eliminating unfair commercial advantages and strengthening public confidence in the Nigerian marketplace.

Mohammed said the surveillance exercise involved coordinated efforts by national, zonal and state officials, with inspections covering major establishments in the oil and gas and non-oil sectors.

He listed some of the manufacturing companies visited as Golden Terra Soya Oil, African GB Food Manufacturing Nigeria Limited and CWAY Nigeria Limited.

According to him, the inspections were aimed at verifying that the actual quantities of products manufactured and supplied correspond with the declarations on their packaging.

In the oil and gas sector, he said, the team was examining petroleum dispensing, storage, distribution, and custody transfer equipment, noting that even minor calibration errors could result in substantial financial losses due to the volume of transactions involved.

He added that inspections in the non-oil sector focused on food processing companies, wholesalers and retailers to ensure compliance and promote fair competition among businesses.

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

Sanwo-Olu links Lagos growth to leadership continuity, strong institutions

- 'Lagos must look beyond infrastructure to achieve devt'
- ENS seeks partnerships to translate state's economic growth into opportunities

By **Gbenga Salau** and **Kehinde Olatunji**

LAGOS State Governor, Babajide Sanwo-Olu, has said that sustained development of the state depends on deliberate planning, strong institutions and policy consistency, citing the contributions of successive administrations to its growth.

He said the demands of the state's growing population required governments to make deliberate investments in transportation, healthcare, education, housing, food security and employment, while ensuring that development policies were sustained beyond individual administrations.

Sanwo-Olu spoke yesterday during the presentation of a book, "Lagos: The Making of Africa's Megacity – Urban Leadership, Infrastructure and Governance under Babajide Sanwo-Olu," held at the Eko Hotels and Suites, Lagos.

The governor said his administration adopted the T.H.E.M.E.S. development agenda to address the state's development needs, adding that interventions had been made across critical sectors.

He, however, acknowledged the contributions of past governors to the state's development, particularly President Bola Tinubu, whose administration as governor, he said, laid foundations for subsequent governments.

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

DAME to honour 20 professionals, three new fellows at 35th edition

FOLLOWING 34 successful and unbroken award ceremonies to celebrate excellence in media practice, the Trustees of the Diamond Awards for Media Excellence (DAME) have announced that the 35th edition of the yearly ceremony will hold tomorrow, November 26, 2026, in Lagos State.

The event, taking place at Raddison Blu Hotel, Ikeja, will feature the presentation of 20 competitive prizes across editorial cartooning, editorial writing, investigative reporting, sports reporting, judicial reporting, energy reporting, television documentary, child-friendly reporting, child-friendly photography, solid minerals reporting, Newspaper of the Year and Editor of the Year, among other categories.

In addition to the competitive categories, three distinguished veterans of the Nigerian media will be conferred with honorary fellowships for their decades of service and impact on national journalism.

TheMetroSection

www.guardian.ng Guardian Nigeria GuardianNigeria 08136370421 Guardiannigeria

Ogun communities seek relief as Senate moves to resolve 50-year Army land dispute

From **Segun Ayinde**, Abeokuta

• Senate pledges action on disputed 500 hectares

RESIDENTS of 16 communities in Ijebu East and Ijebu North-East Local Councils of Ogun State may finally be closer to resolving a land dispute that has lasted nearly five decades, as the Senate has pledged to intervene in their disagreement with the Nigerian Army.

The Senate Committee on Ethics, Privileges and Public Petitions gave the assurance during an inspection of the disputed land in Apunren-Ijebu, Ijebu Imusin and other affected communities. Several residential buildings, schools, hospitals and even a traditional ruler's palace have reportedly been marked for demolition by the military.

The dispute centres on approximately 500 hectares of land reportedly acquired by the Nigerian Army in 1977. Residents said the prolonged military occupation had deprived them of access to their ancestral properties, disrupted their livelihoods and stalled development in their communities.

Leading the committee's delegation, its chairman, Senator Neda Imasuen, said the Senate's intervention followed persistent efforts by the senator representing Ogun East Senatorial District, Otunba Gbenga Daniel, who brought the plight of the affected communities to the attention of the National Assembly.



Governor Dapo Abiodun



COAS, Lt-General Waidi Shaibu

Imasuen described the inspection as an important step towards resolving the dispute, which he said had lingered for more than 50 years. He assured residents that the committee would expedite its findings and submit its report to the Senate for consideration.

"We are here today because of the respect and because of the doggedness of our leader, our senator here, Senator Gbenga Daniel, that this issue has been on ground for over 50 years," he said.

The committee chairman expressed concern that the traditional ruler's palace was also reportedly located on land claimed by the Nigerian Army. He said the inspection would enable members to assess the affected properties and better understand the concerns of the communities.

He promised that the committee would work quickly on its report to enable the full Senate to deliberate on the matter and determine the appropriate course of action.

"I promise you also that as a committee, when we get back, we will do everything possible to make our report ready in no time so that we can facilitate it and let the full Senate have one or two things to say about it and then pass it," he assured.

Imasuen, however, appealed to the 16 affected communities to remain united and cooperate with one another, warning against allowing the dispute resolution process to generate fresh disagreements among them.

Father allegedly tortures 21-year-old son to death over N75,000, phone in Osun

From **Oluwole Ige**, Osogbo

A 48-YEAR-OLD man, Ogunniran Kayode, has been arrested by the Osun State Police Command for allegedly torturing his 21-year-old son, Ogunniran Raphael Adewale, to death over the alleged theft of N75,000 and an Android phone before burying his body in a shallow grave behind their residence.

The incident reportedly occurred at Faji, in Odo-Otin Local Council of Osun State, where the father allegedly tortured his son after accusing him of stealing the money and absconding with a phone he had bought for him on credit.

The police said the suspect was arrested following information received by operatives of the State Intelligence Department (SID) on October 19, 2026, about the alleged killing and secret burial of the victim.

According to a statement by the police spokesperson, Abiodun Ojelabi, detectives immediately launched an investigation and apprehended the suspect.

During interrogation, Kayode allegedly told investigators that his son had stolen N75,000 and disappeared with an Android phone he had purchased for him through an instalment payment arrangement.

The suspect, who reportedly claimed to be a member of the Iru-Ekun Security Network, said he had apprehended his son with the assistance of a colleague before the incident that led to his death.

The police said detectives subsequently visited the scene and discovered the shallow grave where the victim's remains had been buried behind the family residence.

Tinubu support group deploys luxury limousines for nationwide campaign

By **Shakirah Adunola**

A SUPPORT group for President Bola Tinubu has unveiled a fleet of customised, All Progressives Congress (APC)-branded limousines for a nationwide campaign in support of his re-election bid and other party candidates.

The luxury vehicles, unveiled at Onikan Stadium, Lagos, attracted the attention of party chieftains, delegates and other political stakeholders, with the organisers describing the initiative as a new approach to political mobilisation ahead of the forthcoming elections.

The National Unity Support Group said the fleet would be deployed across the country to showcase the President's achievements and canvass support for his administration's Renewed Hope agenda.

The group's National Coordinator, Prince Adebolu Julius Tayo, said the initiative was driven by its confidence in Tinubu's leadership and desire to promote continuity in governance.

He disclosed that four of the limousines had earlier been deployed in Ibadan, Oyo State, before the convoy moved to Lagos, adding that plans were underway to extend the campaign to other states.

Tayo identified the student loan scheme, improved stability in public tertiary institutions and ongoing road rehabilitation projects across the country as some of the administration's achievements the group intended to highlight during the tour.

While acknowledging the economic difficulties confronting Nigerians, he urged citizens to exercise patience with the government's reforms, insisting that the administration needed more time to deliver on its promises.

Police nab four Edo Security Corps personnel over alleged information leak to cultists

From **Joseph Kanjo**, Benin

• Arrest 10 suspected cultists, four kidnappers, suspected armed robber

Four personnel of the Edo State Security Corps have been arrested for allegedly leaking information about police movements to suspected cultists during an initiation exercise in Adolor, Benin City.

The arrests followed an investigation into how suspected cultists allegedly obtained information about the movements and operations of police officers who were tracking them.

The Police Public Relations Officer, Eno Ikoedem, disclosed this while parading suspects arrested for various crimes in the state.

She said the four security personnel were apprehended after operatives discovered that details of police movements had been leaked.

According to her, three of the suspects were identified as Gideon Acher, Tony Oahiale and Culture Uzo. However, the police did not disclose the identity of the fourth personnel.



Arrested Edo Security Corps personnel

In a separate operation, 10 suspected members of the Aye and Axe confraternities were arrested during an alleged cult initiation exercise.

The police also paraded four suspected kidnappers and a suspected armed robber arrested in connection with criminal activities in the state.

Ikoedem said the four suspected kidnappers were arrested after two victims, Yakubu Ibrahim and Abdullahi Mohammed, were rescued unhurt during an intensive bush-combing operation in Ikakumoh/Ayaran Forest.

64 South Africa returnees receive financial support in Ogun

From **Segun Ayinde**, Abeokuta

SIXTY-FOUR indigenes of Ogun State who returned from South Africa have received financial assistance from the state government to help them rebuild their lives, establish businesses and regain economic independence.

The intervention is aimed at easing the challenges of reintegration faced by the returnees and helping them secure sustainable sources of livelihood in their home communities.

The Special Adviser to the Governor on Women Affairs and Social Development, Mrs Ayotunde Lawal, disclosed this yesterday while presenting cheques to some of the beneficiaries at her office in Oke-Mosan, Abeokuta.

Lawal urged the returnees to make judicious use of the financial support, stressing that the opportunities available in Nigeria could enable them to achieve economic stability without seeking greener pastures abroad.

She said Nigeria remained home despite the attractions and opportunities offered by foreign countries, adding that the country had enormous potential for investment, personal growth and economic advancement.

The governor's aide also encouraged the beneficiaries to work together, remain actively involved in their communities and invest in productive ventures that would improve their livelihoods and contribute to Ogun State's development.

She reaffirmed the state government's commitment to supporting vulnerable citizens through social protection and economic empowerment programmes aimed at improving living conditions, promoting self-reliance and upholding human dignity.



Women Leader of Unity Support Group for Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu, Waliyat Hamzat (left); Abuja Coordinator Unity Support Group for Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu (Winning Team), Alhaji Abdulrasheed Zubair and National Coordinator, Prince Adebolu Julius Tayo during the display of an All Progressives Congress (APC) branded limousine at the Onikan Stadium, Lagos.

www.guardian.ng

TheMetroSection

Navy intercepts boat laden with 35,000 litres of stolen crude

Uncovers 54,000 litres of illegal diesel in Rivers

By **Bertram Nwannekanma**

THE Nigerian Navy has intercepted a wooden boat carrying about 35,000 litres of suspected stolen crude oil and uncovered another 54,000 litres of illegally refined diesel at an illegal refining site in Rivers State.

The operation, which exposed an illegal petroleum supply chain involving an estimated 89,000 litres of products, was carried out on November 22 by personnel of Nigerian Navy Ship (NNS) PATHFINDER around Okarki Creek and Okarki Community in Ahoada West Local Council Area of the state.

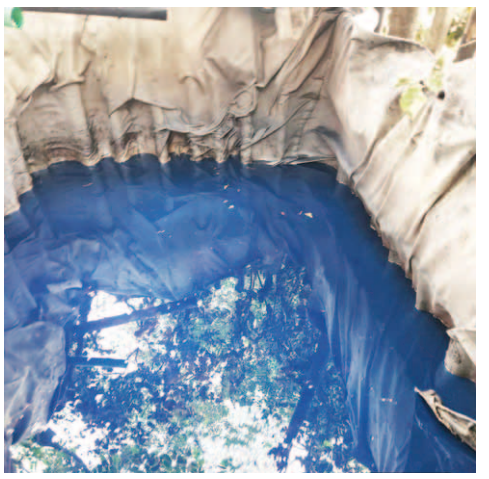
According to a statement by the Director of Naval Information, Navy Captain Abiodun Folorunsho, the operation followed credible intelligence and was part of its sustained efforts to combat crude oil theft and illegal refining in the Niger Delta.

The intercepted wooden boat was found loaded with approximately 150 sacks containing suspected stolen crude oil, estimated at 35,000 litres.

A subsequent search of the adjoining area led naval personnel to an illegal refining site where they discovered about 10 dugout pits, 180 sacks and a storage container holding an estimated 54,000 litres of suspected illegally refined Automotive Gas Oil (AGO), commonly known as diesel.

The discovery brought the total volume of suspected stolen and illegally refined petroleum products uncovered during the operation to approximately 89,000 litres.





Intercepted stolen crude and diesel

The Navy said the boat, its contents and the refining facility, including the stored petroleum products, were handled in accordance with established procedures for combating crude oil theft.

The operation, it added, was aimed at disrupting the movement of stolen crude oil and dismantling the facilities used to process it into petroleum products for the illegal market.

Beyond the economic losses associated with crude oil theft, illegal refining activities pose serious environmental risks to host communities through pollution of waterways, soil contamination and damage to aquatic ecosystems, threatening the livelihoods of residents who depend on fishing and other natural resources.

The Navy said it would sustain intelligence-driven operations to protect oil and gas infrastructure, support national crude oil production and safeguard the country's economic interests.

Mushin LGA clears drainage channels, harps on sanitation

By **Eniola Daniel**

THE Mushin Local Council has intensified efforts to prevent flooding through the clearing and evacuation of accumulated silt and debris from secondary drainage channels along Isolo Road.

The exercise, being carried out under the administration of the council chairman, Tunbosun Aruwe, covers the stretch from off Ibiosi through Akinwunmi/Total Filling Station to the Agege Motor Road Junction.

The council said the intervention was aimed at restoring the drainage channels to their optimal capacity, ensuring the free flow of wastewater and stormwater and preventing overflows onto adjoining streets and roads.

Aruwe said his administration would sustain the maintenance of drainage infrastructure as part of efforts to protect the environment and reduce the risk of flooding across the council area.

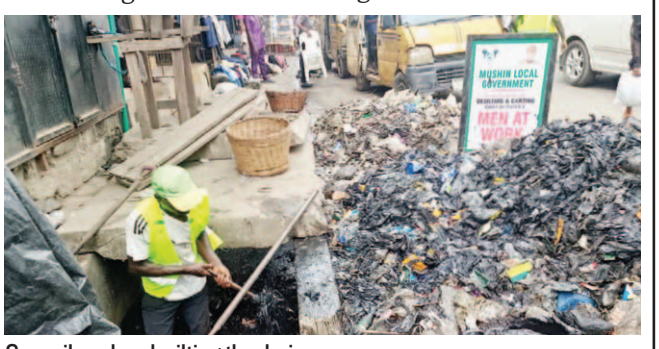
He said: "Our commitment is to ensure that drainage channels across Mushin remain functional and free from accumulated silt, refuse and other obstructions.

"This intervention along Isolo Road is part of our deliberate efforts to guarantee the smooth flow of wastewater and stormwater, prevent flooding and protect adjoining streets and roads."

The chairman appealed to residents, traders and business operators to support the council's sanitation efforts by keeping drainage channels clean and avoiding indiscriminate refuse disposal.

He stressed that maintaining a clean environment required collective responsibility and urged residents to cooperate with the local government to sustain the gains of its sanitation initiatives.

Some residents and traders along Isolo Road commended the council chairman for responding to the drainage challenges in the area, describing the exercise as a timely intervention that would improve water flow and minimise flooding.



Council worker desilting the drains

Customs takes fight against arms smuggling, drug cartels to television

By **Adaku Onyenucheya**

THE dangerous world of arms smuggling, drug trafficking and transnational organised crime, as well as the personal sacrifices of officers working to protect Nigeria's borders, will take centre stage in a new television drama series unveiled by the Nigeria Customs Service (NCS).

Titled Novara, the 79-episode series tells the story of a Customs officer torn between his responsibility to protect the country from economic sabotage and the need to keep his family safe from the dangers associated with his job.

The series, produced through a public-private partnership (PPP) between the NCS and Nollywood production companies, MP Mosaic Production and Native Media, will premiere on African Magic Showcase on January 7, 2027.

The first season, comprising 39 episodes, has been completed and is ready for broadcast, while production of the remaining 40 episodes is ongoing.

Unveiling the production at a press briefing in Apapa, Lagos, yesterday, the National Public Relations Officer of the NCS, Dr Abdullahi Maiwada, said the initiative was designed to take the public beyond the familiar narratives of seizures, enforcement operations and revenue generation to the human experiences of officers serving the country.

TotalEnergies golf tournament brings relief to elderly, vulnerable women

From **Ann Godwin**, Port Harcourt

For women abandoned on the streets because of severe mental health conditions and elderly people who depend on others for their daily needs, access to food, medication and decent shelter can be a daily struggle.

But for residents of Rosalie Home Rehabilitation Centre in Eleme, Rivers State, and Little Sisters of the Poor Home for the Elderly in Enugu, proceeds from the 2026 TotalEnergies Charity Golf Tournament have brought renewed hope of better care and living conditions.

The two charitable organisations have received financial support running into millions of naira from the tournament, organised by TotalEnergies to assist institutions caring for vulnerable people.

For Rosalie Home Rehabilitation Centre, which provides shelter and rehabilitation for homeless women living with severe mental health conditions, the donation will help sustain psychiatric treatment, medication, feeding and other essential services.

Speaking on behalf of the centre, a Daughter of Charity, Bibiana Dura, described TotalEnergies as its only consistent donor over the years, saying the company's annual contributions had remained crucial to its operations.

Dura, who took over the management of the centre seven years ago, said her predecessor had informed her that TotalEnergies was the institution's only reliable source of regular financial support.

She said the company had maintained the commitment since she assumed office, adding that the centre particularly looked forward to its annual donation during the Christmas season.

UPTH management mourns with CMD over wife's demise

From **Obinna Nwaoku**, Port Harcourt

THE management and staff of the University of Port Harcourt Teaching Hospital (UPTH) have rallied around their Chief Medical Director, Professor Chituru Godwill Orluwene, following the death of his wife, Mrs Ugochi Orluwene, assuring him and his family of their support as they navigate the painful loss.

Mrs Orluwene reportedly died on Sunday, November 22, 2026, while attending a church service marking a harvest celebration.

In a demonstration of solidarity, a delegation of the hospital's management, led by the Chairman of the Medical Advisory Committee (CMAC), Professor Richard Echem, visited the bereaved CMD to offer condolences, prayers and words of encouragement.

The visit was disclosed in a statement issued on Monday by the Head of Media and Publicity, UPTH, Kem Daniel-Elebiga.

During the visit, Echem described the loss as a painful test of faith, urging Orluwene to draw strength from God while assuring him that the hospital's management and staff would stand by him and his children during the difficult period.

He noted that Orluwene had consistently demonstrated compassion and offered support to colleagues and others during their moments of difficulty, adding that the hospital community was committed to reciprocating the gesture by supporting him in his time of grief.

HURIWA raises alarm over kidnap in Owerri, demands prosecution of suspects

By **Ayonote Clement**

THE Human Rights Writers Association of Nigeria (HURIWA) has called for an urgent, technology-driven investigation into the reported abduction of Chidozie Oparaugo in Owerri, Imo State, following alleged threats by his kidnappers to kill him and members of his family if their demands are not met.

The association expressed concern over reports that the abductors were demanding N100 million and family land documents as ransom, while allegedly threatening the lives of Oparaugo's mother, elder brother, wife and children.

Describing the incident as disturbing and another indication of the insecurity confronting Nigerians, HURIWA said no family should be subjected to such trauma or forced to negotiate for the life of a loved one under threats and intimidation.

In a statement issued yesterday by its National Coordinator, Emmanuel Nnadozie Onwubiko, the association urged the Department of State Services (DSS) and the Nigeria Police Force to immediately deploy modern investigative technology and intelligence resources to rescue Oparaugo and apprehend those responsible.

It specifically called on the security agencies to investigate threatening messages, telephone numbers, call records and other digital evidence reportedly preserved by the family, stressing that digital forensics, telecommunications intelligence and lawful tracking methods could help identify the suspects and establish their whereabouts.

HURIWA warned against allowing the incident to become another kidnapping case that generates public outrage for a few days before being abandoned without a credible investigation or prosecution.

It said the immediate priority should be to secure Oparaugo's safe release, protect his family from further intimidation and ensure that everyone involved in the crime is arrested and prosecuted in accordance with the law.



Imo State Governor, Hope Uzodimma

IGP orders probe into fatal Delta campaign, arrest of culprits

By **Bertram Nwannekanma**

THE death of six persons and injuries to several others during a political campaign in Delta State have raised fresh concerns over political violence, prompting the Inspector-General of Police (IGP), Olatunji Rilwan Disu, to order a thorough investigation into the incident.

The violence reportedly erupted on Monday, November 23, 2026, at Uduere Community in Ughelli North Local Council of the state, leaving six persons dead, according to preliminary police reports.

In response to the tragedy, Disu directed the Commissioner of Police in Delta State to immediately commence an impartial, evidence-based investigation to establish how the violence occurred and identify those responsible.

The directive was contained in a statement issued yesterday by the Force Public Relations Officer, CSP Ani Iniedu.

According to the police, the investigation will establish the sequence of events and examine the circumstances surrounding the shooting, including the deployment and conduct of police personnel at the campaign venue.



Hearty Felicitations

Sir STANLEY CHIEDOZIEM AMUCHIE

GROUP MANAGING DIRECTOR/CEO OF FIDELITY BANK

My brother Sir Stanley Chiedoziem Amuchie,I have followed your journey with deep admiration from your life of hardwork, generosity and selfless service to humanity.You have remained an inspiration to many of us through your love for the poor and your philosophy that helping the poor is a tool for national transformation and community development.

On behalf of my family, I Pastor Dr Chris Iheanacho and Mrs Eugenia Amuchie congratulate you on the FITTING appointment as the Group Managing Director/CEO of Fidelity Bank.

I pray that God Almighty grants you sound health,long life, divine wisdom and strength to pilot the affairs of this bank to greater heights.

Congratulations MY BROTHER.

Pastor Dr. Chris Iheanacho Amuchie PhD

For the family.



THE FEDERAL UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY, AKURE, NIGERIA

www.futa.edu.ng

VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT FOR THE POST OF THE VICE CHANCELLOR

There will be a vacancy in the post of Vice Chancellor of the Federal University of Technology, Akure, FUTA with effect from 24th May, 2027. Consequently, the Governing Council of the University has commenced in earnest the due process for the appointment of a Vice Chancellor in accordance with the provisions of the Universities of Technology Act as cited in Chapter F23 of the Laws of the Federation of Nigeria 2004; and University Act.

The Institution

The Federal University of Technology, Akure, came into formal existence in September 1981 as one of the four autonomous full-fledged Federal Universities of Technology that then existed in the Country.

The Motto of the University is, "Technology for Self-reliance" In choosing its motto, the University is laying emphasis on the objective of the University to contribute to national development and self-reliance through the advancement of science and technology.

The University, with a total students population of over 24,000 and staff population of over 2,500 has highly developed programmes in the College of Health Sciences and the following fifteen (15) Schools: 1. School of Agriculture and Agricultural Technology, 2. School of Basic Medical Sciences, 3. School of Basic Clinical Sciences, 4. School of Clinical Sciences, 5. School of Earth and Mineral Sciences, 6. School of Computing, 7. School of Electrical System Engineering, 8. School of Environmental Technology, 9. School of Infrastructure, Minerals and Manufacturing Engineering , 10. School of Logistics and Innovation Technology, 11. School of Life Sciences, 12. School of Physical Sciences, 13. School of Science and Technology Education, 14. School of Architecture, and 15.School of Postgraduate Studies.

The University's Vision and Mission are as follows:

Vision

To be a world class University of Technology and a Centre of Excellence in training, research and service delivery.

Mission

To promote technological advancement by providing conducive environment for research, teaching and learning which engenders development of products that are technologically oriented, self-reliant and relevant to society.

The Job

The Vice Chancellor is the Chief Executive and Accounting Officer of the University, ex-officio Chairman of the Senate and member of the Governing Council. Among his other functions, the Vice Chancellor shall:

a) be competent at all times to advise the Council on any matter affecting the policy, finance and administration of the University;
b) be generally responsible to the Council for maintaining the efficiency and good order of the University and for ensuring the proper enforcement of the statutes, ordinances and regulations;
c) be responsible for discipline in the University and;
d) regulate the admission of students subject to guidelines and procedures approved by the Senate.

S/He may exercise such powers as may be necessary or expedient for that purpose.

Qualities and Qualifications

The applicant for the post of Vice Chancellor of the Federal University of Technology, Akure, must possess the following qualities and qualifications:

- be a highly distinguished scholar of the rank of professor of not less than ten (10) years' experience on that rank in a university of high reputation, with ability to provide academic and administrative leadership to the University Community;
- must possess a doctorate degree (Ph.D.) with a minimum of twenty (20) scholarly publications in reputable journals as at the time of appointment as a professor and evidence of scholarly publication in the last three years;
- be on a high pedestal of moral authority, of impeccable character and unassailable integrity, free from financial embarrassment and enjoy excellent physical and mental health;
- has specialized skills in a course that is relevant to the teaching and research mandate of the Federal University of Technology, Akure;
- has administrative and research experience for a sustainable realization of the mandate and mission of a specialized University of Technology;
- be a person who is not likely to pursue racial, ethnic, political, religious or sectional interests;
- possesses drive and ability to attract much needed funds and mobilize other resources for the development of the University;
- has demonstrable ability to establish and maintain partnership with local and International institutions, governmental and non-governmental agencies; and
- be a person who would not be older than 65 years on May 24, 2027 when the post is scheduled to be occupied.

Condition of Service

The Vice Chancellor will, in line with the Federal Universities of Technology Act, hold office for a single term of five (5) years only.

Mode of application

Interested applicants are requested to note and comply with the following conditions:

- Each application should be accompanied by 35 copies of the applicant's detailed "Curriculum Vitae" duly signed and dated by the applicant. The Curriculum Vitae must contain the candidate's name in full, place and date of birth, marital status, number and ages of children, nationality, academic qualifications, degrees with classes (copies of certificates to be enclosed), teaching, research, administrative and managerial experience, academic distinctions, membership of academic and professional bodies and scholarly publication. (Visit the University website (www.futa.edu.ng) for detailed format of the FUTA curriculum vitae);
- statement of the candidate's own vision for The Federal University of Technology, Akure as a University of the 21st Century (35 copies);
- candidate must nominate (3) referees who MUST forward references on him/her directly to the Registrar and Secretary to Council; such references should be able to attest to the candidate's claims to high academic and managerial capability as well as his/her moral standing; such references must be received and signed for in the Office of the Registrar on or before 16 hours, Thursday, 21st January, 2027. For candidates who are 'searched', references must be received and signed for in the Office of the Registrar on or before 16 hours, Thursday, 11th March, 2027;
- all short-listed candidates shall be required to make themselves available for interaction at an appointed date;
- applications are to be submitted under confidential cover in envelopes marked at the Upper Left-Hand Corner "Post of Vice Chancellor, FUTA", to reach the Registrar and Secretary to Council, Federal University of Technology, P.M.B. 704, Akure, Ondo State, Nigeria, not later than six (6) weeks from the date of this publication, that is, 16 hours Thursday, 7th January, 2027. For candidates who are 'searched', applications must be received and signed for in the Office of the Registrar not later than 16 hours, Wednesday, 24th February, 2027.

Charles O. Adeleye, *FNIM*
Registrar and Secretary to Council

CANDIDATES SHOULD PLEASE NOTE THAT

- **ONLY THOSE SHORTLISTED WILL BE CONTACTED**
- **NO ELECTRONIC APLLICATION WILL BE ENTERTAINED**

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

Editorial

www.guardian.ng Guardian Nigeria GuardianNigeria 08136370421 Guardiannigeria

Insurgency: As military considers technology, local arms production

THE thrust of the message delivered by the Minister of Defence, General Christopher Musa (rtd), the other day is that the country's road to fully overcoming insecurity remains unclear and will require more hands on deck, including those of technologists and academia. Beyond the obvious need to leverage technology to fight insurgency, Musa's advocacy for local production of arms for the country's security agencies cannot be overstated. Indeed, it raises questions about past government efforts aimed at self-reliance in military defence.

For a long time, Nigerians have been disappointed by the Federal Government's seeming inability to end insecurity, which has continued to ravage the country for close to two decades. This is despite warnings from the outset that fighting terrorism was not a conventional war whose end could be more easily predicted. In the last 15 years or so, terrorism and insurgency have taken many forms that have invariably overstretched the military and other security agencies. Nevertheless, Nigerians expect that, given the years the insurgency has taken and the human and material resources so far expended on the war against terror, an end ought to be in sight. Unfortunately, this is not the case.

On the contrary, reports indicate that more troubles lie ahead for the nation, as the security crisis now extends beyond the traditional conflict hotspots. A new threat assessment identifies 31 states and the Federal Capital Territory as facing elevated, high or critical risks, while no state falls into the low-risk category.

If it is any consolation, the Defence High Command believes that well-informed policies, credible institutions, technological innovation, and a comprehensive understanding of the human dimensions of conflict are needed.

Arising from the concentrated attacks in the North-East and a host of isolated attacks in different parts of the country, the latest assessment of the country's security milieu suggests a nationwide network of interconnected threats in which insurgency, organised criminal activities, communal violence, separatist pressure and weak institutional capacity reinforce one another.

In its state-by-state risk heat map, the Nigeria Threat Assessment 2026 identifies seven states as facing critical security risks, 11 of which are high risk, 13 states experiencing elevated risk, while six states have to contend with moderate-risk. Sadly, no state or territory in the country received a low-risk rating.

The findings, which are based on analytical ratings as of March 2026, place the country's overall national threat level at high, with critical conditions concentrated in Borno and parts of the North-West and Middle Belt.

The seven states that occupy the highest-risk category are Borno, Benue, Zamfara, Kaduna, Katsina, Niger and Plateau. Figures already suggest that the country's security challenges are considerably dire and much more widespread than what geographical assessment of individual attacks might indicate. The fact that 31 of the 36 states and the Federal Capital Territory have elevated or worse risk ratings is a very troubling development given that 84 per cent of the country's federating units are affected.

It is heartening, therefore, that government may be contemplating informed policies and technological innovation as part of anti-insurgency measures. This should go beyond theoretical analysis.

According to the Minister of Defence, solving Nigeria's insecurity "requires informed policies, credible institutions, technological innovation and a comprehensive understanding of the human dimensions of conflict."

Musa, who spoke during the commissioning of the CG Musa Security Management Hub donated to the Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) Centre of Excellence in Security Management, at the University of Ibadan, emphasised that the country had stepped up its game and was gradually improving the security situation.

The minister added: "The academia occupies a strategic place in our national security management architecture … the battlefield may reveal the immediate manifestations of insecurity, but the university provides the intellectual environment to interrogate its causes, evaluate responses and develop sustainable solutions."

He hinted that insecurity is getting prolonged because it is becoming difficult to get the needed security weapons and ammunition, adding that Nigeria needs to begin to produce what it requires to end it.

"Our intention is to expose our local producers to foreign and international manufacturers so that we can continue to produce what we need or what we rely on. Why insecurity continues to be prolonged is that we do not produce all we need.

"Most times when we go to buy, even with cash at hand, you can't get them off the shelf. And now with the wars going on in Ukraine, Russia and the Strait of Hormuz, it became extremely difficult buying as little as ammunition to use not to talk of Armoured Personnel Carriers (APCs). Since our local manufacturers are doing their best, we need to escalate to an international level.

"The threats we face continue to test our national resilience. Equally concerning are the underlying conditions that sustain insecurity, including extremism, weak governance systems, political manifestations and social exclusion, among others. These realities remind us that security cannot be achieved through military operations alone. It requires informed policies, credible institutions, technological innovation and a comprehensive understanding of the human dimensions of conflict," Musa said.

Among other things, Musa's analysis of how to address the dire security situation in the country, the drawbacks, and the grounds that can be covered by embracing technology and developing sustainable solutions cannot be more correct.

Nonetheless, Nigerians are weary of the seemingly endless war on terrorism, despite the commendable strides that the military has recorded. Besides the heavy toll this takes on government resources and the emotions and well-being of Nigerians, it is also sending a negative signal to the rest of the world that the country is unsafe for investment.

In addition to being seen as a country that is incapable of protecting its citizens, Nigeria's pariah status has forced many foreign countries to routinely issue travel advisories to their citizens about visiting the country.

At this point of the country's development, the government should ensure that the Defence Industries Corporation of Nigeria (DICON) is leveraged to make arms and ammunition readily available in the country.

Important as it is to partner with academia in seeking a lasting solution to widespread insecurity, the recognition by the defence would amount to nothing if urgent and important steps are not initiated to translate these far-reaching thoughts into concrete measures that would safeguard the country.

LETTER

What does this age demand of the writer?

Reflections on Artificial Intelligence, Literary Creativity and the 45th ANA International Convention, Abuja

SIR: As the Association of Nigerian Authors (ANA) gathers in Abuja for its 45th International Convention, I find myself reflecting on an important question: What does this age demand of the writer, and are we sufficiently prepared to respond?

I am reminded of the Nobel Prize-winning Caribbean poet Derek Walcott, who, in discussing the evolution of poetry, acknowledged the relationship between traditional literary expression and contemporary forms such as reggae, hip-hop and rap. Although he maintained distinctions between literary poetry and popular performance, he recognised the creative possibilities arising from their interaction.

This brings me to Ezra Pound's *Hugh Selwyn Mauberley* and his memorable observation about what an age demands.

Every generation presents its writers with new realities, new audiences, new challenges and new instruments of expression. The writer's responsibility is not merely to preserve the past but also to interrogate the present and illuminate the future.

And today, one of the most consequential developments confronting the literary world is Artificial Intelligence.

As someone who has worked extensively in technology and organisational transformation, while also maintaining a lifelong commitment to literature, I see AI as neither an automatic threat to creativity nor an unquestionable blessing. It is a powerful technology whose implications demand serious intellectual engagement.

Over the next five years, AI is likely to reshape significant aspects of how literature is written, edited, translated, published, distributed, discovered and consumed. The question, therefore, is not simply whether writers should embrace or reject AI.

The more important question is: *How do we engage with AI responsibly without surrendering the originality, imagination, intellectual independence and humanity that give literature its enduring value?*

This is a conversation I would love to see ANA engage with meaningfully, alongside the convention's central theme of *Literature, National Security, and the Place of Nigeria in the World*.

Indeed, the relationship is closer than we might initially imagine. AI raises important questions about cultural identity, linguistic preservation, misinformation, intellectual property, national narratives and the future of African storytelling.

How can Nigerian writers use AI to expand the reach of indigenous languages and literary traditions?

How do we protect authorship, originality and copyright in an environment where machines can generate increasingly sophisticated texts?

How can emerging writers use technological tools to improve research, editing, accessibility and publishing opportunities without allowing those tools to replace their creative judgment?

And how do we ensure that Nigerian literature remains a powerful contributor to global conversations rather than becoming a passive consumer of technologies and narratives developed elsewhere?

These are questions worth examining.

I am equally reminded of Vincent van Gogh, whose artistic contribution received far greater recognition after his lifetime. His experience illustrates that the value of creative work is not always fully appreciated by its immediate audience.

But there is another lesson here: creative excellence matters, and so does the ability to communicate that excellence to the world.

Uwem Mbot Umana, a writer, educator, transformation expert, and literary enthusiast, can be reached via uwem.umana@eymbox.com



Opinion

www.guardian.ng Guardian Nigeria GuardianNigeria 08136370421 Guardiannigeria

Fixing Nigeria's electricity challenges: The next frontier

By **Akin Olukiran**

THE engine of any economy aspiring to sustainable development is electricity. It is the indispensable fuel of industrialisation, commercial productivity, technological advancement and economic prosperity. President Bola Ahmed Tinubu has set an ambitious target of transforming Nigeria into a trillion-dollar economy. That aspiration, however, will remain little more than an economic aspiration unless it is underpinned by reliable, affordable and sufficient electricity. No nation can seriously contemplate industrial transformation, global competitiveness or sustained economic expansion while its productive capacity remains hostage to an erratic power supply.

Nigeria's electricity crisis has become one of the most debilitating impediments to national development. It is not simply a question of inadequate generation capacity or ageing infrastructure; it is a complex manifestation of institutional failure, regulatory weaknesses, political compromises and entrenched vested interests. Indeed, the sector has, over several decades, evolved into an ecosystem of inefficiency in which the persistence of dysfunction appears to serve certain interests better than the restoration of efficiency.

The electricity conundrum is, in some respects, the other great Nigerian economic scam, not necessarily because every participant is culpable, but because a system that consistently fails its consumers while rewarding inefficiency cannot be allowed to perpetuate itself indefinitely.

There are uncomfortable parallels between the electricity crisis and the erstwhile fuel subsidy regime. Both have been characterised by opaque arrangements, institutional weaknesses, rent-seeking opportunities and powerful interests with a vested interest in preserving the status quo. For decades, successive administrations acknowledged the problems, established committees, committed colossal sums of public money, announced policy interventions and promised fundamental restructuring. Yet, the political courage required to confront the underlying distortions remained elusive. The result is a country endowed with enormous human and natural resources but still unable to provide one of the most basic prerequisites for economic advancement.

President Tinubu has demonstrated a willingness to confront some of these deeply entrenched economic distortions. The removal of fuel subsidy and the attempt to dismantle the distortions and arbitrage opportunities in the foreign exchange market were politically difficult decisions that successive governments had either postponed or approached with considerable trepidation. Their consequences, particularly the immediate hardship imposed on households and businesses, remain legitimate subjects of debate. Nevertheless, the underlying imperative of confronting unsustainable economic arrangements cannot be dismissed merely because the process of reform is painful.

This is precisely why I believe PBAT deserves a second term to confront what may well be the most formidable economic challenge confronting Nigeria: electricity. Having demonstrated the political appetite to tackle two of the country's most contentious economic distortions, he should now be afforded the opportunity to take on the electricity behemoth with comparable determination. It would be unfortunate if the political capital expended on the first phase of economic reforms were not followed by a sustained assault on the structural impediments to productivity and growth.

Electricity must become the defining economic priority of his second-term agenda in 2027. And this cannot be another exercise in policy declarations, institutional reshuffling or the establishment of yet another presidential committee. Nigeria has had more than its fair share of electricity master plans. What it needs now is an uncompromising implementation strategy, backed by presidential authority, clear accountability and measurable performance targets.

The complexity of the challenge must, however, be properly understood. Electricity reform is not synonymous with increasing generation alone. It requires a comprehensive intervention across the entire value chain: adequate and dependable gas supply, generation capacity, transmission infrastructure, distribution efficiency, commercial viability, metering, realistic but affordable tariffs, regulatory discipline and the protection of consumers. Generating electricity that cannot be transmitted efficiently or distributed commercially is an exercise in economic futility. Equally, asking consumers to pay more for a service that remains unreliable is neither sustainable nor equitable. The objective must be a system in which investment is rewarded, inefficiency is penalised and consumers receive value for money.

The recently evolving electricity market, including the opportunities for greater state participation, also presents an opportunity to rethink the architecture of the sector. Federal and state governments must move beyond jurisdictional rivalry towards a coordinated framework that encourages investment, competition and accountability. The private sector must be empowered to participate meaningfully, but privatisation must not become a convenient euphemism for transferring public monopolies into private hands without corresponding improvements in efficiency and service delivery.

More importantly, the political economy of the electricity sector must be confronted headlong. There will inevitably be powerful interests uncomfortable with reforms that threaten established privileges and lucrative arrangements. Some will resist, others will obstruct, and many will seek to dilute the process. This is where presidential resolve becomes indispensable. Reform cannot succeed if government is unwilling to challenge those who benefit from the dysfunction it seeks to correct.

And who better to consider for the political leadership of this undertaking than the incumbent Minister of the Federal Capital Territory? Nigeria needs a leader with the temperament, political authority and administrative audacity to confront entrenched interests without being overly concerned about whose toes might be stepped upon or whose ox might be gored. The electricity challenge demands someone prepared to make difficult decisions, insist on performance and hold powerful institutions and vested interests to account. The FCT Minister's forceful administrative disposition makes him a compelling candidate for consideration in this regard.

I look forward to the day when Nigeria's electricity crisis is finally conquered and I can join him in celebrating the triumph, perhaps singing along to the familiar refrain: "As e dey pain them, e dey sweet us…!"

Of course, political fearlessness alone will not illuminate Nigeria. The assignment must be supported by first-rate engineers, energy economists, financial experts, regulatory professionals and experienced industry practitioners. The political leader must provide the direction, authority and determination; the technical team must provide the expertise and execution. Above all, the President must be prepared to give the undertaking the institutional backing and sustained political attention it requires.

Nigeria cannot aspire to a trillion-dollar economy while its manufacturers depend on expensive generators, small businesses spend a disproportionate share of their income on alternative energy, hospitals struggle with unreliable electricity and households remain trapped in an endless cycle of darkness.

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

Olukiran, a social and political analyst wrote from London. He can be reached via: olukiran@yahoo.co.uk

Justice Lifu's judgment, Atiku's fate and road to 2027

By **Tunde Rahman**

SOME judgments settle a dispute. Some judgments can reorder a nation's politics. The judgment delivered on November 5, 2026, by Justice Peter Lifu of the Federal High Court, Abuja, in Suit No. FHC/ABJ/CS/1819/2025 – Nafiu Bala Gombe versus African Democratic Congress and Others – belongs to the second category.

That judgment did not just decide who leads a party. It has placed former Vice President Atiku Abubakar's presidential ambition and the future of the ADC in suspense, and perhaps created a crisis of perception for the 2027 general election.

What did the court actually decide? Let me state from the get-go that neither the All Progressives Congress nor President Bola Tinubu filed the case. A member of the ADC itself– Nafiu Bala Gombe, the former Deputy National Chairman (North-East), - filed it.

Gombe argued that after the former National Chairman, Ralph Nwosu, resigned, leadership should have devolved to him under the party's constitution. Instead, he argued, a caretaker leadership led by former Senate President David Mark and former Osun Governor Rauf Aregbesola was imposed at the 99th National Executive Committee meeting on July 27, 2025, without a democratic election.

Justice Lifu agreed with him. Among other things, the judge held that David Mark's emergence as National Chairman and Rauf Aregbesola's emergence as National Secretary were unlawful. He also stated that Nafiu Bala Gombe's purported resignation letter was fictitious. After comparing the signatures on the letter with Gombe's sworn witness statements, the judge found material differences and held that the document could not be relied upon.

Justice Lifu then ordered that all actions, decisions, and steps taken by the David Mark-led National Working Committee from July 27, 2025, are null, void, and without effect, and that the Independent National Electoral Commission should not recognise the Mark-led leadership.

The legal anchor was Section 82 (3) of the Electoral Act 2022, which requires political parties to elect their officers democratically. According to Justice Lifu, neither a NEC resolution nor INEC's administrative recognition could substitute for that statutory requirement.

This is how the judgment affects former Vice President Atiku Abubakar. Admittedly, Atiku was not a party to the suit, and his name, according to his lawyers, was not expressly mentioned in the operative orders after the Certified True Copy was finally released on Wednesday, November 11.

But this logic is consequential. If the leadership that conducted the ADC presidential primary was essentially invalid, then the primary it conducted is also called into question. That is why news media reports from the judgment concluded that the process that produced Atiku as the ADC presidential candidate for the January 16, 2027 election has been invalidated.

Expectedly, the ADC disagrees. Its lawyer, Kalu Kalu, SAN, argued on national television thus: "The judgment of Honourable Justice Peter Lifu does not in any way void the candidacy of Atiku Abubakar… No portion of that judgment voids the candidacy of Atiku Abubakar and other candidates of the party."

That is now the central legal argument that will be tested at the Court of Appeal. The ADC filed its notice of appeal on November 6, alongside an application for stay of execution, and has urged INEC not to act until the appeal is determined.

INEC, for its part, has taken a cautious approach. Its National Commissioner, Mohammed Haruna, said the Commission would not act until it receives and studies the Certified True Copy. That delay – five days before the CTC was released – itself became a controversy, with ADC candidates protesting at the Federal High Court and petitioning the Chief Judge, Justice John Tsoho.

Two conflicting judgments, one party

The crisis is also deepened by another fact: the ADC says it already had a judgment in its favour.

An earlier judgment by Justice Musa Liman of the same Federal High Court had, according to the party, affirmed the legitimacy of the Mark-led leadership. The ADC says it relied on that judgment.

The country now faces a familiar problem: two judgments from courts of coordinate jurisdiction, pointing in different directions, on the same party leadership tussle. Can a party or the electoral commission choose which of the two judgments to respect? Only the Court of Appeal – and ultimately the Supreme Court – can resolve which one stands.

This development is not new in Nigerian politics. From PDP to APC to Labour Party, internal leadership disputes have repeatedly been a deciding factor regarding who is on the ballot, not the voters, or who the voters actually voted for among warring candidates.

The law has apparently become the new primary election.

What does all of this mean on the road to the 2027 governorship election?

For President Bola Tinubu and the APC, the judgment is politically convenient, but it may also be legally delicate.

It removes – at least temporarily – APC's most experienced challenger from the ballot. Atiku, contesting for the seventh and perhaps last time, was the anchor for some opposition figures who adopted the ADC as their platform. Without him, the coalition loses its centre of gravity.

That is why the ADC Presidential Campaign Council, through its spokesman Kola Ologbondiyan, has accused the APC of working towards a "coronation, not an election", and seeking to ensure no strong opposition candidate stands against President Tinubu.

The APC rejects that charge. Its position is simple: the crisis is self-inflicted. The ADC broke its own constitution; a member went to court, and the court ruled.

President Tinubu and the APC cannot be blamed for a party's internal failure to follow the Electoral Act.

Nonetheless, both parties' narratives will dominate the campaign.

But a larger question goes beyond Atiku and President Tinubu, and is now being discussed in some circles: can a democracy be healthy if a court removes its main opposition rather than the ballot box?

Supporters of the judgment argue that the rule of law must apply to parties too. If a party does not elect its leaders democratically, it cannot claim to be democratic. Atiku and company failed to carry out sufficient due diligence in their quest to "privatise" another party. So, who should be blamed for that? Couldn't they have formed their own new party?

For Atiku, though, there is something that seems just so poetic – or increasingly like the hand of Karma, in the conundrum he finds himself. It could indeed be described as a comeuppance of sorts for the former vice president who is busy moving from one court in Nigeria and the United States to another, seeking President Tinubu's disqualification.

However, critics argue that the timing of the Justice Lifu judgment – barely two months to the election – and the consequential effect on all ADC candidates, from President to State Assembly, risks disenfranchising millions of voters who have already aligned with the party.

Rotimi Amaechi, Atiku's running mate, warned that the judgment "could cause a civil war if not properly managed". This statement seems unguarded and could be self-indicting even for the ADC, because the law is what it is: the law.

In the 2019 general elections, the Supreme Court ruled that Rivers APC had no candidate for the governorship and House of Assembly elections. The situation in Zamfara was even more dramatic. The APC had won every political contest in the state: governorship, the three Senatorial seats, the seven House of Representatives seats and the 24 seats in the State House of Assembly.

But when the matter got to the court, the Supreme Court thought otherwise. Even though the electorate had voted for the APC, the court ruled that since the party didn't conduct primaries, it had no candidates in the election. The court awarded the victory to the PDP, which came second in the election. Yet, the heavens did not fall.

As it stands today, Atiku has three possible futures. One, victory at the Court of Appeal: if the Court of Appeal sets aside Justice Lifu's judgment or grants a stay, Atiku returns to the ballot, and the ADC contest proceeds. The ADC and Atiku are banking on this scenario.

Two, a defeat at the Court of Appeal: if the judgment stands, Atiku would need a new platform – but with INEC's timetable almost closed, defecting to another party and conducting a fresh primary would seem legally and logistically impossible.

Three, political settlement: Nigerian politics has a long history of out-of-court settlements in party crises. Nafiu Gombe could withdraw, or a fresh, court-supervised convention could be ordered. This is the least talked-about outcome.

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

Rahman, Senior Special Assistant to the President on Media and Special Duties, is a Fellow of the Nigerian Guild of Editors.

Opinion

www.guardian.ng Guardian Nigeria GuardianNigeria 08136370421 Guardiannigeria

Street urchins in London and Cinna the poet moment

By **Sola Adeola**

HONESTLY, the London episode deserves a comedy award. I have been wondering what exactly went through the minds of some of these protesters. How do you travel all the way to London to make a political statement, armed with placards, rehearsed slogans and righteous indignation, only for a photograph circulating around the controversy to be wrongly identified?

Imagine the scene. You have prepared your placards, rehearsed your chants, put on your best London accent and perhaps even practised shouting your slogans with the appropriate British intonation. Then comes a photograph of Tunde Doherty, and some people confidently identify him as Professor Joash Amupitan, the INEC Chairman. Kai! What a spectacular own goal!

One would have thought that establishing the identity of the person in the photograph would be the easiest part of the exercise. But apparently, that little detail escaped the preparation committee. Everything was ready except the facts.

I could not help remembering William Shakespeare's Julius Caesar, particularly the unfortunate story of Cinna the poet.

For those who may have forgotten their literature, Cinna the poet appears in Act III, Scene III. Following Caesar's assassination, an angry Roman mob is hunting for the conspirators. Unfortunately, it encounters a poet who shares a name with Cinna the conspirator.

They ask him his name.

"Cinna," he replies.

That is all the mob needs to hear. When he explains that he is a poet, not the conspirator they are looking for, they refuse to listen. His explanation makes no difference. They decide that he must pay simply because he bears the same name as the man they want. They eventually tear him to pieces.

Just imagine! A man goes out as a poet and ends up paying for somebody else's identity.

Now, what if our London protesters had taken their mistaken-identity drama a little further? Tunde Doherty could have become the Cinna the poet of our own political comedy, an unsuspecting man caught in the crossfire of other people's anger simply because somebody failed to establish his identity.

Thank goodness we were spared such a Shakespearean tragedy. It is one thing to make a fool of yourself on social media. It is quite another to expose an unconnected person to hostility.

The lesson is simple. Before you confront anybody, make sure you have found the right person. Shakespeare understood, centuries ago, that a mob driven by anger rather than reason can become dangerous.

But wait. The London comedy has another interesting dimension. It is not just the mistaken identity. It is also the vocabulary some of these protesters have chosen to describe President Bola Ahmed Tinubu.

Suddenly, everybody has become a lawyer. The President is called an *Olódò,* an ex-convict and virtually every other name that can be squeezed into a protest chant.

Ex-convict!

I actually find this one amusing. Do these people understand what the expression means? An ex-convict is someone who has previously been convicted of a criminal offence. It is not a convenient political insult to pick up whenever you run out of arguments.

There is a difference between an allegation, an investigation, a civil forfeiture proceeding, a criminal prosecution and a criminal conviction. These are distinct legal concepts. They do not become interchangeable simply because somebody is angry with the President.

The often-cited 1993 United States civil forfeiture proceedings involving funds held in accounts associated with Tinubu are part of the public record and deserve scrutiny. But a civil forfeiture proceeding and its outcome should not automatically be described as a criminal conviction of the person associated with the funds. Legal language matters, particularly when making serious allegations against another person.

You may disagree with Tinubu. You may dislike his policies, criticise his appointments, challenge his economic decisions and demand accountability. Nobody is stopping you. That is what democracy is about. But you cannot manufacture a criminal conviction with a placard. Neither can you turn an allegation into a judicial finding by shouting it repeatedly.

The same goes for the *Olódò* label. What exactly is the argument? Is that now the standard vocabulary of political engagement? When insults become the substance of a protest, one begins to wonder whether the message has run out of ideas.

There is also an irony worth mentioning. Some of those who readily throw such insults from London have made another man's country their home. There is absolutely nothing wrong with seeking a better life abroad. Nigerians in the diaspora contribute enormously to their families and to the country. But living in London does not automatically confer a certificate of superior patriotism.

You can live abroad and still love Nigeria. You can live in Nigeria and be deeply critical of its government. The issue is not where you live. It is whether your criticism is informed, fair and responsible. A loud voice and an imported accent are not substitutes for facts.

My concern is that political discourse is increasingly becoming a competition in name-calling. Every allegation is treated as an established fact. Every disagreement becomes an opportunity for abuse. Every photograph is accepted as evidence, even when the person in it has been wrongly identified.

And when the truth eventually emerges, everybody simply moves on as if nothing happened.

Let me make something clear. Nigerians living abroad have every right to protest against their government. They can question INEC, demand electoral credibility and insist that public officials account for their actions. Nobody should confuse legitimate protest with an attempt to silence dissent.

But the right to protest does not come with a licence to abandon common sense. If you want to hold somebody accountable, first establish who that person is. If you want to accuse somebody of a crime, understand the law and produce evidence.

You cannot be looking for Professor Amupitan and end up identifying Tunde Doherty. You cannot demand accountability while failing the most basic test of identification. And you certainly cannot turn the word ex-convict into a political nickname.

Honestly, the London episode has provided enough material for a comedy series. The placards were ready, the voices were loud, but the facts were apparently on holiday.

Perhaps somebody should remind these protesters that political activism is not a shouting competition. Neither is London a theatre where every loud performance deserves applause.

Before you bark, know who you are barking at. Before you throw labels around, understand what they mean. And before you demand somebody's resignation, make sure you have found the person whose resignation you are demanding.

Otherwise, you may travel all the way to London, organise a protest, raise your placards and return home with nothing more than a spectacular case of mistaken identity.

Shakespeare gave us Cinna the poet. London almost gave us another version.

The trouble with political activism without facts is that, sometimes, the only thing being exposed is the intellectual poverty of the activists themselves.

And in another episode of Nigerian political theatre, the ADC has reportedly received a phone call from beyond the grave, with Buhari allegedly requesting that his 12 million votes be transferred to the party. Apparently, even in the great beyond, voter registration and political realignment remain unfinished business. Who says Nigerian politics ever runs out of surprises?

Adeola is a commentator on governance, security, criminology, public policy and strategic communication.

Beyond connectivity: What Africa's digital transformation needs next

By **Chiziterem Ngozi-Olehi**

FOR years, one of the defining conversations around Africa's digital future has been connectivity. How many people have access to the internet? How quickly are broadband networks expanding? How affordable is data? How many people have smartphones? How much digital infrastructure is being deployed? These are important questions. Connectivity remains one of the foundations of digital participation, and large parts of the continent still have significant gaps to close.

But as Africa's digital ecosystem matures, the conversation needs to evolve. The next phase of Africa's digital transformation cannot be measured only by how many people and institutions are connected. The more important question is what that connectivity enables them to do. According to the Global Systems for Mobile Communications Association, GSMA's September 2026 roadmap for Africa's digital connectivity, around 906 million people live within mobile broadband coverage but still do not use mobile internet.

Another 122 million people remain outside the reach of mobile broadband altogether. In other words, the continent's challenge is no longer only about building networks. It is increasingly about turning access into meaningful participation. This represents a significant shift in the digital transformation conversation.

All over the world connectivity is an enabler of digital transformation

It is not digital transformation itself. A connected student who still cannot access quality learning is not experiencing the full value of digital transformation. A hospital with sophisticated technology that does not improve patient outcomes has not necessarily become digitally transformed. A government that puts forms online but leaves citizens navigating the same inefficient processes has digitised a process without necessarily transforming the service. Technology creates possibilities. Transformation happens when those possibilities produce meaningful change.

Connectivity was the beginning, not the destination. Africa has made significant progress in building the infrastructure required for some measure of digital economy. Mobile connectivity has expanded dramatically across the continent, digital financial services have transformed how millions of people transact, and technology companies have created new ways for people to work, communicate, learn and access services. These developments matter because they create the foundation upon which digital transformation can happen.

But infrastructure is only an enabler. A road can connect two places without necessarily improving what happens at either destination. In much the same way, a broadband network can connect a community without automatically improving education, healthcare, commerce or public services. The numbers increasingly make this distinction clear. The GSMA estimates that mobile technologies and services contributed approximately $240 billion to Africa's economy in 2025, equivalent to 7.8 per cent of the continent's GDP.

Yet almost one billion Africans still did not use mobile internet despite living within coverage. The major barriers include device affordability, digital skills, safety concerns and the availability of relevant services and content. That means the continent's digital challenge is increasingly moving from coverage to usage. The question is gradually shifting from "Can we connect people?" to "What can we enable because people are connected?" That is a much harder question.

It requires us to think beyond infrastructure and consider the systems, products, services and institutions that sit on top of it. Someone may technically have access to a mobile network but still be unable to afford a smartphone. They may own a smartphone but lack the skills or confidence to use digital services. They may have internet access but find that the services available online do little to address their immediate needs.

The real test is what changes

Digital transformation is sometimes treated as a technology acquisition exercise. An organisation purchases new infrastructure, deploys a software platform, moves workloads to the cloud, introduces analytics or adopts artificial intelligence, and the project is considered a success. But technology can be successfully deployed without an organisation being meaningfully transformed. The real test is what changes afterwards. Does a teacher have better tools to reach students? Can a doctor access the information needed to make better decisions? Can a citizen access a government service without navigating unnecessary bureaucracy? Can a business make faster and better-informed decisions? Can an organisation reduce costs, improve productivity or serve customers more effectively?

The foregoing are the outcomes that give technology its value. This is why digital transformation needs to be understood as more than the implementation of technology. It is ultimately about changing how people, organisations and institutions operate. There are already examples of what this can look like when digital infrastructure is connected to a broader system. Consider Ethiopia's Fayda digital identity programme. Digital identity is not transformative simply because millions of people receive an identification number. Its real value emerges when that identity becomes a gateway to other parts of the economy and public-service system.

The World Bank reports that more than 36.6 million residents had been registered under Fayda by 2026. More importantly, digital identity has been connected to practical outcomes: 1.3 million households transitioned to digital payments, while more than 1,600 business licenses and 6,600 work permits were issued to refugees, supporting their participation in the formal economy. Fayda has also enabled people, including women and displaced populations, to access financial services, social protection and other essential services. These examples point to a broader principle: The value of digital infrastructure grows when it becomes part of systems that solve real problems.

Africa's digital challenges are often system challenges:

One of the reasons digital transformations can be difficult is that many of the problems we are trying to solve are not purely technological. Consider education. Providing schools with devices and internet access is important, but it does not automatically improve learning. The technology has to fit into a broader system involving teachers, curriculum, content, training, assessment, infrastructure and students. The same principle applies to healthcare.

A digital health platform may be technically impressive, but its value depends on whether healthcare professionals can actually use it, whether the necessary data exists, whether the infrastructure is reliable, whether patients can access the service and whether it fits into the way healthcare is delivered. Technology is only one part of the equation.

This is why some of Africa's most important digital challenges are actually system-design challenges. Solutions designed for markets with very different infrastructure, purchasing power, institutional structures and user behaviour cannot always be transferred directly into African environments and expected to produce the same results.

Africa does not need technology designed for an imaginary "African user." It needs technology designed with the realities of African users in mind. That means understanding the environment in which the technology will operate, not simply the technology itself.

A digital product designed for a market with reliable electricity, high smartphone penetration, established digital identity infrastructure and widespread digital literacy is operating within a very different environment from one serving communities where those conditions cannot be assumed. The question therefore should not simply be: "What technology worked somewhere else?"

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

Ngozi-Olehi is a Tech-Product and Solutions Manager based in Abuja.

TheGuardian Business

www.guardian.ng Wednesday, November 25, 2026 Guardian Nigeria GuardianNigeria 08136370421 Guardiannigeria

CRUDE OIL PRICE UPDATE Brent crude: $108.6| WTI crude: $105.9 **FOREX MARKET UPDATE** I&E Window: N1,332.69

How fleet combination affects airlines' operating costs, efficiency

By Olusegun Koiki

THE use of multiple aircraft types is increasing airlines' operating costs and limiting efficiency, the Head of Commercial, Umza Airlines, Adedeji Awotunde, has said.

Speaking with aviation correspondents in Lagos yesterday, Awotunde said the airline was adopting a fleet strategy centred on a limited number of aircraft types to control operating costs and ensure long-term sustainability in Nigeria's challenging aviation environment.

According to him, operating different aircraft types increases maintenance, training and personnel costs, potentially undermining profitability in an industry already burdened by high operating expenses.

He emphasised that the airline was currently restricting its fleet development to Airbus aircraft, despite plans to introduce a Bombardier aircraft into its operations.

He said the decision was informed by the need to conserve resources and avoid the complexities associated with maintaining different aircraft types.

"Multi-aircraft type, sincerely, because of my weight of experience now with this aviation industry, I have worked directly with decision-makers when it comes to this and I see the challenges they go through when they want to switch aircraft type.

Awotunde advised Nigerian airlines to maintain uniform fleets where possible, adding that operators should limit their aircraft types to a maximum of two if business considerations make a single fleet impractical.

He also identified exchange rate stability as a major factor supporting the airline's operations, particularly in aircraft maintenance, spare-parts procurement and other dollar-denominated obligations.

He said the relative stability of the dollar in recent months had helped the airline maintain its maintenance budgets and return aircraft to service without the financial shocks previously experienced by operators.

Awotunde said rising aviation fuel costs had also continued to put pressure on the airline's operations, noting that fuel consumption accounted for a significant proportion of its revenue.

He appealed to the Federal Government to consider measures to ease the burden of aviation fuel prices, noting that the sustainability of domestic airlines was critical to national security and economic activities.

He said Umza was also working to improve operational reliability by maintaining one of its four aircraft as a standby plane to minimise disruptions caused by technical or operational challenges.

According to him, three aircraft are deployed at full operational capacity, while the fourth is reserved for lighter operations and backup duties.

The airline, he said, was also pursuing plans to establish cargo operations in 2027, expand its partnerships, join global distribution systems and eventually commence international operations to Europe and Asia within the next five to 10 years.



Registrar, Chartered Institute of Taxation of Nigeria (CITN), Folake Oso (left); Chairman, Membership and Professional Conduct Committee, Dr Yemi Sanni; Vice President, Simon Kato; President, Innocent Ohagwa; special guest and Tax Lead and Partner, International Tax and Transaction Services, EY, Akinbiyi Abudu and Deputy Vice President, CITN, Titilayo Fowokan, during the 55th induction ceremony of CITN in Lagos.
PHOTO: AYODELE ADENIRAN

MPC retains 23% interest rate as CBN commits to naira stability

From Collins Olayinka, Abuja

• Monthly diaspora remittances above $900m

THE Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) has retained its benchmark interest rate at 23 per cent, signalling a neutral approach to inflation management.

The decision was reached at the 308th meeting of the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC), held in Abuja yesterday.

Speaking after the meeting, the MPC Chairman and CBN Governor, Yemi Cardoso, said the decision reflected five consecutive months of declining inflation and an improvement in the country's external reserves.

The committee also retained the asymmetric standing facilities corridor at +50 and -300 basis points around the Monetary Policy Rate (MPR).

Similarly, it maintained the cash reserve ratio (CRR) at 45 per cent for deposit money banks, 16 per cent for merchant banks and 75 per cent for non-Treasury Single Account (TSA) public sector deposits.

The decision underscores the apex bank's preference for policy consistency as it seeks to consolidate price stability, improve foreign exchange liquidity and strengthen confidence in the naira.

Although headline inflation declined to 14.06 per cent in October 2026 from 14.63 per cent in September, the committee identified emerging risks that could undermine the disinflation process. These include increased end-of-year spending, election-related expenditure and potential disruptions to global energy supplies arising from the Middle East conflict.

Food inflation moderated to 19.13 per cent from 19.59 per cent, while core inflation declined more significantly to 10.78 per cent from 12.95 per cent, reflecting the impact of tight monetary conditions and relative stability in the foreign exchange market.

Explaining the committee's decision, Cardoso said the monetary authorities were encouraged by improvements in market indicators, particularly the movement of interbank rates towards the lower end of the standing facilities corridor.

He noted that Open Market Operations (OMO) and Treasury bill rates had also declined, indicating improved alignment between monetary policy rates and market conditions.

According to him, the narrowing gap between policy and market rates suggests that recent adjustments are producing the desired results while creating conditions for a gradual moderation in borrowing costs.

Cardoso also disclosed that credit to the private sector had begun to increase gradually, expressing optimism that improving monetary conditions would support lower borrowing costs.

On the foreign exchange market, the CBN governor reassured investors and businesses that Nigeria's external position remained strong despite recent fluctuations in reserves and exchange rates.

Gross external reserves stood at $54.02 billion as of November 17, 2026, providing approximately 10.26 months of import cover for goods and services.

Cardoso described the reserve position as a substantial buffer against external shocks, attributing recent foreign exchange pressures partly to seasonal factors, including portfolio investors' end-of-year adjustments and increased demand by domestic businesses seeking to hedge against future obligations.

He also identified election-related spending as an additional source of demand pressure, expressing confidence that foreign exchange volatility would moderate as the economy moves into the new year.

The governor said Nigeria's external position was also being supported by improved diaspora remittances, which exceeded $900 million in the preceding month, alongside a sustained current account surplus.

He assured businesses and investors that the CBN would continue to deploy appropriate measures to preserve the stability achieved in the foreign exchange market.

The MPC's focus on foreign exchange stability was also reflected in its endorsement of a Memorandum of Understanding between the CBN and the Nigerian National Petroleum Company Limited (NNPCL).

The agreement is designed to strengthen foreign exchange inflows, support energy project financing and improve macroeconomic stability.

Cardoso explained that the agreement followed several months of consultations between the two institutions to identify operational challenges, improve coordination and establish clearer responsibilities.

He expressed confidence that the arrangement would deepen institutional collaboration, improve foreign exchange market liquidity, support further accumulation of external reserves and strengthen investor confidence.

France, Nigeria deepen economic ties with energy, agribusiness deals

By Benjamin Alade

FRANCE and Nigeria intend to deepen bilateral economic cooperation with the signing of three agribusiness agreements and the development of an energy roadmap during French Week 2026 in Lagos.

The week-long programme, organised by the Franco-Nigerian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FNCCI), brought together government officials, businesses, investors and industry stakeholders across the energy, agriculture and technology sectors.

In a statement issued yesterday, the FNCCI said the engagements focused on strengthening commercial partnerships and creating opportunities for French investment in Nigeria, particularly in energy and agribusiness.

Speaking on the outcomes, the Consul General of France in Lagos, Laurent Favier, said the engagements marked a shift from diplomatic discussions towards concrete business opportunities.

The programme featured the inaugural France-Nigeria Energy Roundtable, co-chaired by TotalEnergies and SPIE Global Services Energy, as well as the France-Nigeria Agri-Business Summit, held in partnership with the France-Nigeria Agribusiness Club.

At the energy roundtable, industry stakeholders, including Nigeria LNG Limited (NLNG) and ExxonMobil, examined investment opportunities and infrastructure challenges in Nigeria's oil and gas sector, with emphasis on the country's gas development agenda.

NLNG Managing Director, Adeleye Falade, said utilisation at the company's facilities had risen to 81 per cent, while the completion of the Train 7 project was expected to increase domestic liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) supply by about 50 per cent.

Participants stressed the need for policy stability, predictable pricing and an investment-friendly operating environment to attract long-term capital into Nigeria's energy infrastructure.

FNCCI President, Guillaume Niarfeix, said investments in the sector must also translate into stronger participation by Nigerian businesses across the value chain.

He said developing Nigeria's energy potential would require long-term capital and a stable operating environment, while stressing the importance of ensuring that investments create sustainable value for local businesses.

Oyetola woos Polish investors to Nigeria's fisheries, aquaculture sectors

By Adaku Onyenucheya

THE Minister of Marine and Blue Economy, Adegboyega Oyetola, has urged Polish investors to take advantage of investment opportunities in Nigeria's fisheries and aquaculture sectors, saying strategic partnerships could boost domestic production, create jobs and strengthen food security.

Oyetola made the call in Lagos on Tuesday while delivering his goodwill message at the Polish-Nigerian Economic Forum held in Lagos.

He described Nigeria's marine and blue economy as a promising frontier for bilateral economic cooperation, urging Polish investors to bring investment capital, modern technology, technical expertise and sustainable production systems to unlock the sector's potential.

He identified fish production, processing, storage, cold-chain logistics, aquaculture technology, feed production, equipment manufacturing and export development as key areas offering investment opportunities.

According to him, investments in the areas would help increase domestic fish production, reduce dependence on imports, generate employment, empower coastal communities and create economic value.

"These investments can help boost local production, reduce fish import dependence, create employment, strengthen food security, empower coastal communities, and generate significant economic value," Oyetola said.

The minister also appreciated the Polish Government for supporting Nigeria's Port Modernisation Programme, describing the gesture as a reflection of Poland's confidence in the country's economic potential and commitment to strengthening bilateral relations.

He said the partnership would contribute to developing efficient, modern and competitive maritime infrastructure, noting that the programme was scheduled for flag-off in Lagos on Wednesday, November 25.

Oyetola said Nigeria-Poland cooperation should extend beyond port infrastructure to other critical areas of the marine and blue economy, including fisheries, aquaculture, marine technology and logistics.

Advertorial

The Nigerian Society of Engineers

Special Commendations to A Model of Engineering-Driven Excellence:

Engr. Prof. Babagana Umara Zulum, FNSE, CON, mni

The Council and entire membership of The Nigerian Society of Engineers (NSE), under my leadership as the 35th President, hereby express profound pride and admiration for one of our most distinguished Fellows, the Executive Governor of Borno State, His Excellency, Engr. Prof. Babagana Umara Zulum, FNSE, CON, mni

As a professional body, the NSE has closely monitored the governance landscape in Nigeria, and it is with immense professional satisfaction that we witness the "Engineering Renaissance" that has been unfolding in Borno State in the last eight years. Governor Zulum has not only proven to be an astute administrator but has also remained a quintessential engineer in practice, deploying logic, precision and structural integrity to the task of nation-building.

Massive Infrastructural Transformation

Since assuming office, Governor Zulum has turned Borno State into a vast construction site of hope. From the commissioning of the first flyover in North-East of Nigeria to the construction of thousands of housing units for Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), teachers, the Police and other security personne, as well as construction of ultra-modern schools and state-of-the-art hospitals, his projects are a testament to durable and purposeful engineering. His commitment to high-quality infrastructure, even in the face of security challenges, demonstrates a rare courage fueled by professional excellence.

Empowerment of the Indigenous Engineer

The NSE is particularly gratified by His Excellency's unwavering commitment to Nigerian content. Governor Zulum's policy of prioritising and empowering indigenous engineers and local contractors is outstanding. By trusting the expertise of home-grown professionals, he is not only building structures but also building the capacity of the people and boosting the local economy.

His engagement of local engineers alongside the investments in 100 trucks, a 120-tonne-per-hour quarry plant and four asphalt plants demonstrates a clear commitment to indigenous capacity building and sustainable infrastructure maintenance. He has set a benchmark for other sub-nationals to emulate in domesticating engineering excellence.

Recently also, the Governor announced his administration's approval of the Enhanced Salary Entry Point of Grade Level 09 for engineers in the civil service, with a progression to Grade Level 10 after two years, in accordance with the National Council on Establishment's approved framework. That was an announcement that bolstered the spirits of engineers in Borno State, both young and old.

A Pillar of Support for the NSE

Beyond his public works, Engr. Prof. Zulum has remained a steadfast pillar for the Nigerian Society of Engineers. His consistent support for the activities of the Society – both at the Maiduguri branch and the National Secretariat levels – has been substantially instrumental in advancing the cause of the engineering profession in Nigeria. He has provided an enabling environment for the Maiduguri branch of the NSE to thrive, ensuring that the voice of the engineer is heard in the corridors of power.

The idea of hosting the 2026 engineering conference in Maiduguri was mooted before the Governor in December 2024 and he jumped at it wholeheartedly. Fourteen (14) months after the NSE Council's approval of the hosting rights to the Maiduguri branch, the brand-new Maiduguri International Conference Centre (MICC), an edifice taken from the scratch, is being commissioned today, ready to host its first event – the **2026 International Engineering Conference, Exhibition and Annual General Meeting holding between Monday, November 30 and Friday, December 4, 2026.**

It is a feat that clearly confirms Engr. Prof. Zulum's transformative and forward-thinking leadership model.

A Worthy Ambassador of NSE

In Engr. Prof. Babagana Umara Zulum, FNSE, CON, mni, the engineering profession has found a Worthy Ambassador. He embodies the ethics of our calling – **Integrity**, **Diligence**, and a **Commitment to the Public Good**. He is a living proof that when an engineer leads, the results are measurable, sustainable, and transformative.

On behalf of the Nigerian Society of Engineers, we congratulate "The People's Governor" on these landmark achievements. The NSE remains committed to supporting his vision as he continues to engineer a more prosperous and resilient Borno State.

Long live Borno State!
Long live the Nigerian Society of Engineers!
Long live the Federal Republic of Nigeria!

Signed:
Engr. Ali Alimasuya Rabiu, FNSE, F.ASCE, FAEng, MFR
President



Maiduguri International Conference Centre

Fidelity

Stay ahead of that bind

before it happens.

Let your Savings save you.



SCAN TO OPEN ACCOUNT

FSA

Open a Fidelity Savings Account today

FSA FIDELITY SAVINGS ACCOUNT

*770#, MOBILE BANKING APP, AND CARDS ARE AVAILABLE ON THE FIDELITY SAVINGS ACCOUNT.

Email: trueserve@fidelitybank.ng

We Are Fidelity, We Keep Our Word. www.fidelitybank.ng

Nigeria can save millions of dollars from China's zero-tariff policy, says envoy

By Ngozi Egenuka

NIGERIAN businesses could save millions of dollars in export duties under China's zero-tariff policy for African countries, with a shipment of 747 tonnes of Nigerian products reportedly saving its exporter more than N60 million in tariffs, the Chinese Consul-General in Lagos, Zhou Bin, said.

Speaking yesterday at the Nigeria-China Trade and Investment Forum, themed From Zero Tariff to Full Value: Turning China's Open Market into Nigerian Exports, Investment and Jobs, Bin said the policy covering 53 African countries would boost trade, create jobs and improve livelihoods across the continent.

He said China officially implemented the policy on May 1 as part of efforts to deepen China-Africa economic cooperation and open its vast consumer market to African products, particularly amid rising unilateralism and protectionism globally.

According to him, the initiative would lower the cost of African products entering the Chinese market and provide a long-term framework for both sides to advance economic modernisation.

He urged Nigerian producers and export companies to take advantage of the opportunities by aligning their products with Chinese market requirements, particularly in quality control, supply reliability and brand marketing.

Bin said China was ready to work with Nigeria to improve the business environment for exports through technical assistance, capacity-building programmes, training and dedicated clearance channels for agricultural products.

He also encouraged Nigerian businesses to participate in major trade exhibitions, including the China International Import Expo, the Canton Fair and the China-Africa Economic and Trade Expo, to expand partnerships and promote Nigerian products.

He expressed optimism that the zero-tariff policy would translate into tangible benefits for Nigerian businesses and strengthen commercial relations between both countries.

However, Director-General of the Nigerian Institute of International Affairs (NIIA), Prof. Eghosa Osaghae, described China's zero-tariff policy as a potential game changer in Africa-China trade relations, stressing the need for stronger regulatory frameworks and good governance to maximise its benefits.

He raised concerns about transparency in the operations of Chinese businesses in Nigeria, calling for clearer identification of companies and greater accountability in their activities.

Air Peace adds London-Owerri connections from December 15

By Olusegun Koiki

AIR Peace is set to strengthen its international connectivity with the introduction of London-Owerri flight connections from December 15.

In a statement, the airline's Corporate Communications Manager, Efe Osifo-Whiskey, said the new connection would offer travellers in Imo State and the wider South-East greater convenience and accessibility when travelling to and from the United Kingdom.

The connection forms part of the airline's efforts to expand travel opportunities across its international and domestic networks, providing passengers departing London through Gatwick and Heathrow with a more convenient option for travelling to Owerri.

The airline said the development was made possible through the partnership and commitment of Imo State Governor, Hope Uzodimma, with the support of the Minister of Aviation and Aerospace Development, Festus Keyamo, who implemented President Bola Tinubu's approval for Owerri Airport to be used for international operations.



Executive Director, Technology eTranzact Plc, Olayiwola Okunola (left); Independent Non Executive Director, Omobola Hollist; Managing Director/ Chief Executive Officer, Niyi Toluwalope; Board Chairman, Wole Abegunde; Company Secretary, Tosin Kembi; Non Executive Director, Olatunde Akande and Independent Non Executive Director, Hauwa Bello at the eTranzact 22nd yearly general meeting held in Lagos.

Spectranet exits Ibadan, Port Harcourt, consolidates Lagos, Abuja operations

By Adeyemi Adepetun

SPECTRANET Limited is consolidating its operations in Lagos and Abuja, announcing plans to discontinue broadband services in Ibadan and Port Harcourt after a six-month notice period, citing rising operating costs and mounting challenges in sustaining service quality.

The broadband internet service provider said the decision followed a review of its operations in the two cities, where increasing operational costs had placed significant pressure on its ability to maintain service standards.

The company explained that rather than allow the rising costs to undermine service quality, it had opted to concentrate its resources on Lagos and Abuja, where it would continue to strengthen its operations and improve customer experience.

Under the arrangement, subscribers in Ibadan and Port Harcourt will receive six months' advance notice, during which existing services and customer support will remain available. Services in the two cities will cease at the end of the notice period.

The company stressed that the planned withdrawal would not affect its operations in Lagos and Abuja, where it intends to sustain and improve broadband service delivery.

Speaking on the development, Spectranet's Chief Operating Officer, Sumit Gambhir, described the decision as difficult but necessary in view of the prevailing operational challenges.

"Our decision to discontinue services in Ibadan and Port Harcourt was not taken lightly. We recognise the trust our subscribers have placed in Spectranet over the years and the important role connectivity plays in their daily lives.

"By providing six months' advance notice, we want to ensure that affected subscribers have sufficient time to make their own decisions and arrangements before our services cease in the two cities," he said.

Gambhir said the consolidation would enable the company to deploy its operational resources more efficiently and strengthen service delivery in its remaining markets.

'ESG gaps could raise Nigerian business borrowing costs'

By Abigail Ikhaghu

AN audit, advisory, assurance and assessment firm, A4S, has warned that Nigerian businesses without verifiable environmental, social and governance (ESG) records risk facing higher financing costs and reduced access to loans, investments and business contracts.

The firm, which says lenders, investors and export buyers are increasingly demanding evidence of responsible business practices, has introduced a free online ESG readiness tool, Trust-to-Valuation (T2V), to help businesses identify weaknesses that could affect their financing prospects and determine the records needed to address them.

According to A4S, banks, development finance institutions, investors and export buyers are increasingly requesting evidence of governance structures, risk management, certification, supply chain practices and sustainability reporting from businesses seeking finance or commercial opportunities.

However, many small and medium enterprises (SMEs) lack structured systems for assessing their readiness to meet these requirements, leaving them exposed when lenders or prospective investors request documentation.

According to them, the T2V assessment takes about eight minutes and covers 14 sectors, including agriculture, food processing, manufacturing, financial services, healthcare, oil and gas, construction, logistics and education. It also provides an option for businesses operating in other sectors.

Presco appoints new MD amid West African expansion

By Abigail Ikhaghu

PRESCO Plc has appointed Gangadhar Shetty as its new managing director, effective January 1, as the integrated oil palm producer continues to expand its operations across Nigeria and Ghana.

Shetty, who was until recently the managing director of Ghana Oil Palm Development Company (GOPDC), a wholly owned subsidiary of Presco, will succeed the company's outgoing leadership as it oversees an expanding portfolio of plantations and processing operations in the two countries.

As of September 2026, Presco operated 13 estates across Nigeria and Ghana, comprising 11 in Nigeria and two in Ghana. Its operations cover oil palm cultivation, palm oil milling, palm kernel processing, refining and fractionation.

His appointment follows Presco's acquisition of the remaining 48 per cent stake in GOPDC in January 2025, which made the Ghanaian company a wholly-owned subsidiary and its subsequent acquisition of Saro Oil Palm Limited in August 2025.

Shetty brings more than 29 years of experience in agribusiness transformation, commercial operations, global trade and management across West Africa and Asia.

He joined GOPDC as chief commercial officer before rising to become its chief executive officer and subsequently managing director. Under his leadership, the company developed into an integrated agribusiness operation with more than 4,000 employees.



Shetty

FirstBank simplifies personal loans, creates new platforms

FIRSTBANK has introduced two digital platforms to simplify personal loan applications and management, allowing eligible customers to initiate salary-backed credit requests without visiting a branch.

FirstBank has launched two digital platforms, mApply and mServe, to simplify access to and management of its Personal Loan Against Salary (PLAS) facilities, allowing eligible customers to initiate loan applications without visiting a branch.

The bank said the new platforms would digitise key stages of the personal lending process, from application to loan management, as part of efforts to improve customer experience and expand access to credit.

With mApply, eligible customers can initiate and submit PLAS applications through the bank's digital channels, upload required documents, select their employers and preferred branches for processing, and complete the application process remotely.

Previously, customers seeking the facility had to engage the bank through its branches or Relationship Managers to initiate applications.

The new platform is expected to reduce reliance on physical documentation and branch visits at the application stage, making access to personal credit more convenient.

Under the PLAS scheme, eligible salary account holders domiciled with FirstBank, as well as employees of approved organisations willing to move their salary accounts to the bank, can access loans of up to N150 million, with repayment periods of up to 72 months, subject to applicable terms and conditions.

NB marks 80 years with N1.6tr contribution to 2025 GDP

By Tobi Awodipe

NIGERIAN Breweries Plc has put its economic contribution to Nigeria at N1.6 trillion in 2025, as the company marks its 80th anniversary.

It is also rolling out an N80 million consumer reward scheme and nationwide festive activations.

The brewer disclosed this at its anniversary media soirée, where it unveiled its 'Legendary Christmas 2026 Calendar', a series of consumer engagement initiatives and entertainment events scheduled to hold across several cities during the festive season.

The N80 million reward scheme, tagged NB@80 Story Collection Campaign, will see 80 Nigerians receive N1 million each for sharing personal stories and memorable experiences connected to the company and its brands.

The initiative forms part of the brewer's anniversary activities under the theme, 'Together Every Moment', as it seeks to strengthen consumer relationships and reinforce the market presence of its brands.

Managing Director, Nigerian Breweries, Thibaut Boidin, said the company's eight decades of operations had extended beyond beverage production to supporting economic activities, businesses and livelihoods across its value chain.

He noted that the company, which commenced operations in 1946, had evolved into a major player in Nigeria's manufacturing sector, with a broad economic footprint spanning suppliers, distributors, retailers, employees and other business partners.

According to him, the estimated N1.6 trillion contribution to Nigeria's Gross Domestic Product in 2025 underscores the scale of the company's operations and its impact on the wider economy.

"For 80 years, Nigerian Breweries has grown alongside Nigeria. Our story is not simply about the beverages we brew or the brands we have built. It is about the people, communities, businesses and partners who have been part of this journey with us," Boidin said.

He added that the anniversary offered an opportunity to recognise the company's history while creating new experiences and opportunities for consumers and business partners.

"As we celebrate this milestone, we are looking forward as much as we are looking back. 'Together Every Moment' is our way of recognising the millions of moments Nigerians have shared with us over the decades, while creating new experiences and opportunities for people to celebrate with us," he said.

www.guardian.ng

Energy&Solid Minerals

Leveraging CNG campus push for refuelling expansion, lower bus fares

High conversion costs and inadequate refuelling infrastructure have limited the benefits of gas-powered transportation in Nigeria. However, the expansion of refuelling facilities, particularly across university communities, is raising expectations of lower transport costs, improved business margins and wider adoption of compressed natural gas, ***ABIGAIL IKHAGHU*** *reports.*

FOR students and commercial transport operators, the commissioning of four compressed natural gas (CNG) stations at Nigerian universities could represent more than an expansion of the country's gas infrastructure. It could provide access to a cheaper transportation fuel, reduce operating expenses and create opportunities for businesses seeking alternatives to increasingly expensive petrol.

The facilities, commissioned at the University of Lagos (UNILAG), University of Ibadan (UI), Federal University of Technology, Akure (FUTA), and Federal University Oye-Ekiti (FUOYE), are part of the Federal Government's Special Palliative Relief on University Transportation (Project SPROUT).

By bringing refuelling infrastructure closer to university communities, the initiative seeks to address one of the major constraints to CNG adoption: the difficulty of accessing filling stations. For transport operators, particularly those running campus shuttle services, easier access to gas could reduce the time and additional costs associated with travelling long distances to refuel.

The potential economic implications are significant, particularly for operators whose businesses depend on daily fuel purchases. With rising petrol prices putting pressure on transport businesses, switching to CNG could improve operating margins and potentially create room for lower fares.

The Presidential Initiative on Compressed Natural Gas and Electric Vehicles (Pi-CNG & EV) estimates that motorists who switch from petrol to CNG can save between 40 and 60 per cent on fuel costs, depending on vehicle type and driving patterns. For commercial bus operators covering about 200 kilometres daily, the initiative estimates monthly savings of between N15,000 and N25,000 or more.

The potential savings are also reflected in a techno-economic study published in the Journal of Energy Research and Reviews in April 2025. The research, conducted by academics from the Department of Mechanical Engineering at Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, estimated that adopting CNG could reduce fuel expenditure by more than N5,518 for every 100 kilometres compared with petrol. For transport businesses operating several vehicles, such savings could improve profitability, particularly where fuel accounts for a substantial share of daily operating expenses. The availability of refuelling facilities within university communities could also make it easier for shuttle operators to incorporate CNG-powered vehicles into their fleets.

However, the extent to which the newly commissioned stations will translate into lower transport costs will depend on their capacity, regularity of gas supply, operating hours and the number of vehicles they can serve.

Minister of Education, Dr Tunji Alausa, acknowledged the transportation burden facing students, saying the initiative was designed to address one of the major concerns they regularly raise with his ministry.

"Through the Special Palliative Relief on University Transportation, known as Project SPROUT, we are addressing one major concern students raise with us directly: the cost of getting to class," he said.

He said even small savings on individual trips could make a difference to students who commute several times daily. He also urged university authorities and transport operators to ensure that lower operating costs associated with CNG translate into cheaper fares.

"I therefore urge university management and transport operators to work together so that students share in those savings through affordable fares and dependable shuttle services," Alausa said.



Minister of Education, Dr Maruf Tunji Alausa, flanked by the Executive Director of Nigeria's Midstream and Downstream Gas Infrastructure Fund (MDGIF), Oluwole Adama and others at the commissioning of a CNG station at the University of Lagos, Akoka, Lagos.

The National Association of Nigerian Students (NANS) also identified transportation as a major financial burden. Its National President, Comrade Akinteye Babatunde Afeez, said transportation remained one of students' major daily expenses, sometimes forcing them to spend less on other basic needs.

He said the initiative could ease the burden but stressed that its success should be measured by the affordability and quality of transport services available to students.

For students, the economic value of the infrastructure will ultimately be determined by how much they spend on daily movement between their accommodation, lecture halls and other parts of their campuses. Without a reduction in shuttle fares, the benefits of cheaper fuel could remain largely with transport operators.

The university programme is also expected to expand beyond the four recently commissioned facilities. The initiative is being implemented in partnership with FEMADEC Energy Limited, which is responsible for developing the campus facilities.

The company's Chief Executive Officer, Fola Akinnola, said the rollout had reached 11 tertiary institutions, with more facilities being prepared for commissioning.

The initial plan targets 20 federal universities, although Alausa said the programme could be extended to 40 more public universities, potentially bringing 60 institutions under the initiative.

Such an expansion could create a wider market for CNG-powered transportation by providing more organised refuelling points for university shuttle operators and other commercial vehicle owners. It could also encourage investment in vehicle conversion, maintenance and related services around participating institutions.

Beyond the university programme, the expansion is part of a broader effort to address infrastructure gaps limiting the adoption of natural gas as an alternative transportation fuel.

Read the remaining storyon www.guardian.ng

Experts seek flexible power investments for stable electricity supply

From **Kingsley Jeremiah**, Abuja

ENERGY experts have called for increased investment in flexible power generation and energy storage to improve Nigeria's electricity supply, warning that the country must address persistent reliability challenges while expanding renewable energy capacity.

They said a combination of flexible engine power plants, battery storage and renewable energy could help stabilise the electricity system, reduce reliance on inflexible generation and provide industries with the dependable power needed to sustain production.

The experts spoke at the 2026 Energy Transition Forum, organised by Wärtsilä in Lagos and Abuja, where power-sector stakeholders and major electricity consumers examined how Nigeria could deliver reliable and affordable electricity while pursuing a cleaner energy future.

Participants included representatives of Elektron Energy, Axxela, Paras Energy, Nestlé and Flour Mills of Nigeria.

Director, Africa, Wärtsilä Energy, Marc Thiriet, said the success of Nigeria's energy transition would depend on the reliability and affordability of electricity delivered to consumers rather than the number of renewable energy installations.

He said solar and wind generation would increasingly provide low-cost electricity but would require complementary technologies to manage fluctuations in output.

According to him, battery energy storage systems could store excess electricity and release it when needed, while flexible engine power plants could respond quickly when renewable generation falls or demand increases.

"The more renewables we bring into the system, the more important it becomes to have the right balancing capacity in place," Thiriet said.

Managing Director, Wärtsilä Nigeria, Wale Yusuff, said investment decisions should consider operating conditions, fuel quality, temperature and the ability of power plants to adjust output.

He said modular engine plants could reach full power in about two minutes and adjust generation by starting or stopping individual units, allowing operators to respond quickly to changes in demand.

Yusuff added that their ability to minimise output losses under hot conditions made them suitable for Nigeria's operating environment.

Senior Manager, Growth and Development for Africa and Europe at Wärtsilä Energy, Krzysztof Lokaj, said industries needed electricity systems that could accommodate changing production requirements and integrate on-site renewable energy.

He said Wärtsilä managed 800 megawatts of generation capacity at facilities including Paras Energy Ogijo, Nestlé Agbara, HBM Ewekoro, VIPL Victoria Island and HBM Mfamosing.

Lokaj said proactive maintenance, timely upgrades and local expertise were essential to sustaining power generation throughout the lifespan of energy assets.

Meanwhile, Director, Sustainability and Future Plant Concepts at Wärtsilä, Rasmus Teir, said investments in flexible technologies should also prepare the sector for cleaner fuels, including ammonia, methanol, biofuels and hydrogen.

"The sensible approach is to invest in flexible technology today while preparing for cleaner fuels as they become available and economically viable," Teir said.

Nigeria receives 1.47 million tonnes of LPG in 10 months as local supply dominates

From **Kingsley Jeremiah**, Abuja

NIGERIA received an estimated 1.47 million tonnes of liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) between October 2025 and July 2026, with domestic producers accounting for the bulk of supply, as the country continued to reduce its reliance on imports to meet demand for cooking gas.

The volume, calculated from monthly receipt figures published by the Nigerian Midstream and Downstream Petroleum Regulatory Authority (NMDPRA), represents average daily receipts of about 4.8 million kilogrammes over the 10 months.

However, the regulator's October 2026 factsheet does not provide cumulative consumption for the period. Its figures show that receipts slightly exceeded consumption in October, when daily consumption averaged about 5.0 million kilogrammes, compared with receipts of 5.2 million kilogrammes.

The October figures also indicate that domestic sources accounted for about 92 per cent of LPG receipts, while imports supplied the remaining eight per cent, reflecting the growing contribution of local producers to the market.

According to the factsheet, total LPG receipts rose by 11 per cent to 5.2 million kilogrammes daily in October, above the 13-month average of 4.8 million kilogrammes.

Domestic supply averaged 4.8 million kilogrammes daily, compared with imports of about 400,000 kilogrammes, which doubled from 200,000 kilogrammes in September.

October's performance was slightly below the peak of 5.3 million kilogrammes recorded in July 2026 but above the 4.7 million kilogrammes recorded in September.

A breakdown of supply sources showed that other processing plants contributed the largest volume, supplying 1.691 million kilogrammes daily, representing 32.6 per cent of total receipts. Their contribution increased by 38 per cent compared with September.

NLNG Limited and Seplat, which supplied LPG through vessels, accounted for 1.601 million kilogrammes daily, or 30.9 per cent of total receipts. However, their contribution declined by 37 per cent from the previous month.

The Dangote Petroleum Refinery supplied 1.505 million kilogrammes daily, representing 29 per cent of total receipts. Its contribution increased by 115 per cent from September, making it one of the major drivers of supply growth during the month.

Imports contributed about 390,000 kilogrammes daily, accounting for 7.5 per cent of total receipts, following a 102 per cent increase from September.

The figures show that local refineries and processing plants supplied about 3.2 million kilogrammes daily, while NLNG and Seplat accounted for another 1.6 million kilogrammes through vessel deliveries.

The regulator's 13-month breakdown also showed that domestic sources supplied an average of four million kilogrammes daily, accounting for 83.8 per cent of receipts, while imports averaged 800,000 kilogrammes daily.

Despite the increase in receipts, the factsheet indicated that stock cover remained low at 14.8 days in October, raising concerns about the resilience of supply in the event of production or import disruptions.

The growing contribution of local refineries and processing plants could reduce exposure to import-related supply risks. However, sustaining the gains will depend on consistent production, efficient distribution and adequate storage capacity.

Transport&Tourism
MARITIME AVIATION HOSPITALITY & TOURISM MOTORING ROADS & RAILS
www.guardian.ng
Guardian Nigeria GuardianNigeria 08136370421 Guardiannigeria

Lost at Sea: How one life exposes 'price' of global shipping



Behind the seamless flow of energy, food, medicines, industrial inputs, and consumer goods that power the global economy are thousands of seafarers whose lives are increasingly endangered by geopolitical tensions, piracy, abandonment, and maritime emergencies. When tragedy strikes, the value placed on a dead seafarer is a mere $125,000—or, in many cases, nothing at all, leaving families abandoned by governments, shipping companies, and international bodies to struggle for survival, ADAKU ONYENUCHEYA reports.

NEARLY 170 seafarers have been killed, injured or are missing during the eight months of Middle East Gulf conflicts, according to Iran's maritime authority.

These seafarers, whose identities remained unknown and identified only through their recovered bodies, had left their homes to embark on voyages lasting six to nine months. They did so to ensure the uninterrupted movement of more than 90 per cent of global trade by sea, thereby earning a living to provide for their families.

Unfortunately, the situation has become a contract for death, with an estimated 1,892,720 seafarers serving on internationally trading merchant ships and uncertain about making it alive after every voyage across the world's oceans.

About 8.3 billion people worldwide depend on these seafarers to transport food, pharmaceuticals, machinery, vehicles, fuel, industrial materials and other goods that sustain the global economy and households.

These seafarers, who set out on voyages leaving their families behind in anxiety, however, encounter waters threatened by conflicts, wars, piracy and armed robbery attacks.

Every conflict targeted shipping routes, but these attacks extended beyond damaged vessels and disrupted trade; they exposed the crews to prolonged uncertainty concerning their safety, injury, death, captivity, freedom of movement, access to essential services, prospects for evacuation or the possibility of never returning home to their families.

Unfortunately, during these crises, the world is more concerned about disruptions to trade, fluctuations in crude oil prices and losses to the global economy, paying little or no attention to the lives of the seafarers who made that trade possible.

Shipping companies are concerned about damage to their vessels, especially as larger hi-tech vessels can cost over $200 million to build, with the operation of merchant ships generating an estimated yearly income of over half a trillion U.S. dollars in freight rates, according to the International Chamber of Shipping (ICS).

Marine insurers are focused on premiums and claims, with the changes in global trade routes and the growing geopolitical volatility seeing a surge in war risk premium, which has reached 15 per cent of a ship's hull value, almost double the rate for vessels, according to industry data.

Meanwhile, the governments of warring nations, as well as those that watch from the sidelines or take sides in the conflicts, appeared to give little consideration to the safety and welfare of seafarers caught in the crossfire or piracy attacks.

When workplace becomes a danger zone

GEOPOLITICAL tensions or piracy attacks on merchant vessels in the Black Sea, Persian Gulf, Ukraine-Russia war, Strait of Hormuz, Red Sea & Bab el-Mandeb Strait, Somali Basin, Gulf of Aden, Gulf of Guinea and the Singapore Straits have become a continuous trend.

In the Middle East, attacks on shipping associated with regional hostilities have exposed seafarers to missile and drone threats, explosions, fires, and the risk of casualties and death. Elsewhere, piracy and armed robbery continued to threaten crews through violent boarding, kidnapping, hostage-taking and theft.

Data from *Statista* showed that between 2015 and 2019, hundreds of seafarers were reported killed or missing globally. In 2015, 165 seafarers were reported killed and 125 missing. In 2016, the figures fell to 55 killed and 69 missing, before rising to 103 killed and 99 missing in 2017. In 2018, 92 seafarers were reported killed and 100 missing, while 2019 recorded 112 deaths and 116 missing seafarers.

The present geopolitical crisis, according to data from maritime security firm Ambrey and the International Maritime Organisation (IMO), showed that over 570 ships have been hit by missiles in the Black Sea, resulting in the deaths of at least 40 seafarers.

Also, a public registry maintained by IMO showed that the Strait of Hormuz witnessed 113 ship attacks or attempts as of October 15, with 24 seafarers killed.

On October 23, an oil tanker was hit by a drone close to the Romanian coast, killing a seafarer while three others went missing. A week before, two chemical tankers were struck off Romania.

The Secretary-General of the IMO, Arsenio Dominguez, said in a recent interview that the situation in the Strait of Hormuz is critical and does not appear to be improving, with 6,000 seafarers stranded on ships stuck in the region.

Iranian forces are busy changing tactics in the waterway to exert pressure on vessels, with the U.S. Navy calling the threat to shipping in the region 'severe'.

Iran's envoy to IMO, Seyed Ali Mousavi, said worldwide, VHF Channel 16 is for vessels or crews in distress and in need of assistance; however, that has been used by the U.S. Navy to threaten Iranian ships and crew members.

Vessels attempting to transit the Strait of Hormuz through established communication channels came under attack on October 13 and 14, 2026. Two Singapore-registered vessels, GFS Pride and GFS Giselle, were struck by projectiles, with all 42 crew members aboard rescued

Meanwhile, neither side in the conflict appeared willing to back down, despite efforts to reach an agreement. Attempts to secure a lasting resolution have yet to yield the expected results, leaving shipping and seafarers exposed to continued risks in the strategic waterway.

Warnings by the global maritime bodies urging the warring nations to prioritise seafarers' safety and spare them when launching missiles appear to have gone unheeded. Neither have governments made sufficient efforts to reach out to their nationals trapped in the crossfire to facilitate their evacuation and safe return home.

A seafarer's life cost nothing

BEHIND every casualty figure is a human life interrupted by dangers that have made the sea a place of growing insecurity.

Unfortunately, *The Guardian* learned that when a seafarer dies at sea, his/her family gets a total of $125,000 as compensation for their loss.

Shipping companies also do not make it easy for grieving family members to receive the compensation owed to them after losing a loved one and breadwinner who left home for work at sea but never returned.

Families whose husbands, wives, parents or children are away at sea anxiously follow reports of attacks, hoping to establish whether their loved ones were aboard the affected vessels.

A delayed message or an unanswered telephone call from the shipping company can become a source of anxiety when reliable information is difficult to obtain.

Global Wellbeing Programme Coordinator, International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF), Dr Asif Altaf, expressed concerns about compensation for families of dead seafarers, noting that the existing provisions under ITF collective bargaining agreements (CBAs) generally provide death compensation of $125,000 to eligible families.

He said families of seafarers covered by applicable ITF agreements receive $125,000 when a seafarer dies on board by accident, but might receive nothing under the relevant death-compensation provisions if the death was classified as suicide.

Altaf said some shipping companies could use suicide classifications to avoid paying compensation, describing the situation as particularly distressing because families not only lose their breadwinner but could also forfeit substantial financial compensation.

He clarified that the $125,000 death compensation provision was not a universal requirement under the Maritime Labour Convention (MLC), which entered into force in 2013.

While about 80 per cent of global shipping tonnage is covered by ITF agreements, with the federation having about 14,000 collective bargaining agreements, *The Guardian* learnt that shipping companies operating in Dubai, United Arab Emirates (UAE), Iran, China and Saudi Arabia do not follow applicable rules or have ITF collective bargaining agreements.

Altaf urged seafarers to verify whether vessels were covered by ITF collective bargaining agreements before accepting employment, particularly when dealing with shipping companies operating in the highlighted countries.

Psychological challenges

SEAFARERS sign a contract and are told the voyage is Mediterranean or West Africa; weeks later, their ship is rerouted through a High Risk Area (HRA) without their consent.

They also take up a six-month contract at sea and later end up nine months away from family, sometimes without receiving salaries on time, while facing the additional threat of piracy, missile and drone attacks in conflict-affected waters.

The ITF coordinator said such circumstances heightened the psychological pressure on seafarers, particularly those working in dangerous maritime environments.

Altaf cited a study conducted by Yale University in the United States, which disclosed that 25 per cent of seafarers suffer from depression, while 17 per cent experience anxiety disorders and 20 per cent have suicidal thoughts, underscoring the need for stronger mental health support in the maritime industry.

Executive Director, Maritime Labour and Cabotage Services, Nigerian Maritime Administration and Safety Agency (NIMASA), Jibril Abba, said life at sea entails distinct pressures, including extended working hours, irregular sleep patterns, prolonged periods away from family, multicultural crews, and, at times, challenging working conditions.

He said if left unaddressed, these pressures may develop into chronic stress, anxiety, depression, burnout, and substance misuse, and, in the most tragic cases, loss of life.

While seafarers demonstrate extraordinary personal and professional resilience, the shore-based and operational systems supporting them are failing to keep pace, according to the Mission to Seafarers (MTS).

The Seafarers Happiness Index (SHI) fell for the third consecutive quarter in 2026, highlighting a growing dissatisfaction with connectivity, wages, and shore leave.

The index, based on a seafarer survey and seafarer testaments, fell to 6.81 in Q3 from 6.87 in Q2, and 7.18 in Q1, continuing a decline from 7.26 in the last quarter of 2025.

Of the 10 areas of happiness measured by the index, six declined, with the sharpest drop recorded in connectivity, from 7.46 in Q2 to 6.89 in Q3, while wages recorded the second-largest drop, falling from 6.86 in Q2 to 6.56 in Q3.

According to the report, seafarers lamented: "Salary is the same for many years and not enough. We are working on an LNG tanker, which is high risk and with more responsibilities, but no extra allowance."

www.guardian.ng

Transport&Tourism

Operators' pushback hobbles CRFFN's N10b revenue target

Stories by **Adaku Onyenucheya**

FREIGHT forwarders' refusal to pay the controversial Practitioners' Operating Fee (POF) is threatening the Council for the Regulation of Freight Forwarding in Nigeria's (CRFFN) N10 billion yearly revenue target.

The collection of the POF, previously integrated into the cargo clearance process, has been halted, with members of freight forwarding associations withholding payments for several months.

The CRFFN had projected yearly revenue of between N5 billion and N10 billion from POF collection.

Similarly, a business case prepared for the Council by the Infrastructure Concession Regulatory Commission (ICRC) had projected about N5 billion yearly revenue from the scheme.

Persistent resistance from licensed customs agents, prolonged legal battles and the apparent breakdown of the collection mechanism have undermined the revenue platform, raising questions about the feasibility of the projected earnings.

Speaking on the collection situation, the National Publicity Secretary of the Association of Nigerian Licensed Customs Agents (ANLCA), Emmanuel Onyeme, confirmed that freight forwarders had stopped paying the POF, attributing the development to the Council's alleged failure to provide appropriate value exchange.

He said practitioners had questioned the justification for paying the fee, given the Council's alleged failure to address the operational challenges its members face.

Onyeme also questioned the CRFFN's relevance to freight forwarders, particularly its role in addressing complaints and operational challenges involving shipping companies, terminal operators and alleged harassment by law enforcement agencies.

"Nobody is paying POF for now. Nobody has been paying for more than three to four months. Can you pay POF to people that are not adding value? CRFFN adds no value and doesn't solve operational problems. The maritime police are blocking containers every day. Where is the council?" he queried.

Similarly, the President of the National Council of Managing Directors of Licensed Customs Agents (NCMDLCA), Ifeanyi Anakweze, said most practitioners stopped paying the fee following legal action against its collection.

"Since practitioners went to court stopping CRFFN from collecting POF, the payment has been voluntary," he said.

A chieftain of the National Association of Government Approved Freight Forwarders (NAGAFF), Bert Okeke, noted that the fee was no longer demanded during cargo transactions at shipping companies or terminals.

Also confirming the decline in compliance, Public Relations Officer, Africa Association of Professional Freight Forwarders and Logistics of Nigeria (APFFLON), Tin Can Chapter, Clinton Okoro, said many freight forwarders had stopped paying since late last year.

In contrast, the National Public Relations Officer of the Association of Registered Freight Forwarders of Nigeria (AREFFN), Taiwo Fatomilola, said some practitioners were still paying, but the collection was no longer enforced.

According to him, the payment has effectively become voluntary following disagreements among freight forwarding associations over the Council's leadership and the fee's administration.

The CRFFN's increasing focus on professional licensing and other revenue-enhancement initiatives suggests that POF may no longer be a reliable revenue source.

Yet, the Registrar, Kingsley Igwe, insisted that the legal hurdles to its collection have been resolved. He acknowledged that the POF had remained a major source of controversy whenever the Council's revenue profile was discussed, but maintained that his administration was pursuing alternative revenue sources to reduce dependence on the fee.



Minister of Marine and Blue Economy, Dr Adegboyega Oyetola (left); Secretary to the Government of the Federation, George Akume; Minister of Solid Minerals Development, Dele Alake and former Minister of Power, Prof. Bart Nnaji at the Nigeria Now Global Investors Expo in Abuja.

Port clears congestion at Tin Can corridor

TIN Can Island Port has facilitated the clearance of the lingering traffic congestion that had slowed the movement of trucks and other vehicles along the port corridor.

The congestion, which persisted for several days, turned the vital access corridor into a daily ordeal for truck drivers, commuters and other port users.

Long queues of heavy-duty vehicles, tankers and private cars stretched from Trinity Bus Stop through Coconut to the Tin Can Port Gate, reducing travel time and turning journeys that should have taken minutes into frustrating, hours-long crawls.

Businesses that depend on timely cargo movement reported delays, while residents and workers in the area voiced growing concern over the gridlock's impact on productivity and safety.

Responding to the situation, the Port Manager of Tin Can Island Port Complex, Abubakar Isa, directed a coordinated intervention involving port security, traffic management officials, and relevant enforcement agencies.

The operation focused on clearing unauthorised parking, streamlining vehicle flow, and ensuring that only legitimate port-bound traffic used the critical stretch, which saw the bottleneck ease as vehicles moved more freely toward the Tin Can Gate.

Speaking on the development, the Port Manager emphasised that efficient access roads are essential to the smooth functioning of the Tin Can Island Port Complex.

"We cannot allow avoidable traffic to undermine the efficiency of this strategic gateway. Our priority is to restore free movement so that cargo operations, commercial activities, and daily commuting can proceed without unnecessary hindrance," Isa stated.

The Port Manager said monitoring of the activities will continue to prevent a recurrence, with ongoing collaboration between the port management and traffic control teams.

He said the clearance reduced the waiting times for truckers and will support smoother logistics and help sustain the complex's role in national trade.

FG cautioned against Denmark's low-rank sea job offers

• 'Gabonese, Ivorians get higher positions onboard Danish vessels'

THE Federal Government has been cautioned against accepting Denmark's rating offers for Nigerian cadets aboard Danish vessels on the grounds that the offers are demeaning, tantamount to servitude, and below the cadets' academic qualifications.

The Danish government had engaged the Nigerian Maritime Administration and Safety Agency (NIMASA), expressing its interest in ensuring that Nigerian cadets work as ratings aboard Danish vessels through engagements with Maersk Shipping, as part of efforts to strengthen maritime cooperation between the two countries.

Nigerian Ambassador of the International Seafarers' Welfare and Assistance Network (ISWAN), Captain Ladi Olubowale, explained that a cadet is a trainee officer who has undergone training to become an officer of the watch, a master, a third or fourth engineer, a chief engineer, and an electro-technical officer (ETO).

In contrast, the ISWAN Ambassador clarified that ratings are ordinary seafarers, oilers, wipers and motormen, whose primary roles are supportive, including maintenance, mooring, cleaning, painting, keeping watch and assisting officers.

Olubowale said that Denmark is offering NIMASA employment at the lowest seafaring rank, while it provides cadets from other African countries, including Gabon and Côte d'Ivoire, with mandatory sea-time training and progress towards officer positions in Danish-linked fleets.

Olubowale noted that Danish shipping operators also committed to offering yearly cadet berths to students from neighbouring African maritime institutions, maintaining that Nigerian cadets deserved equal treatment and training opportunities to prepare them for officer positions rather than being relegated to ratings.

"Cadets' time on board is meant to be spent on the bridge and in the engine control room, learning navigation, cargo operations, watchkeeping, machinery management and leadership under the eye of senior officers. While a rating's sea time does not count toward an officer's Certificate of Competency," he explained.

Olubowale, who is also the Managing Director of Seamate Maritime Services Nigeria Limited, said the global shipping industry needs more qualified officers and cadets rather than additional ratings, citing data from the Baltic and International Maritime Council (BIMCO) and the International Chamber of Shipping (ICS) Seafarer Workforce Report 2026 to support his position.

Safety lapses under scrutiny as NIWA probes Bayelsa boat mishap

THE National Inland Waterways Authority (NIWA) has dispatched a team of investigators to Bayelsa State to investigate the fatal boat mishap that claimed several lives in Ukubie, Southern Ijaw Local Government Area.

The deployment follows a directive by the Minister of Marine and Blue Economy, Dr Adegboyega Oyetola, ordering an immediate and thorough investigation into the remote and immediate causes of the tragic incident.

NIWA Acting Managing Director, Umar Yusuf Girei, disclosed that the investigative team had been sent to the scene to establish the circumstances surrounding the accident, identify possible safety lapses and determine measures to prevent a recurrence.

Girei said the Authority was committed to carrying out a comprehensive and credible investigation in line with the Minister's directive, adding that NIWA would work closely with relevant agencies and the Bayelsa State Government to unravel the circumstances surrounding the tragedy.

He stressed that the investigation would examine critical safety issues, including the use of life jackets, passenger manifest documentation, boat condition, operational procedures and compliance with existing inland waterways regulations.

Girei noted that passenger safety remained a top priority of the Authority, warning boat operators and transport stakeholders against disregarding established safety guidelines.

"We are taking this incident very seriously. In compliance with the directive of the Honourable Minister, we have deployed our investigators to Bayelsa to ascertain the cause of the mishap, establish the facts, and make appropriate recommendations.

"Our responsibility is to ensure that the circumstances surrounding this unfortunate incident are thoroughly examined and that lessons are drawn to strengthen safety standards across our inland waterways. We cannot afford to allow preventable incidents to continue claiming innocent lives," Girei said.

He said the tragedy underscored the need for stronger enforcement, improved safety consciousness and cooperation among waterways operators, government agencies and communities to protect passengers.

Girei assured that NIWA would pursue the investigation diligently and act on its findings, while reinforcing its safety monitoring and enforcement mechanisms to ensure that waterways transportation becomes safer for Nigerians.

He expressed condolences to the victims' families and prayed for strength to all those affected by the tragedy, assuring them that the Authority would work with relevant stakeholders to prevent similar incidents in the future.

Oyetola had earlier expressed concern over reports that passengers involved in the mishap were not wearing life jackets and that a passenger manifest might not have been available, describing both lapses as serious safety concerns that require urgent attention.

GuardianTech

Experts warn of new AI-fuelled, high-stakes cybercrimes

By **Adeyemi Adepetun**

EXPERTS warned that artificial intelligence (AI) could make cybercrime cheaper, more sophisticated and easier to execute.

The warning follows the reported $6.36 billion Binance cyber-heist, which has drawn attention to vulnerabilities in digital asset infrastructure and the challenges financial institutions face in preventing attacks, containing losses, and recovering stolen funds.

Co-founder and Managing Partner at First Circle Capital, Agnes Aistleitner, said the incident highlighted how AI is changing the economics of cybercrime by lowering the technical and financial barriers that once made sophisticated attacks difficult to execute.

"AI is making it easier and cheaper for criminals to automate activities that previously required considerable technical expertise. From convincing phishing emails and voice impersonation to identifying system vulnerabilities, these tools are expanding the opportunities available to cybercriminals," said Aistleitner.

She warned that the threat extends beyond cryptocurrency exchanges to banks, payment service providers, businesses and consumers who increasingly depend on digital financial services.

According to blockchain intelligence firms TRM Labs and Chainalysis, attackers transferred about $6.36 billion across ten blockchains during the Binance incident, reportedly moving most of the assets within about 20 minutes.

Cybersecurity consultant Christian Haschek, said the incident pointed to a critical weakness in digital asset security.

"The problem is not necessarily that cryptocurrency exchanges are easier to hack than traditional financial institutions. It is that stolen assets can move much faster once attackers gain control of critical transaction-authorisation systems.

"Multisig, HSMs and cold storage only protect you if the machines and people that sign transactions are secure. In this case, it seems one compromised laptop was enough to make the signing system work for the attacker," Haschek said.

The incident demonstrated how a single compromised access point can undermine multiple layers of security, potentially exposing billions of dollars in digital assets to theft.

Recovering stolen cryptocurrency presented another challenge. Although blockchain transactions are publicly traceable, identifying where stolen funds move does not guarantee their recovery.

TRM Labs estimated that approximately $2.7 billion of the stolen assets was frozen or otherwise moved beyond the attackers' control, partly through interventions by stablecoin issuers, including Tether and Circle.

Aistleitner said the growing sophistication of cybercrime could also increase the cost of delivering secure digital financial services.

She added that financial institutions may need to rethink their emphasis on transaction speed, particularly when handling large-value transfers, where additional verification could help reduce exposure to fraud.



High device costs keep 64% of Africans offline

By **Adeyemi Adepetun**

AFRICA is making measurable progress on digital development and enabling policy, but turning widespread mobile broadband coverage into meaningful digital participation remains a critical challenge.

This is according to the GSMA's flagship Digital Africa Index 2026, launched at the GSMA Digital Africa Summit Cape Town.

GSMA disclosed that mobile broadband networks now cover 92 per cent of Africa's population, yet only 28 per cent use mobile Internet on their own devices, leaving a 64 per cent usage gap. The cost of Internet-enabled devices, limited digital skills and a lack of relevant local content and services remain significant barriers to adoption.



While the usage gap is a global challenge, it is largest in Africa, making accelerating adoption across the region particularly urgent.

The Summit brought together policymakers, regulators and mobile industry leaders to address these challenges and explored how to extend the benefits of connectivity across Africa. Drawing on data from 54 countries, the Index gave delegates an evidence base to compare where reforms are driving progress and where further action is needed. This year's report places particular focus on digital government and what it takes to turn the availability of online public services into meaningful use.

The Index also pointed to encouraging policy momentum. It noted that 10 African countries now combine stronger digital development with more enabling policy and regulation, up from three in 2024. Egypt, Ghana, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, Seychelles and Tunisia have joined Kenya, Mauritius and South Africa in the Index's leading group.

Head of Africa, GSMA, Angela Wamola, said: "Africa has made real progress in expanding mobile broadband coverage. The challenge now is ensuring that more people can actually use it. With 64 per cent of the population living within coverage but not using mobile Internet, closing the usage gap requires us to tackle the barriers that continue to keep people offline.

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

Expert seeks commitment to data protection

By **Sunday Aikulola**

THE Managing Director/Chief Executive Officer of E-Terra Technologies Limited, Ifeanyi Chukwutem Ochonogor, has called for stronger commitment to data protection and responsible destruction of obsolete electronic devices, warning that improper disposal of electronic equipment and confidential information poses serious risks to individuals, businesses, government institutions and the environment.

Fielding questions from journalists ahead of the forthcoming Permanent Data Destruction Exposition (DDE) 2026 in Lagos, he described data as one of the most valuable assets in today's digital economy and stressed the need for secure and responsible disposal practices.

He described DDE 2026 as an important initiative designed to promote responsible data protection, secure IT asset disposal, electronic waste recycling and environmental sustainability in Nigeria.

He disclosed that the exposition would provide a platform for government institutions, corporate organisations, technology companies, data protection professionals, environmental experts and other stakeholders to discuss practical solutions to the growing challenges of data insecurity and Nigeria's electronic waste crisis.

"Our objective is not merely to talk about Permanent Data Destruction, but to demonstrate why secure data disposal, responsible recycling and proper management of obsolete IT assets must be taken seriously," he stated.

'How telecom gaps, poor coordination impede emergency response'

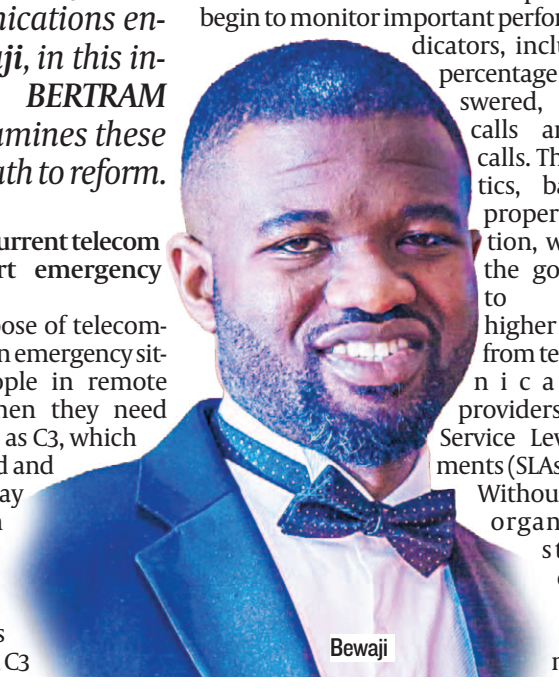
*Nigeria's emergency response system continues to falter under the weight of fragmented agency coordination, unreliable telecom networks and high power deficit. A UK-based telecommunications engineer, **Oladipo Bewaji**, in this interview with **BERTRAM NWANNEKANMA**, examines these failures and charts a path to reform.*

How well does Nigeria's current telecom infrastructure support emergency services?

WE can do better. The purpose of telecommunications infrastructure in emergency situations is to connect people in remote locations to assistance when they need it. There is a concept known as C3, which stands for contact, command and control. The terminology may vary slightly depending on the organisation adopting it, but the principle remains the same. You cannot effectively manage emergencies without properly established C3 centres.

These centres should serve as fully staffed hubs that receive distress calls from the public and dispatch the necessary assistance. They should also function as coordination points for all emergency services.

Once such structures are in place, we can begin to monitor important performance indicators, including the percentage of calls answered, dropped calls and failed calls. These statistics, backed by proper organisation, will enable the government to demand higher standards from telecommunications providers through Service Level Agreements (SLAs).


Bewaji

Without a serious organisational structure on the part of the government, however, telecommunications companies, which are private investors, will continue to operate on a best-effort basis. I remember working years ago with Emperion West Africa (EW), an Internet Service Provider. I was excited about the opportunity and recall telling a friend in the UK that I had installed network services for banks using 500Mbps bandwidth. At the time, a bank branch using 500Mbps was considered fairly large.

My friend calmly responded that the bandwidth available in his flat was even higher. I could hardly comprehend it then. What made that possible in the UK was the country's existing Public Switched Telephone Network (PSTN) and Integrated Services Digital Network (ISDN) copper infrastructure, which had been upgraded to deliver higher speeds to homes.

The lesson is that Nigeria also had an extensive network of PSTN infrastructure through NITEL. Unfortunately, as mobile telecommunications gained prominence, much of that infrastructure appeared to be abandoned. It should not have been allowed to go to waste.

The good news is that we can leverage newer technologies. The Internet speeds available on our mobile phones today are faster than what many banks used decades ago. Voice and data can now be transmitted over the same network at significantly lower costs through technologies such as Session Initiation Protocol (SIP).

The implication is that where fibre-optic or copper cables are unavailable, mobile masts can provide connectivity. Where terrestrial mobile coverage is absent, satellite communications, such as Starlink, can provide an alternative. With 4G networks, Wi-Fi calling is also possible.

What are the major telecommunications challenges facing emergency response agencies in Nigeria?

Telecommunications connects people to help, but it does not necessarily deliver the help itself. All stakeholders must work together. Government, civil society organisations and the public all have roles to play.

Take the UK, for instance. Its telecommunications infrastructure handles tens of thousands of emergency calls daily. However, every failed call must be investigated, even if it is just one. That is a matter of policy.

This is possible because clear boundaries of responsibility have been established among the stakeholders. The telecommunications carriers responsible for ordinary services are distinguished from those handling emergency services. Therefore, when a call fails, it is easier to identify the party responsible.

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

www.guardian.ng

GuardianTech

Morocco, Ghana emerge Africa's next technology hubs

By **Adeyemi Adepetun**

WHILE Nigeria, Kenya, Egypt and South Africa continue to dominate Africa's venture capital landscape, Morocco and Ghana are emerging as the continent's most balanced and resilient secondary technology hubs, a new industry analysis said.

Deal-tracking data for the first three quarters of 2026 show that the traditional 'big four' markets attracted 81 per cent of all startup funding raised across Africa, broadly in line with the 78 to 89 per cent range recorded annually since 2019.

However, beneath the headline figures, startup activity is gradually spreading beyond the four dominant markets. Startups outside the Big Four accounted for 35 per cent of all companies that raised at least $100,000 between the first and third quarters of 2026, up from 24 per cent five years ago.

Their share of total capital, however, remained unchanged at 15 per cent, suggesting that although entrepreneurial activity is expanding across more African markets, access to substantial growth-stage financing remains concentrated.

In an assessment of the 10 leading non-big four ecosystems, based on funding volume, startup maturity, domestic investor participation and exit activity since the venture capital downturn began in mid-2022, researchers identified Morocco and Ghana as leading contenders for a 'Next Four' group of technology hubs.

The analysis, by Africa: The Big Deal, placed Morocco at the top of the secondary markets, describing it as the most well-rounded startup ecosystem outside the big four.

The country attracted $296 million in startup funding since July 2022, with capital relatively well distributed across companies. Its two largest fundraisers, fintech firm CashPlus and travel technology company Nuitee, which raised $48 million in a Series A round, accounted for just 36 per cent of total funding.

Over the same period, 33 Moroccan startups raised at least $1 million, the highest number outside the Big Four, while six secured funding rounds exceeding $10 million. These included ABA Life, which raised $40 million in October.

Morocco's strongest advantage, according to the analysis, is its domestic investment base. At least 21 local investors, including CDG, Azur Innovation Fund, UM6P Ventures, WitaMax and Kalys Ventures, have backed startups since mid-2022.

Local investors participated in 54 per cent of all Moroccan deals, the highest domestic participation rate recorded across African markets.

The growing domestic capital base is also supporting exit opportunities for investors. Five exits have been recorded since mid-2022, including CashPlus's initial public offering on the Casablanca Stock Exchange in November 2025 at a valuation of $550 million. It was the only startup IPO outside the Big Four since at least 2019.

Ghana, meanwhile, emerged as the most balanced startup market outside the Big Four, attracting $221 million in funding since mid-2022.

Beyond the Big Four

	Funding Volume & Depth	Funding momentum	Start-up breadth	Growth-stage pipeline	Early-stage resilience ($100k-$1m deals)	Local investors' involvement	Exits
Morocco	$296m (top 2: 36%)	-13% ($128m)	73 start-ups 33 since 2025	33 at $1m+ inc. 6 at $10m+	18 start-ups (-10%)	21 local in 54% of deals	5 incl. 1 IPO inc. 3 since 2025
Ghana	$221m (top 2: 31%)	-31% ($79m)	72 start-ups 40 since 2025	21 at $1m+ inc. 5 at $10m+	32 start-ups (=)	8 local in 6% of deals	6 inc. 3 since 2025
Côte d'Ivoire	$156m (top 2: 62%)	+48% ($78m)	43 start-ups 26 since 2025	12 at $1m+ inc. 2 at $10m+	22 start-ups (+22%)	7 local in 38% of deals	4 all since 2025
Senegal	$344m (top 2: 77%)	+179% ($177m)	41 start-ups 16 since 2025	19 at $1m+ inc. 4 at $10m+	9 start-ups (-10%)	6 local in 26% of deals	4 inc. 3 since 2025
Tunisia	$63m (top 2: 47%)	+143% ($41m)	48 start-ups 22 since 2025	9 at $1m+ inc. 1 at $10m+	17 start-ups (+31%)	8 local in 25% of deals	3 none since 2025
Tanzania	$243m (top 2: 54%)	+30% ($102m)	63 start-ups 35 since 2025	13 at $1m+ inc. 5 at $10m+	31 start-ups (+7%)	2 local in 1% of deals	1 none since 2025
Uganda	$82m (top 2: 51%)	+44% ($35m)	52 start-ups 28 since 2025	12 at $1m+ inc. 3 at $10m+	21 start-ups (+17%)	none identified	1 1 since 2025
Rwanda	$105m (top 2: 54%)	-65% ($27m)	38 start-ups 26 since 2025	9 at $1m+ inc. 4 at $10m+	23 start-ups (+156%)	4 local in 9% of deals	1 none since 2025
	Total raised since mid-2022 (share raised by the 2 largest fundraisers)	*Change in total funding raised since 2025 (vs. previous 22 months)*	*Unique start-ups raising $100k+ since mid-2022 (of which since 2025)*	*Start-ups with a $1m+ round (of which $10m+) since mid-2022*	*Start-ups raising $100k–$1m since 2025 (vs. previous 22 months)*	*Institutional investors HQ'ed in the country (share of deals involving at least one of them since mid-2022)*	*Exits since mid-2022 (of which since 2025)*

Start-ups raising $100k+ (exc. exits), by HQ country, Jul 2022–Oct 2026. Source: thebigdeal.gumroad.com

Firm celebrates *Make in Africa* finale

QUALCOMM Technologies, Inc. has concluded the fourth yearly Make in Africa Startup Mentorship programme, which culminated in its first in-person Finale at Africa Tech Festival in Cape Town, South Africa. Qualcomm also announced the winner of the 2026 Qualcomm for Good Social Impact Fund.

The 2026 programme supported 10 startups from nine African countries developing embodied AI and edge-computing solutions across agriculture, fish-farming, e-mobility, water purification and accessibility.

The Finale brought the 2026 cohort together in Cape Town, where founders from across the continent presented their work as the culmination of the programme. Their solutions span embodied AI and edge computing, built on Qualcomm technologies and Arduino development platforms.

The equity-free programme supported early-stage African technology startups through business coaching, engineering support and intellectual property guidance. The 2026 cohort worked with Qualcomm technologies and Arduino development platforms, including the Arduino UNO Q. Through L2Pro Africa and specialist consultation from Adams & Adams, participants gained practical support to protect and commercialise their innovations. Upon completion of the program, startups will also receive a $5,000 stipend and reimbursement of up to $5,000 for one full utility patent application.

SVP and President of Europe, Middle East & Africa (EMEA), Qualcomm France S.A.R.L, Wassim Chourbaji, said: "The Qualcomm Make in Africa program reflects the strength of Africa's growing innovation ecosystem and the extraordinary potential and achievements of its entrepreneurs.

'Rights, safeguards must anchor West Africa's digital future'

By **Benjamin Alade**

STAKEHOLDERS have called for a rights-based approach to digital transformation in West Africa, warning that rapid technological growth could deepen inequality, expose citizens to abuse and undermine civic participation if adequate safeguards are not put in place.

They made the call at a regional convening in Lagos on "Building a Rights-Respecting Digital Future in West Africa," which brought together civil society organisations, technology companies, policymakers, regulators, ECOWAS officials and journalists.

The Executive Director of the West Africa Civil Society Institute (WACSI), Dr Nana Asantewa Afadzinu, said digital technology had become integral to work, advocacy and social interaction across the region.

Afadzinu said the growing use of digital tools made it necessary for governments and other stakeholders to ensure that the infrastructure, policies and regulations supporting digital transformation also protected citizens' rights.

"We have 100 per cent mobile penetration... it's one of the key tools that we use in our work, it's also very much a part of our social interaction as a people," she said.

She asked stakeholders to examine whether digital development in West Africa was sufficiently rights-centred, particularly in areas of accessibility, security and protection of citizens.

"How do we build the structure and have the infrastructure to ensure that we are protected, that we are secure, that we have accessibility to digital tools?" she asked.

The Head of Policy, Influencing and Advocacy at WACSI, Omolara Balogun, said although digital acceleration had created new opportunities, it had also exposed gaps in access and increased vulnerabilities among marginalised groups.

She said affordability, digital literacy and other barriers continued to keep some citizens away from the digital economy.

"Some people are not on the internet because they cannot afford it. Some are not in the digital space because they do not have the skills... All of these exclude people," Balogun said.

She also raised concerns about technology-facilitated gender-based violence, arguing that technology companies must do more to protect women and other vulnerable users from online abuse.

With Nigeria approaching another election cycle, Balogun said protecting digital civic space would be particularly important to ensure citizens could participate in public discourse and hold leaders accountable without intimidation or harassment.

She also called for greater harmonisation of digital rights laws across West Africa, questioning whether citizens whose digital rights were violated across borders would have adequate legal protection.

Foundation targets increased jobs through stronger AI adoption

By **Abigail Ikhaghu**

THE Rose of Sharon Foundation has urged young Nigerians to use artificial intelligence (AI) to build products and services that solve local problems, while treating waste recovery as a viable business opportunity that can create jobs, generate income and promote environmental sustainability.

The call came at the foundation's 2026 Youth Empowerment Programme, held over the weekend, with the theme, "Harnessing AI-Driven Resources & Circular Economy for a Sustainable Future."

Digital Transformation Consultant at Agileplus Limited, Babajide Arulogun, said young people needed to move beyond using existing AI applications to creating digital products that address specific problems and can be sold to individuals and organisations.

He explained that developing a useful product begins with identifying a problem, understanding whom it affects and determining how a solution could meet their needs.

He said the approach could help young people identify business opportunities within their careers and communities, rather than viewing problems as obstacles to be avoided.

Arulogun outlined possible income streams, including developing digital applications for organisations, providing research and design services, setting up chatbots and automating routine tasks for small businesses, and offering training and consulting services.

He, however, warned that young developers could lose time and resources by pursuing several projects simultaneously or become discouraged when larger technology companies introduced similar products.

Bakare takes Airtel Group broadband post after India secondment

AIRTEL Africa has appointed Nigerian telecommunications executive, Goriola Bakare, as Home Broadband Experience Lead, effective October 1, 2026, following an 18-month stint leading Airtel Nigeria's Home Broadband business and a six-month strategic secondment to Bharti Airtel in India.

In his new role, Bakare will help shape Airtel Africa's Group Home Broadband experience agenda, working with operating companies to strengthen customer acquisition, improve digital engagement, support customer retention and develop scalable commercial models for broadband growth.

The appointment represents a further step in Bakare's career at Airtel, where he has held senior responsibilities spanning commercial strategy, product development, digital innovation and business performance.

Before assuming his Group-level position, Bakare served as Acting Director, Home Broadband Business at Airtel Nigeria from October 2024 to March 2026. During the period, he was responsible for the business's commercial performance, including revenue growth, product strategy, customer acquisition and retention, customer lifecycle management and strategic partnerships. His responsibilities included developing broadband products and solutions, identifying new commercial opportunities and driving initiatives to strengthen Airtel Nigeria's position in the home connectivity market.



Bakare

'Raw material imports, low capacity threaten pharmaceutical supplies'

Stories by **Tobi Awodipe**

NIGERIA'S pharmaceutical manufacturing industry faces mounting challenges from dependence on imported raw materials, low factory capacity utilisation and high production costs, the Pan-African Manufacturers Association (PAMA) has warned.

The association said the country's ambition to reduce dependence on imported medicines would remain difficult to achieve without addressing structural weaknesses across the value chain and creating an environment that enables local manufacturers to produce competitively.

PAMA's Secretary-General, Segun Ajayi-Kadir, said the challenges confronting Nigeria reflected wider weaknesses in Africa's pharmaceutical industry, where local manufacturing remains concentrated in a few countries and production depends heavily on imported inputs.

According to the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), more than 70 per cent of medicines consumed across Africa in 2025 were imported, especially from Asia.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) estimates that African countries import between 70 and 100 per cent of their medicines and other medical products, while about 99 per cent of vaccines consumed are imported.

The dependence extends beyond finished medicines to active pharmaceutical ingredients (APIs), essential components used in drug production and other manufacturing inputs.

Ajayi-Kadir noted that although pharmaceutical production takes place in about half of African countries, manufacturing capacity remains concentrated in a handful of markets. Eight countries account for 85 per cent of the continent's approximately 690 pharmaceutical plants, while 11 countries with local production have fewer than five factories each, he noted.

He said the concentration of manufacturing capacity and dependence on imported inputs exposed the weaknesses of the continent's pharmaceutical industrial base.

Nigeria and other African manufacturers, particularly those involved in drug formulation and packaging, still rely substantially on foreign suppliers for APIs and excipients.

China remains a major global producer of APIs, while India is a leading supplier of finished pharmaceutical products to African countries.

This dependence, he said, exposed local manufacturers to foreign exchange (FX) challenges, international supply disruptions and rising input costs, undermining their ability to compete with imported medicines.

Another major challenge, he added, was the underutilisation of existing manufacturing facilities.

Ajayi-Kadir said pharmaceutical manufacturing required significant investment in specialised equipment, quality-control systems, skilled personnel, regulatory compliance and reliable utilities. Such investments, he noted, could become commercially viable only when factories operated at higher capacity and served sufficiently large markets.

However, evidence cited by UNCTAD indicates that some tablets, capsules and creams manufactured in Nigeria and Ethiopia could be about 15 per cent cheaper than equivalent products imported from India under specified conditions.

The finding challenges the perception that locally manufactured medicines are necessarily more expensive. Instead, it suggests that low production volumes and inefficient capacity utilisation are among the factors undermining the competitiveness of domestic manufacturers.

Ajayi-Kadir also identified government procurement as critical to expanding local production. He said fragmented purchasing, short procurement cycles and unpredictable orders made it difficult for manufacturers to plan production, expand facilities and commit capital to new investments.

Long-term procurement arrangements and pooled purchasing across African countries, he argued, would provide manufacturers with greater certainty about demand, encourage investment and enable factories to operate closer to their installed capacity.

He further highlighted the limitations of fragmented national markets, noting that differences in regulatory requirements, procurement arrangements and trade barriers restricted manufacturers' access to customers across Africa.

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



Brand Manager, Caplux, Oluseun Mudashiru (left); Head of Inbound Logistics and Procurement, Chemical & Allied Products Plc (CAP PLC), Ademuyiwa Afolabi, and Brand Executive, Jesulayomi Awogbami, at the 4th African Brands Innovators Summit Awards 2026, where CAP PLC was recognised as Africa's Most Admired Quality Decorative Paints & Coatings Manufacturer of the Year.

'Business credibility key to unlocking AfCFTA opportunities'

AFRICAN businesses risk losing investment and cross-border trading opportunities if they fail to establish the credibility required to attract investors, secure financing and build reliable commercial partnerships, industry experts have warned.

They said the success of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) would depend not only on tariff reductions and the removal of trade barriers but also on businesses' ability to demonstrate financial transparency, product quality and reliability in fulfilling contractual obligations.

The experts spoke at the Loveworld Trade and Investment Forum (LTIF), held in Ghana, where participants examined the role of business credibility in expanding intra-African trade and investment.

They argued that a lack of trust among buyers, lenders and investors increased the cost of doing business by encouraging stricter payment conditions, additional collateral requirements and lengthy due diligence processes.

Such constraints, they noted, could particularly disadvantage small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), which often lack the financial resources to absorb delays and higher transaction costs.

Speaking at the forum, Executive Minister of Commerce at Loveworld Kingdom and LTIF convener, Stephanie Oforka, said trust remained fundamental to the growth of trade, investment and sustainable business relationships.

"Capital goes where there is trust. Trade expands where there is trust. Partnerships endure where there is trust. And customers return where there is trust," she said.

She stressed that businesses must demonstrate credibility through consistent product quality, enforceable agreements and reliable delivery of promised services.

Firm reaffirms commitment to Nigeria's economic development, job creation

BIC has reaffirmed its commitment to Nigeria's economic development and job creation, citing its local manufacturing operations, supplier partnerships and investments in the country.

The company made this known at the recently held French Week 2026, which brought together business leaders, government representatives and other stakeholders to strengthen business relationships, explore investment opportunities and advance economic ties between France and Nigeria.

Speaking at the event, General Manager, BIC Nigeria, Anthony Amahwe, said the French-founded company had built an established business in Nigeria over several decades, contributing to local economic activity through sustained investment, employment and partnerships.

He said its operations also demonstrated the role international businesses could play in developing domestic capabilities and creating value within their host markets.

Amahwe said the company's contribution to Nigeria's economy was reflected in its local manufacturing operations, commercial activities and partnerships with Nigerian suppliers.

He noted that the company's production facility in Ogun State sourced all its packaging materials from local suppliers.

These activities, he said, supported employment, strengthened local business relationships and contributed to the development of domestic capabilities.

He added that the company's contribution to Nigeria's development extended beyond its commercial operations to supporting the people and institutions shaping the country's future through various initiatives.

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

Lagos eyes $1tr economy in 2052, bets on manufacturing, export

THE Lagos State Government has set a target of growing its economy to between $800 billion and $1 trillion by 2052, with manufacturing, value addition, exports and investment expected to drive the ambition.

Governor Babajide Sanwo-Olu disclosed this at the closing ceremony of the 40th Lagos International Trade Fair, held at the weekend.

Represented by the Secretary to the State Government, Abimbola Salu-Hundeyin, the governor said the state was working to transform its economy from a commercial hub into a production and export hub.

He said the government was determined to ensure that more locally manufactured products competed effectively in African and international markets, adding that sustained industrial growth would depend on an enabling business environment.

According to him, the state was pursuing the economic target through infrastructure development, access to affordable financing and policies designed to support enterprise development and industrial expansion.

"The state is committed to supporting businesses through improved infrastructure, access to affordable finance and a better business environment," he said.

He explained that the commitment informed the Lagos State Industrial Policy 2025–2030 and other government initiatives aimed at promoting enterprise development.

Sanwo-Olu said the government was also expanding access to affordable capital for cooperative-backed businesses through the N10 billion Lagos State Micro Enterprise Cooperative financing arrangement.

He added that investments in transportation, electricity reform and other critical infrastructure formed part of efforts to improve the operating environment for businesses and strengthen the state's productive capacity.

He described Lagos' emergence as Nigeria's best-performing state in the 2025 Presidential Enabling Business Environment Council (PEBEC) Subnational Ease of Doing Business assessment as encouraging, although he acknowledged that more work was required to sustain improvements in the business environment.

He also identified the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) as a major opportunity for local businesses, stressing that exploiting the continental market would require competitive products, reliable infrastructure, access to finance and stronger business networks.

Earlier, the Commissioner for Commerce, Cooperatives, Trade and Investment, Folashade Ambrose-Medebem, said the 10-day trade fair attracted more than 50,000 participants, thousands of exhibitors and business delegations from over 20 countries.

She disclosed that the state, in partnership with Afreximbank and other organisations, trained over 2,000 Lagos-based micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) in export readiness and market access.

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

www.guardian.ng Guardian Nigeria GuardianNigeria 08136370421 Guardiannigeria

'Tinubu's reforms lay groundwork for socioeconomic recovery'

The Minister of Information and National Orientation and Coordinating Director of Media and Strategic Communication of the APC Presidential Campaign Council, ***Mohammed Idris Malagi****, alongside members of the media directorate,* ***Bayo Onanuga, Tunde Rahman*** *and* ***Sunday Dare****, speaks on insecurity, electricity, fuel prices, food security, local government autonomy, corruption and the impact of President Bola Tinubu's reforms in an interview with media executives in Lagos.*

Insecurity remains a major concern, particularly for farmers and rural communities. What is the government doing to secure farms and forests?

NIGERIA has been grappling with insecurity for more than 20 years. President Bola Tinubu is strengthening the country's capacity to address the problem by investing in personnel, equipment, infrastructure, and intelligence.

The military has been strengthened, new formations have been established, and operations have been intensified. The Army has reported significant successes, including arrests, neutralisation of insurgents and rescue operations. Its recent operational reports indicate a 70 to 75 per cent reduction in terrorist attacks and kidnapping incidents over the last two to three months.

These achievements involve the military, police, Air Force and other security agencies working together. The President has also increased the number of Army divisions from eight to 12, expanding operational capacity in vulnerable areas.

We are investing in military infrastructure, including barracks, training facilities and housing for personnel. Recruitment is also ongoing, with about 24,000 military recruits being discussed under the current exercise. The police force is equally being expanded to address the security demands of a population exceeding 230 million.

Forest guards are another important component of the strategy. Their recruitment involves community-level screening, including checks through traditional institutions, because they will operate within communities and some will carry arms. The Office of the National Security Adviser and state governments are collaborating on their recruitment and training.

The objective is to provide intelligence, protect communities and prevent criminals from using forests as hideouts. Technology, including drones and surveillance equipment, is also being deployed to improve operations.

State police will complement these measures. All 36 states have expressed support for the constitutional process, which is progressing. The reform will create additional layers of policing, strengthen local intelligence and bring security closer to communities.

Our ultimate objective is to ensure that farmers can return to their farms and Nigerians can move freely without fear. Security requires sustained investment, and the administration is addressing the structural weaknesses that have hampered the system.

What is the administration doing to address the persistent electricity crisis?

President Tinubu has prioritised decentralisation of the electricity sector, allowing states to participate more actively in generation, transmission and distribution.

Restrictions that previously limited states' participation have been removed, enabling them to develop their electricity markets. However, existing contractual agreements with distribution companies must be respected. Some of these agreements run until 2028.

The sector also faces serious infrastructure challenges. Many transmission lines and installations are decades old and require rehabilitation. Generation alone cannot guarantee electricity supply without adequate transmission and distribution capacity.

The Minister of Power is assessing these challenges and working towards improved performance. The government is also encouraging alternative arrangements, including mini-grids for hospitals, universities and rural communities, so that electricity supply does not depend entirely on the national grid.

Metering is another priority. Programmes, including the British metering initiative, are helping expand meter distribution and reduce estimated billing.

We recognise that Nigerians need reliable electricity immediately. However, the problems accumulated over several decades require sustained investment and structural reforms. Our objective is to build a more dependable electricity system.

With petrol prices continuing to rise, is the government considering measures to make fuel more affordable, and how can transportation costs be reduced?

The petroleum sector has been liberalised, creating opportunities for different operators to participate in supply and distribution. Nigeria is also recording increased domestic refining, reducing the country's historical dependence on imported petroleum products.

The removal of fuel subsidy was a difficult but necessary decision. The subsidy regime placed enormous pressure on government finances and consumed resources that could have been invested in infrastructure, healthcare, education and security.

> "This administration has taken difficult decisions that previous governments avoided, and these decisions are changing the structure of the Nigerian economy."

Petrol prices are influenced by international market developments, including geopolitical tensions and fluctuations in crude oil prices. The government cannot arbitrarily dictate prices in a deregulated market without considering the implications for supply and investment.

However, we recognise the pressure on households and are promoting alternative energy sources. The Presidential CNG Initiative is encouraging commercial motorists to convert their vehicles to compressed natural gas, which offers a cheaper alternative.

More than 400 conversion centres are now operating across the country, and the programme is expanding alongside efforts to improve access to refuelling facilities.

Transportation requires coordinated action by all levels of government. The Federal Government does not own every road or control every transport system. States and local governments must also invest in public transportation and road infrastructure.

The Federal Government is supporting mass transportation, while states are acquiring buses, including CNG-powered vehicles. Some are also exploring electric buses and other alternatives that can reduce operating costs.

Private operators have a role to play as well. The scale of the challenge requires increased investment in affordable public transport, better roads and alternative fuels.

We acknowledge that more needs to be done. The government must continue to expand transportation infrastructure to meet population growth and Nigerians' daily mobility needs.

There are concerns that local governments are still not receiving and utilising their allocations effectively despite the Supreme Court judgment on financial autonomy. What is the government's position?

The President is committed to ensuring that local governments receive the resources that belong to them. This is a constitutional matter, and he has repeatedly made clear that he intends to abide by the Constitution's provisions.

He has said that when he was a governor, he experienced a situation where resources meant for his state were held up. He made a promise to himself that if he became President, no state should suffer such a situation. He intends to keep that promise.

The question of how funds should be allocated to local governments was taken to the Supreme Court for interpretation. The government wanted clarity on the constitutional provisions governing the allocation and administration of local government funds.

There are challenges and bottlenecks in implementing the judgment, but the process is ongoing. The President's intention is that resources should reach the grassroots, where they can address the needs of ordinary Nigerians.

The problems people face are often more acute at the local government level. Insecurity, unemployment, poor sanitation, inadequate healthcare, poor roads, and other challenges directly affect communities.

If local governments receive the resources they are due, they should be able to address these issues. There must be accountability, however, because money alone does not guarantee development.

I have asked questions about the resources available to local governments. In some cases, a local government may receive hundreds of millions of naira monthly. After paying salaries and overheads, there should still be substantial resources available for roads, waste disposal, primary healthcare, schools and other basic services.

What are local governments doing with the money? Are they investing in the things people need? Are they improving sanitation? Are they maintaining clinics? Are they constructing feeder roads?

We have seen instances where local governments and other authorities embark on projects that may not be the most pressing priorities. There are situations where bridges and other infrastructure are constructed while basic services remain inadequate.

The reform is intended to empower local governments, but it is unfortunate that some of those who should benefit from it are making the process difficult.

The federal government cannot be the only level of government constantly interrogated. States and local governments must also be held accountable. Nigerians should ask their local government chairmen what they are doing with the resources available to them.

Food security is central to economic development, and Nigeria cannot achieve sustainable growth without improving agricultural production and making food affordable. What is the administration doing on this?

President Tinubu has made significant commitments to agriculture through programmes aimed at supporting farmers, improving access to equipment and increasing production.

We must modernise agriculture through improved seeds, irrigation, technology, mechanisation and better farming methods. These measures will improve yields and reduce production costs.

The Federal Government is working with states, but state governments must also deploy their land, resources and local knowledge to support farmers.

Our focus must be on sustainable agricultural programmes that increase production, strengthen value chains and improve food availability. Security is equally important because farmers must be able to access their farms without fear.

Should the government prioritise repairing existing roads before embarking on new projects?

There is no question that existing roads need attention. The government is working on roads across the country, including rehabilitation and construction projects.

The President understands that infrastructure is important to economic development. Roads are necessary for moving goods, connecting communities and reducing the cost of doing business.

There are ongoing projects in different parts of the country. The Lagos-Calabar corridor is one of them, while other major roads linking different regions are also being addressed.

The federal government is also working on projects that will improve connectivity between states and ease pressure on existing routes. When new roads are constructed, they can take traffic off older roads and reduce congestion.

We must not, however, ignore the need to maintain existing infrastructure. Roads that are already in use must be repaired and rehabilitated so that Nigerians can travel safely and efficiently.

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



Malagi

MidweekArts

www.guardian.ng
Guardian Nigeria GuardianNigeria 08136370421 Guardiannigeria

My *Village to New York* explores illusion of greener pastures

By **Opeyemi Babalola**

THE increasing growth in number of people seeking opportunities abroad, popularly known as *Japa*, has become one of the defining social realities of contemporary Nigeria.

For many young Nigerians, leaving the country in search of greener pastures represents an escape from economic uncertainty, unemployment and the seemingly diminishing prospects of a better future at home. However, beneath the enthusiasm surrounding migration lies a critical question that many prospective migrants rarely ask: Do they truly understand what awaits them once they leave Nigeria?

It is against this backdrop that James Egbuchulam's *My Village to New York* assumes considerable relevance.

More than a travelogue or a personal account of geographical relocation, the book offers a thoughtful exploration of the expectations, misconceptions and realities associated with seeking a new life abroad.

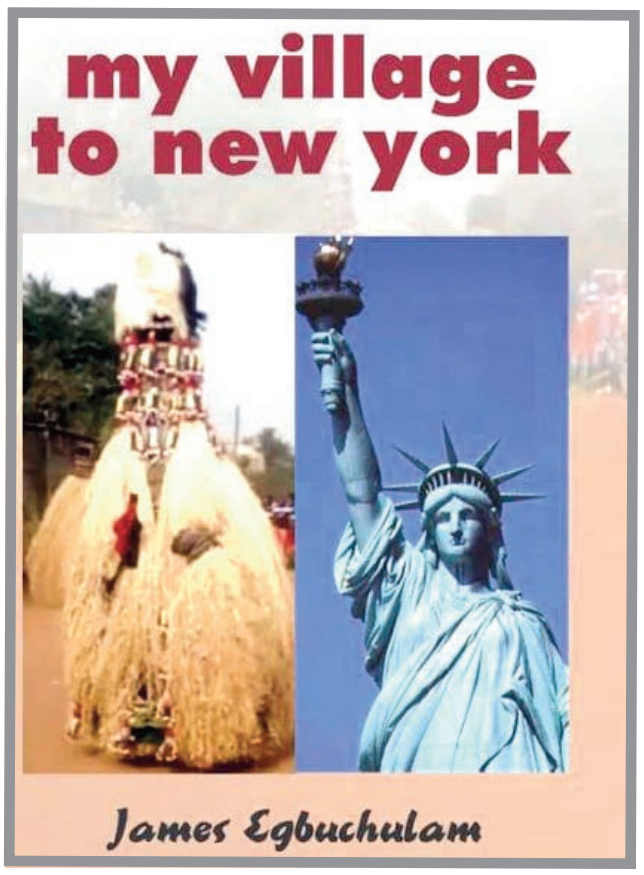
At first glance, the narrative appears to follow the familiar trajectory of a journey from a Nigerian village named Umunoha in Imo State to the much-celebrated metropolis of New York. However, as the reader progresses through its pages, it becomes apparent that Egbuchulam's intention goes beyond recounting a physical journey. Beneath the travel narrative lies a deliberate attempt to educate, caution and reorient Nigerians who regard migration as an automatic pathway to prosperity.

Towards the end part, particularly chapter nine of the book, titled, 'Reflections', makes one of the most significant contributions by interrogating the wrong perception of America as a land where opportunities abound without corresponding struggles.

For years, popular narratives about life abroad have helped sustain the belief that success is almost guaranteed once an individual crosses Nigeria's borders. Social media, diaspora success stories and carefully curated accounts of foreign lifestyles have further reinforced this perception, often concealing the sacrifices, financial pressures and personal challenges that accompany life in a foreign country.

Egbuchulam challenges this misconception with a reminder that nothing comes free abroad. Although America may offer opportunities and a relatively structured environment for personal advancement, such opportunities are often accompanied by demanding responsibilities.

According to him, money does not grow on trees, neither is prosperity picked from the ground. Survival requires hard work, discipline, resilience and the willingness to confront realities that may be considerably different from what prospective migrants have imagined.



"As I arrived and stayed in the United States, I did not find dollars on the streets of New York or any where else, but I met a clean, disciplined environment, peopled by folks who treasure freedom, democracy d hardwork. In America, I found that 'there is no food for lazy man's, and that you have to fight your way in through the narrow door. Everybody -man and woman- upholds is business and finds job satisfaction in whatever he is doing, even selling cold bottled water on the street at $1 each."

The book still offer some advice to those who already began their lives abroad, reminding them to always make use of any opportunity at first glance. Though abroad especially America, which is the author's point of argument, present opportunities, that if one is sluggish or lackadaisical or even prayerful can get lost because over there, one just needs to be active, alert and always take a clean and sharp shot.

My Village to New York does not conclude without offering a sobering message to Nigerians who are determined to leave their homeland for America in search of a better life. Egbuchulam suggests that much has changed about the American experience, noting that some immigrants who once dreamed of settling permanently in the country are now considering returning to Nigeria. He also draws attention to the pressures exerted by some family members back home, who, rather than encouraging their relatives abroad to return, would prefer that they remain overseas, endure the struggles and continue sending money home.

This observation exposes an often-overlooked dimension of migration: the financial expectations and emotional burdens that immigrants are compelled to shoulder on behalf of their families.

Earlier in the opening chapters, the author takes readers through the process of his migration journey, beginning with his visa application and the experiences surrounding his encounter with immigration officials. He highlights how the manner in which an applicant is attended to and the outcome of such encounters can significantly influence the success or otherwise of the visa application process.

Beyond its central message about migration, the book also offers practical lessons that Nigerians can draw from and incorporate into their everyday lives.

With *Ake to Stockholm* , Adebowale celebrates 40 years of Soyinka's Nobel Prize award

By **Tobi Awodipe** and **Ruth Chidinma Ononye**

COMMEMORATING the 40th anniversary of Nobel laureate, Wole Soyinka's Nobel Prize in Literature; archivist, Oludamola Adebowale, is exhibiting *Ake to Stockholm*, a multi-faceted showing which features an archival exhibition, documentary film, illustrated comic book and artistic presentations exploring Soyinka's literary journey and the significance of his historic achievement.

The exhibition, which formed part of the 27th Lagos Book and Art Festival (LABAF), in partnership with the Committee for Relevant Art (CORA), opened on November 16 ends November 29, 2026 at Kongi's Harvest Gallery, Freedom Park, Lagos.

Adebowale said the initiative goes beyond celebrating Soyinka's Nobel Prize to examining the experiences, intellectual influences and struggles that shaped his journey to international recognition.

In 1986, Soyinka became the first African writer to receive the Nobel Prize in Literature, marking a historic moment for African literature on the global stage.

According to the curator, the theme traces the journey from Ake, Abeokuta, where Soyinka spent his formative years, to Stockholm, Sweden, where he received the prestigious award. He said the project seeks to preserve the historical materials and ideas that illuminate Soyinka's life and work while making them accessible to audiences across generations.

Launched in 2019, *Timeless Memories: Elastic Effects of Wole Soyinka,* is a yearly curatorial initiative that explores the writer's life, literary contributions and intellectual legacy through archival research, exhibitions and public engagement.

"At the heart of this exhibition is the understanding that Stockholm was not the beginning of Soyinka's story, but a moment of international recognition for an intellectual journey rooted in Ake, Abeokuta. His formative years, vividly documented in his autobiographical work Aké: The Years of Childhood, reveal a world shaped by Yoruba cultural traditions, religious plurality, colonial encounters and the social dynamics of a changing Nigerian society. These early experiences, alongside his subsequent education and literary engagements, contributed to the development of a distinctive creative imagination that would resonate across continents," Adebowale said.

Through archival photographs, historical documents, newspaper clippings, literary materials and visual narratives, Adebowale said the exhibition reconstructs significant moments in the journey.

These materials he said, are presented not merely as historical artefacts, but as fragments of collective memory through which viewers can examine the relationship between individual achievement, cultural identity and national history.



Pictorials of the award plaques

At TAF 2026, art meets commerce

By **Gregory Austin Nwakunor**

ARRANGEMENTS have reached conclusive stages for this year's Theatre Mania Africa Festival (TAF). Themed, *The Spark: Igniting the African Economy Through Stagecraft,* this edition underscores how theatrical arts drive economic transformation, youth empowermentand cultural diplomacy throughout Africa.

TAF 2026 offers an immersive experience designed to connect grassroots communities with elite stagecraft.

The one-day event in Lagos on Thursday December 10, 2026 at the Shodex Gardens, Anthony, Ilupeju, Lagos, Nigeria by 10:00am prompt. The festival, third since it started, will feature dynamic activations like Street Theatre, Interactive art and brand exhibitions, Fireside Conversation, Industry Stakeholder Forum, the Generation Next Theatre (GNT) competition/showcase, Command Performance of the Stage Play, titled, Grain In The Wind 5.0 and Award Ceremony & Induction Into TAF Hall of Fame among others.

Speaking on the vision driving the festival, Alayande Stephen, CEO/Co-Founder of TAF, said: "We are creating a robust ecosystem where art meets commerce. TAF 2026 provides the platform for creative professionals to scale their enterprises, connect with global audiences, and monetize their craft effectively."

Lead Speaker for TAF 2026 is Serge Aime Coulibaly, an award winning the spian,choreographer and dance curator. Joining him as a keynote speaker is London-based Nigerian CEO, Podium International, Titilola Aboyade-Cole, Dr. Akin Lewis (Veteran Nollywood Actor/Producer) and Kemisola Otekaiye-Colloraffi (NKAN), Creative Entrepreneur from Oakland, USA. Panelists and facilitators will address pertinent isses in the industry including the central theme - 'The Spark: Igniting the African Creative Economy Through Stagecraft'are Norbert Young (Nollywood actor),Chinwe Bode-Akinwande (Head, Sponsorships, Partnerships, Events & Collaborations, First Bank of Nigeria), Dr. Sam Uche Anyamele fta. (Nollywood actor/lecturer), AJ Dagga Tolar (author/poet/activist), Obiajulu Ozegbe (Chairman, Guild of Nigerian Dancers (GOND), Lagos State Chapter), Bukola Thomas (Nollywood actor), while Oluwanishola Oladele Adenugba (Founder, Live Theatre Lagos) will moderate the session.

The second panel session with the topic- Stage, Verse & Value: Where Theatre, Performance, Music and Poetry Meet the Creative Economy will have an assemblage of vibrant iIndustry players like Godson Osarenren (Lead Convener/Founder, Naija Poetry Fest), Titilayo O. Akinmoyo–Kaaku (NANTAP Lagos Chairpetson), Collins Dada (Artist/music producer), Bunmi Awolowo (Founder, Signpost Studios Productions), Mayowa Daramola (Creative Lead, Red Art Africa) and to moderate the session is Nsidibe-Abasi Asuquo (Creative Producer, Founder, Beyond The Slate).

The Generation Next Theatre Competition/Showcase will be anchored by MD Omisore (Award Winning Educationist), Jacinta MacJob (Nollywood Director/Script Writer) and Seun Leo (Youth Talent Manager).

Adding weight to the festival's institutional goals, Dr. Akin Lewis, Chairman, Board of Trustees, TAF, said:"The recognition of excellence is vital to preserving our history. Through TAF 2026, we bridge the generational gap, honoring those who paved the way while equipping the youth to take African theatre to unprecedented heights."

The TAF 2026 TheatreManiac Award Recipients and these honorees represent the pinnacle of resilience, creativity, and cultural identity that TAF 2026 proudly champions.

World Report

www.guardian.ng
Guardian Nigeria GuardianNigeria 08136370421 Guardiannigeria

Israeli air strike kills Hamas internal security chief in Gaza

AN Israeli air strike has killed the head of Hamas's internal security service in Gaza.

Gaza's Hamas-run interior ministry said Naeem Abu Nahel was targeted by an aircraft in western Gaza City.

The 50-year-old had only been in the position since September, when his predecessor was captured in a raid by Israeli special forces.

Israeli Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu and Defence Minister Israel Katz announced that Abu Nahel had been "eliminated" by the Israeli military.

Earlier, Palestinian first responders and health officials reported that six other people had been killed in two Israeli air strikes elsewhere in Gaza on Tuesday.

Three people, including a teenage boy, were killed in the Wadi Gaza area, south of Gaza City, they said.

The other three, including two police officers, were killed in a separate strike on a police station in the al-Mawasi area, west of Khan Younis, they added.

Gaza's police force, which operates under the interior ministry, condemned the second attack, saying it was "part of an ongoing campaign targeting the police apparatus aimed at sowing chaos" in the territory.

The Israeli military said it had struck terrorists in the area.

Israeli strikes on Gaza take place almost daily despite a U.S.-brokered ceasefire agreed by Israel and Hamas in October last year.

At least 1,679 people have been killed in Gaza since then, according to the territory's Hamas-run health ministry, whose figures are considered reliable by the UN.

Israel said six of its soldiers have been killed in Gaza over the same period.

The Gaza war was triggered by the Hamas-led attack on southern Israel on October 7, 2023, when about 1,200 people were killed and 251 others were taken hostage.

Since then, more than 74,740 people have been killed in Israeli attacks in Gaza, the health ministry said.

NATO chief vows defence against space threat over Russian nuclear satellite reports

NATO chief, Mark Rutte has said the alliance will defend any threats in space after German reports that Russia is preparing to launch a nuclear-armed satellite.

Intelligence reports about a possible launch in the next 60 days had been shared among Nato countries this month, according to German media. It was not clear which country had authored the reports.

Asked about the reports, the NATO secretary general told a press conference in Berlin "We will always make sure we defend every inch of NATO territory, and that includes making sure we are safe when it comes to the space element."

Rutte said the Western defensive alliance had a variety of response options.

"When it comes to the military domain, we will always make assessments of our deterrence and defence and make updates where necessary," he added.

German Chancellor, Friedrich Merz said such reports were not new, yet they remain no less shocking, and a government spokesman said the reports were being taken very seriously.

Kremlin spokesman, Dmitry Peskov said he had not seen the reports but dismissed stories citing unknown sources as hardly worth taking seriously.

Russian governor detained in rare criminal case against regional leader

THE governor of Russia's northern Murmansk region has been arrested on corruption charges in the first detention of a regional leader for five years.

Andrei Chibis, 47, is suspected of embezzlement and misappropriation of more than a billion roubles ($12.2.m; £9.3m) set aside to build an Arctic highway, as well as a further 39 million roubles from the Murmansk construction budget.

Chibis is reported to have been detained as he arrived on a visit to Moscow on Monday and was taken in for questioning.

He denies wrongdoing but has made no public comment. His wife Yevgenia Chibis said "anyone who knows our family understands how ridiculous this is".

Trump faces backlash after remarks on reinstated Nvidia CEO

The AI chipmaker Nvidia has handed its co-founder Jensen Huang his job back, despite rejecting his initial offer to return, after pressure from the U.S. President Donald Trump.

Trump said he made the deal with the tech giant's board to get Huang his job back, but both the president and Nvidia are facing backlash from lawmakers.

However, his comeback added almost $1 trillion to Nvidia's market value as its share price jumped 31 per cent, ending a streak of losses on the U.S. stock market.

Huang has been reinstated as the boss of Nvidia less than two weeks after he was forced to resign following the revelations of extra marital affairs, one of which was with a suspected Chinese spy.

Nvidia's gains helped boost shares in other tech companies and financial markets in Asia while European markets were flat.

However, despite Huang's return, Nvidia's share price remains down over the past month amid investor concerns about the wider AI industry and future development.

But it is a dramatic return for the man dubbed the Taylor Swift of tech to the company at the centre of the AI spending boom.

Attention will soon turn to Huang's appearance before Congress next week, where the Nvidia boss will be questioned over his relationship with Alice Huang, alleged to be a spy for China, due to national security concerns.

On Monday, the U.S. Commerce Department announced it was preparing to blacklist Megaspeed, the Singapore-based Nvidia customer where Alice Huang (no relation) was chief executive. China has denied the spying allegations.

Harvey Jones, chairman of Nvidia's board, said Huang's reinstatement after originally resigning on November 12 was in the best interests of our stockholders, employees, partners and customers.

The board said it had received input from senior levels of the U.S. government and was confident that Huang's reinstatement posed no national security risk.

Last Tuesday, the board explicitly said it did not intend to reinstate him following calls to do so and Huang himself stating he would be open to returning.

'47,000 women, girls killed by partners, family members in 2025'

By Silver Nwokoro

NO fewer than 47,000 women and girls were killed by intimate partners or family members in 2025, translating to an average of 129 deaths daily, with Africa recording the highest rate of such killings globally, a new United Nations report has revealed.

The 2026 Femicide Brief, published by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and UN Women to mark the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, disclosed that the home remained the most dangerous place for women and girls, with little change in the pattern over the years.

The report stated that 60 per cent of the 78,000 women and girls intentionally killed globally in 2025 were murdered by intimate partners or family members, representing an average of five deaths every hour.

Africa recorded the highest rate of intimate partner and family-related femicide, with 2.9 victims per 100,000 female population.

The Americas followed with 1.4 victims per 100,000 female population, while Oceania recorded 1.1, Asia 0.6 and Europe 0.5.

Executive Director of UNODC, Monica Juma, attributed the persistent killings to harmful social attitudes, societal norms and failures of institutional safeguards, which she said had created an environment where violence against women was tolerated.

"For far too long, we have seen alarming statistics. Frightening attitudes, social norms, and the failure of institutional safeguards create an environment in which killing a wife, daughter, mother, or sister becomes 'tolerable'," she said.

The Guardian Classifieds
Change of Name | Loss of document | Property | Legal Notice | Guardian Jobs | Education Page | SME's/Business Page
SME's/Business Page
ENQUIRIES:
LAGOS OFFICE:
08028411767
07069747993

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is to inform the general public that **THE INCORPORATED TRUSTEES OF ASSOCIATION OF INSTRUMENTALISTS IN ESAN WEST**, of Behind MTN Office, Ukpenu, Ekpoma, Edo State, has applied to the Corporate Affairs Commission (CAC) for registration as an Incorporated Trustee under Part F of the Companies and Allied Matters Act, 2020.

THE PROPOSED TRUSTEES ARE:

1. IREGBEYEN OMON – Chairman
2. ANEKE PAUL AKHERE – Trustee
3. ULJIATALOR DAVID – Secretary
4. IJEKHUEMEN IDEMUDIA ISAAC – Trustee

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES:

1. To unite instrumentalists and persons actively involved in instrumental music within Esan West Local Government Area, Edo State.
2. To promote professionalism, ethical conduct, discipline and excellence among members.
3. To promote the welfare, development and legitimate professional interests of members.
4. To foster cooperation, mutual support and peaceful relationships among musicians.
5. To organise music training, workshops, seminars, rehearsals, cultural programmes and musical events.
6. To encourage young people to develop musical and performance skills.
7. To preserve and promote local music, culture and musical performance.
8. To encourage peaceful mediation and resolution of disputes among members.
9. To establish constructive relationships with individuals, educational institutions, cultural organisations, public bodies and government agencies for lawful music, educational and cultural purposes.

Any objection to the registration of this association should be forwarded to the Registrar-General, Corporate Affairs Commission, within 28 days of this publication, clearly stating the grounds of such objection.

SIGNED:
For: ESAN WEST INSTRUMENTALISTS ASSOCIATION

Stanbic IBTC Asset Management

Stanbic IBTC Dollar Fund

Notice of Extraordinary General Meeting

Notice is hereby given that the Extraordinary General Meeting of Stanbic IBTC Dollar Fund will be held via Microsoft Teams on Friday, 04 December 2026 at 11:00am to transact the following business:

Special Business

To consider and, if thought fit, pass the following resolution as a Special Resolution:

"That the conversion of the Stanbic IBTC Dollar Fund to the Stanbic IBTC Dollar Specialised Fund and the consequential modifications to the Trust Deed dated 16 September 2016 be and are hereby approved, subject to the approval of the Securities and Exchange Commission."

Dated this 12 day of November 2026

Gbenro Aju
Company Secretary

NOTES:

1. Attendance at the meeting shall be conducted virtually through Microsoft Teams.
2. Only registered Unitholders of the Fund shall be entitled to attend and vote at the meeting.
3. A Unitholder entitled to attend and vote at the meeting may appoint a proxy to attend and vote on their behalf. A proxy need not be a Unitholder of the Fund.
4. The proxy form, duly completed, must be deposited at the office of the Fund Manager or returned via the designated electronic channel not later than 48 hours before the time fixed for the meeting.
5. Meeting access details and other relevant documents will be circulated to registered Unitholders before the meeting.

For further information, please contact Stanbic IBTC Asset Management Limited
Tel: 0201 280 5595 I Email: investments@stanbicibtc.com

RC: 209744

The Guardian Classifieds
Change of Name | Loss of document | Health
Property | Legal Notice | Automobile
Guardian Jobs | Education Page | Fashion
SME's/Business Page | Agro
email: peter.iworh@guardian.ng

E-PAYMENT; E-BOOKING
GUARDIAN NEWSPAPERS LIMITED
UNION BANK: 0008530586
GT BANK: 0117546335
www.guardian.ng

ENQUIRIES:
LAGOS OFFICE: 08023459584, 08094441944
ABUJA OFFICE: 08036627804, 07039315660, 08035678231
P. HARCOURT: 08064693588, 08064283611
ENUGU: 08033958839, 07030180057
ONLINE: 08058717159, 08126307209

CHANGE OF NAME

www.guardian.ng Guardian Nigeria GuardianNigeria Guardiannigeria Guardian Nigeria - C00264288

ABDUKADIRI : I, formerly known as Abdukadiri Saliu now wish to be addressed as Saliu Abdukadiri.. My DOB is 07-03-2006 not 07-09-2008. Former document remains valid. Public note

ABIKE: I , formerly known as Olanrewaju Oluwadasholami Abike now wish to be addressed as Olanrewaju Ganiyat Dasola former documents remain valid general public take note

ADDITION OF NAME : I, Aliyu Yahaya now wish to be addressed as Shinko Yahaya Aliyu . All former documents remain valid . General public take note

ADDITION OF NAME :I formerly known as Laila Oluwatoni Olalere, now wish to be addressed as Laila Oluwatoni Olashile Olalere .The Nigeria Passport Office and relevant authorities take note.

ADDITION OF NAME I, Aliyu Yahaya now wish to be addressed as Shinko Yahaya Aliyu . All former documents remain valid. General public take note

ADDITION OF NAME: I formerly known as Itua Lawal now wish to be addressed as Itua Lawal Alfred. All former documents remains valid. General public take note.

ADDITION OF NAME: I, formerly known as Ayonote Stella now wish to be addressed as Ayonote Stella Lami All former documents remain valid. General public take note

ADEBAYO: I, formerly known as Temitope Abike Oduwole now wish to be addressed as Temitope Abike Adebayo. All former documents remain valid .General public take note

ADEMAYELOYE: I, formerly Miss Ademayeloye Adeyosoye Abidemi now wish to be known as Mrs Shonaike Adeyosoye Abidemi. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

ADIO: I, formerly known as Meddie Adio now wish to be addressed as Ahmed Babatunde Sikirullah. All former documents remain valid gl. General public take note

AFOLABI : I, formerly known as Afolabi Boluwatife Lydia now wish to be addressed as Emmanuel Boluwatife Lydia. All former documents remain valid. Geanral public take note.

AGWAEZE: I, formerly: Agwaeze Ezekiel Osazuwa now wish to be addressed as Agwaze Ezekiel Osazuwa. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

AKPADUMA :I, formerly known as Akpaduma Bose Bidemi now wish to be addressed as Ewan Bose Bidemi. My DOB is 08-05-2010 not 08-05-2005. All former documents remains valid, Public note.

ALAWADA: I, formerly known as Alawada Mary Oluwabunmi now wish to be known as Adesipe Mary Oluwabunmi. All former documents remain valid. General Public note.

AMADI: I, formerly known as Miss Amadi Chidinma now addressed as Mrs Daramola Praise Chidinma. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

AMOTAJO: I,formerly known as Aduragbemi Dorcas Omotajo now wish to be addressed as Aduragbemi Dorcas Ayeni . All former documents remain valid . General public take note

ASAKE: I, formerly known as Oladinni Temitayo Omolara Asake now wish to be addressed as Oyedele Temitayo Omolara Asake. . All former documents remain valid. General public take note

ASHA : I, formerly known as Asha Blessing now wish to be addressed as Ashia Blessing, My DOB is 05-12-1989 not 05-12-1999. Former documents remains valid. Public note.

ASHAOLU: I, formerly known as Joan Aanuoluwapo Adelakin now wish to be addressed as Joan Aanuoluwapo Ashaolu . All former documents remain valid . General public take note

AYELABOLA: I, formerly known as Ayelabola Blessing Temidayo now wish to be addressed as Obikezie Blessing Temidayo . All former documents remain valid . General public take note

AYOOLA: Formerly Ayoola Damilola Opeoluwa now wish to be addressed as Oluwoledamilola Opeoluwa.. All former documents remain valid.General public take note.

BADRU: I, formerly known as Oluwatosin Olusola Badru now wish to be addressed as Oluwatosin Olusola Akinrinde. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

BAKO : I, formerly known as Bako Laraba now wish to be addressed as Binbol Salome . All former documents remains valid , General public take note.

BOJIREH :I, formerly known as Bojireh Emmanuel now wish to be known as Odesola Emmanuel. All former documents remain valid. General public take note

CHUKWUDI:I, formerly known as Chukwudi Anyabunsi now wish to be addressed as Chukwudi Godwin Oguchukwu . All former documents remain valid. General public take note

CONFINETION OT NAME: That Arimieye Victor and Arimieye Victor Calabar is same person, now wish to be addressed as Arimieye Victor. Former documents remains valid. Public note.

CONFINETION OT NAME: That, Igbinoba Oghomwen Sophia and Igbinoba Oghomwen is same person now wish to be addressed as Igbinoba Oghomwen Sophia. Former documents remain valid. General public take note.

CORRECTION OF NAME :I, Formerly known as Christopher Victor Ojo now wish to be addressed as Christopher Victor Enyo all former documents remain valid general public take note

CORRECTION OF NAME; I, Adewale Oluwasgun Tobiloba now wish to be addressed as Adewale Oluwasegun Tobiloba . All former documents remain valid . General public take note

CORRECTION OF NAME; I, Kebeh Sunday Eloma now wish to be addressed as Kebeh-sobase Eloma All former documents remain valid general public take note

CORRECTION OF NAME; I, Timilehin Boluwatife now wish to be addressed As Diyaolu Boluwatife Timilehin .All former documents remain valid . General public take note

DIM: I, formerly known as Chinazo Dim, now wish to be addressed as Chinazo Justin. All former documents remain valid, General public take note.

EYIFEORU: I, formerly Eyifeoru Amaebi now wish to be known & addressed as Eyifeoru Henry finine. All former documents remain valid. Banks, public take note.

EZEOBI: I, formerly known as Ezeobi Chiamaka Jennifer now wish to be addressed as Ezeobi Jennifer Chiamaka .All former documents remain valid . General public take note

EZEOMA: I, formerly Miss Ezeoma Chinyere Joy now wish to be addressed as Mrs. Herbert Chinyere Joy. All former documents remain valid. Banks, public take note.

FATOYE: I, formerly known as Miss. Fatoye, Basirat Eniola, now to be addressed as Mrs. Idowu, Basirat Eniola. Former documents remain valid. Public take note.

HANNAH: I, formerly known as Hannah Ozioma Ekemezie now wish to be addressed as Ozioma Capuano. All former documents remain valid. General public take note

IBRAHIM: I, formerly known as Ibrahim Danamisa isiaka Abass , Ibrahim Abass Issiaka now wish to be addressed as Abass Ibrahim. Former documents remain valid. Public take note

IDOWU: I, formerly known as Emma Temitope Idowu now wish to be addressed Emma Temitope Kueje . All former documents remain valid . General public take note

KAKAWA : I, formerly known as Bisayo Lawal- Kakawa now wish to be addressed as Bisayo Eyinola - Lawal.. All former documents remain valid. General public take note

KALU: I, formerly known as Blessing Chinaza Kalu now wish to be addressed as Blessing Chinaza Osih . All former documents remain valid . General public take note

LUCKY : I, formerly known as Isewede Ujata Lucky now wish to be addressed as Isewede Ojeata. My DOB is, 04-12-1975 not 01-01-1982.All former documents remains valid. Public note.

MUOGHALU: I , formerly known as Muoghalu Onyinye Catherine now wish to be addressed as Mgbechi Onyinye Catherine .All former documents remain valid . General public take note

NNAMANI : I, formerly known as Miss Nnamani Stephanie Chiamaka, now wish to be known as Mrs. Chikwendu Stephanie Chiamaka.. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

NZE: I, formerly known as Miss Chika Annuciatta Nze now wish to be addressed as Mrs. CHIKA Annunciatta Gavas. All formerly documents remain valid. Geanral public take note

OBAKACHI: I, formerly known as Adeola Eunice Haastrup now wish to be addressed as Adeola Eunice Obakachi . All former documents remain valid. General public take note

OBAREMI : I , formerly known as Obaremi, Laura Mamuyovwi now wish to be addressed as Mba-Otike, Laura Mamuyovwi .All former documents remain valid general public take note

ODEGBO : I, formerly known as Ogunsanya Motunrayo Oluwatosin now wish to be addressed as Odegbo Motunrayo Oluwatosin all former documents remain valid general public take note

ODESOLA :I , formerly known as Odesola Sammy David now wish to be known as Alfa-Odesola Samuel David. All former documents remain valid. General public take note

OGBUJI : I, formerly known as Ifeanyi Duru Ifeanyi Goodluck Ogbuji now wish to be addressed as Ifeanyi Goodluck Nwoke All former documents remain valid. Public take note

OGUNDEIE: I , formerly known as Ogundele Boluwatife Julihana now wish to be addressed as Adeniji Boluwatife Julihana . All former documents remain valid . General public take note

OGUNMADE : I, formerly known as Omotola Olufunke Ogunmade now wish to be addressed as Omotola Olufunke Adeleke-Stephens. All former documents remain valid. Public take note

OGUNTOKE: I, formerly known as Chivi Elisha Calvin now wish to be addressed as Chivi Calvin Oguntoke NIMC, NIS, (NMCN), UKVI, and the general public take note.

OKECHUKWU ; I, formerly known as Ijeoma Mercy Okechukwu now wish to be addressed as Ijeoma Mercy EMMANULE . All former documents remain valid. General public take note

OKHABU: I,formerly known as Okhabu Angela Omoyeme now wish to be addressed as Benauer Angela Omoyeme . All former documents remain valid .. General public take note

OKODUWA : I , formerly known as Okoduwa Osetohan now wish to be addressed as Omoruyi Osetohan. All former documents remains valid. General public take note.

OKOJAJA: I, formerly known as Okojaja Favour Michael now wish to be addressed as Okojaja Favour All former documents remain valid general public take note

OKONJO: I, formerly known as Stephanie Chibuzor Okonjo now wish to be addressed as Stephanie Chibuzor Imafidon . All former documents remain valid . General public take note

OKONKWO: I, , formerly known as Okonkwo Maryann Kosisochukwu now wish to be addressed as Njoku Maryann Kosisochukwu . All former documents remain valid General public take note

OKORIE: I, formerly known as Promise Adaeze Okorie now wish to be addressed as Promise Adaeze Emezuom . All former documents remain valid. General public take note

OLADUNTOYE: I, formerly known as foluke Olufunmilola Comfort Ogungbayi now wish to be addressed as Foluke Comfort Oluwafunmilola Oladuntoye . All former documents remain valid. General public take note

OLASIMBO:I, formerly known as Adeola Deborah Olasimbo now wish to be addressed as Adeola Deborah Abatan. All former documents remain valid. General public take note

OMIYEFA : Formerly known as Omiyefa Joel Olayinka now to be addressed as Olagunju Olayinka Joel-Oluwadamilola. All documents remain valid. General public take note

OMOTAJO,: I, formerly known as Aduragbemi Dorcas Omotajo now wish to be addressed as Aduragbemi Dorcas Ayeni . All former documents remain valid . General public take note

ONYEAKU: I , formerly known as Augustina Ginika Onyeaku now wish to be addressed as Augustina Ginika Nwogu. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

OSADIAYE : I , formerly known as Osadiaye Osaretin Aisosa now wish to be addressed as Mrs. Enobakhare Osaretin Aisosa. All former documents remains valid. General public take note.

OSEMUDIAMEN : I , formerly known as Osemudiamen David Uwagbale now wish to be addressed as Uwagbale David Osemudiamen. All former documents remains valid. General public take note.

OSIMOSU: I, formerly known as Ishola Eniola Elizabeth now wish to be addressed as Osimosu Eniola Elizabeth . All former documents remain valid . General public take note

OWOLABI: I , formerly known as Owolabi Esther Bukky now wish to be addressed as Akinola Esther oluwabukola . All former documents remain valid , General public take note

OYEWOGA: I, formerly known as Oluwasola Oluwakemi Quadri now wish to be addressed as Oluwasola Oluwakemi Oyewoga . All former documents remain valid. General public take note

PATRICK: I, formerly known as Patrick Faith, now wish to be addressed as Kaju Faith. Former documents remain valid. General public and authorities take note.

PHILO : I, formerly known as Odijie Philo now wish to be addressed as Odijie Philomina Imona. My DOB is 16-02-1975 not, 15-12-1975 . Former documents remains valid. Public note.

ROTIMI: I, formerly known as, Rotimi Vincent Folahan now wish to be addressed as Folahan Vincent Rotimi . All former documents remain valid general public take note

USMAN: I, formerly known as Usman Precious, now wish to be addressed as Kosisochi Precious Oluwadamilola. Former documents remain valid. General public and authorities take note.

UYIMEN : I , formerly known as Airewele Lucky Uyimen now wish to be addressed as Airewele Uyimen Lucky. My DOB is 02-01-1983 not 20-05-1983. Former documents remain valid. Public note.

Tinubu retains borrowing projections, deficit

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

will maintain zero tolerance for political violence, intimidation, thuggery, assault and the use of offensive weapons.

He reaffirmed the neutrality of the police in the political process, declaring that the Force owed allegiance to the Constitution, the law and the Nigerian people rather than any political party or individual.

Disu said the police would protect the rights of political actors to organise rallies, hold meetings and participate in the democratic process, while taking decisive action against anyone whose conduct threatened public peace.

He specifically warned that recruiting, financing or deploying political thugs, threatening violence, attacking electoral officials and destroying electoral materials would attract appropriate law enforcement action, subject to due process.

He stressed that those sponsoring, financing or directing political violence would be treated with the same seriousness as those who physically carried out such acts.

The IGP urged political party leaders to take responsibility for the conduct of their candidates, officials, youth wings and supporters, directing national chairmen to issue clear instructions against violence and ensure compliance across their structures.

He also urged parties to comply with advance notification requirements for rallies and cooperate with security agencies to prevent avoidable confrontations.

On activities after elections, Disu advised political parties to discourage reprisals following the declaration of results and pursue grievances through lawful judicial processes.

He said the meeting was designed to move beyond general appeals for peace towards clearly defined responsibilities and practical commitments ahead of the elections.

"The Nigeria Police Force will not take sides in political contests, but we will take a firm stand against anyone who threatens the peace. We will not protect political interests; we will protect the Nigerian people," he declared.

INEC Chairman, Prof. Joash Amupitan, also expressed concern over violence accompanying political rallies and campaigns, describing the incidents as major threats to democratic governance.

Speaking at the meeting, he urged political parties and candidates to comply strictly with the legal framework governing campaigns and the electoral process.

He said the credibility of elections depended on the conduct of voting, counting of votes and declaration of results without interference.

Amupitan cautioned politicians against turning the electoral process into a battlefield, urging stakeholders to guarantee a level playing field for all parties and candidates.

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

Bayelsa boat tragedy: Diri seek FG's support to complete roads

From **John Akubo** and **Adamu Abuh**, Abuja

BAYELSA State Governor, Douye Diri, has made a fresh appeal to the Federal Government to deepen its collaboration with the state in the construction and completion of the three senatorial district road projects.

Linking the deadly boat accident, which claimed 29 lives, to the wider infrastructure challenges forcing many riverine communities to depend heavily on water transportation, the Senate also demanded urgent road construction and a nationwide safety audit of passenger vessels.

The House of Representatives, on its part, called for a full investigation into the accident in Southern Ijaw Local Council of Bayelsa and to ensure urgent humanitarian support for direct victims and affected communities.

The ongoing projects include the Ekeremor-Agge road in Bayelsa West, Yenagoa-Oporoma-Ukubie road in Bayelsa Central, and the Nembe-Brass road in the eastern district.

Senate, Reps seek probe, closure for victims

While the state had undertaken the construction of phase one of the Nembe-Brass road, with the project nearing completion, the Federal Government has awarded the contract for the second phase.

The other two senatorial roads are being constructed solely by the state government.

Diri renewed his appeal in a statement issued by his Chief Press Secretary, Daniel Alabrah, yesterday, following the tragic boat incident of November 20, 2026.

During Vice-President Kashim Shettima's condolence visit to the state on Sunday, the Bayelsa governor lamented the slow pace of work on the second phase of the Nembe-Brass project.

He also noted that tragic boat incidents in the riverine state would be reduced or averted if the road projects were completed.

THE Senate warned that the tragedy, involving a boat reportedly carrying more than 300 passengers, exposed the dangers of inadequate transport alternatives and weak enforcement of safety regulations on Nigeria's waterways.

During plenary, the chamber called on the Federal Government to support the construction of the Yenagoa-Okpoma Road and other critical roads in Bayelsa to reduce residents' dependence on boats for everyday movement.

The resolutions followed a motion moved by Senator Benson Konbowei (Bayelsa Central) on the November 20 accident.

Konbowei told the Senate that the boat reportedly broke apart and capsized after carrying passengers beyond its capacity. He disclosed that rescuers had recovered 29 bodies, while search operations continued for missing passengers.

Many survivors, he added, had been rescued and taken to medical facilities.

The decision by the House followed a motion of urgent public importance sponsored by the member representing Southern Ijaw Federal Constituency, Rodney Ambaiowei, who urged the House to intervene in the rescue operations, provide relief materials and address persistent safety challenges associated with water transportation in riverine communities.



Head Public Relations Unit, Projects Development Institute (PRODA), Dr Ijeoma Eze (left); Head of Procurement Unit, Ifeanyi Ofili; Head of Industrial Promotion, Information and Documentation Department, Dr Chioma Ugwa; Director of Finance and Accounts Department, Angela Elom; Director General, Dr Peter Ogbobe; Head of Human Resources, Bethrand Ochiaka; Head of Audit, Ifeoma Nwokeabia; Head of Legal Unit, Doris Eneh; and Head of Works, Emmanuel Iwuji, during a news conference on PRODA 2026 Productivity Week in Enugu, yesterday PHOTO: NAN.

Olaopa lists benefits of changing ASCON to National School of Government

PROF. Tunji Olaopa has said that if the proposed transformation of the Administrative Staff College of Nigeria (ASCON) into the National School of Government (NSG) is implemented, it will turn the latter into a centre for strategic leadership development, public policy delivery, governance innovation, research, and digital learning.

Olaopa, who is the chairman of the Federal Civil Service Commission, spoke in Badagry, Lagos yesterday during the Public Hearing of the Bill to Transform ASCON into the NSG, adding that the new institution would provide a platform for rigorous training and assessment of civil servants before promotion.

Olaopa expects that a significant part of the legislation, targeted at the senior executive cadre, must ensure that, when fully established as the School of Government, no senior civil service posts, from Grade Level 14 to permanent secretaries, could be attained without first going through the specialised executive tracks of the NSG.

Nigeria loses $3b yearly to gender-based violence, says Minister

From **Joke Falaju**, Abuja

MINISTER of Women Affairs and Social Development, Imaan Sulaiman-Ibrahim, has said Nigeria loses an estimated $3 billion yearly to gender-based violence (GBV), representing about 1.5 per cent of the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

The minister disclosed this at a briefing in Abuja yesterday to flag off the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence.

She said the economic cost of GBV was reflected in lost productivity, increased healthcare burden and disrupted livelihoods.

Sulaiman-Ibrahim said nearly one in three Nigerian women aged 15 to 49 had experienced physical or sexual violence, while more than 27,000 cases of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) were documented in the most recent reporting cycle.

Omo-Agege protests, to appeal court ruling nullifying candidacy

From **Monday Osayande** (Asaba) and **Chido Okafor** (Warri)

Senator vows to appeal, says judgment defies facts, law and logic

TWENTY-FOUR hours after the former Deputy President of the Senate, Ovie Omo-Agege, escaped death, a Federal High Court sitting in Warri, Delta State, has nullified his nomination over non-compliance with the provisions of the Electoral Act.

Omo-Agege is the Nigeria Democratic Congress (NDC) candidate for Delta Central Senatorial District for the 2027 general elections.

The court, presided over by Justice Hyeladzira Ajiya Nganjiwa, consequently ordered the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) to remove Omo-Agege's name from its list of candidates for the forthcoming election and restrained him from parading himself as the NDC's senatorial candidate.

The judgment, delivered yesterday in suit No. FHC/WR/CS/120/2026, followed a suit instituted by Prof. Alexander Osondu Akpodiete, who challenged the legality of Omo-Agege's emergence as the party's flag bearer.

In a development with significant implications for the NDC's electoral participation in Delta Central, the court further held that the statutory window for conducting fresh primaries to nominate another candidate had elapsed, citing the Electoral Act's requirement that political parties conclude their nomination processes within the prescribed 180-day period before the general elections.

Akpodiete had approached the court to challenge Omo-Agege's eligibility to participate in the NDC senatorial primary, raising questions bordering on his resignation from the All Progressives Congress (APC), membership of the NDC and compliance with statutory requirements for participation in party primaries.

Delivering judgment, Justice Nganjiwa dismissed all five preliminary objections raised by Omo-Agege, the NDC and INEC against the competence of the suit before proceeding to determine the substantive issues.

The court specifically found that the NDC failed to comply with the mandatory provisions of the Electoral Act requiring political parties to submit their membership registers to INEC at least 21 days before conducting their primaries.

Opposition parties in C'River unite under rainbow coalition to challenge APC

From **Tina Agosi Todo**, Calabar

Imo APC dismisses Anyanwu's proposed coalition move

OPPOSITION political parties in Cross River State have joined forces under the Rainbow Coalition to challenge the ruling All Progressives Congress (APC) in the 2027 general elections, declaring their readiness to work together to produce a new government.

The alliance was formally inaugurated on Monday at the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) secretariat in Calabar during the flag-off of the PDP's 2027 campaign, attended by national and state party leaders, candidates and supporters.

The coalition brings together six political parties, including the PDP, Allied People's Movement (APM), Labour Party (LP), Zenith Labour Party (ZLP), Young Progressives Party (YPP), and the Peoples Redemption Party (PRP).

Chairman of the Coalition of Opposition Parties (COPP), Ntami Ezige, said the alliance was driven by a shared desire for political change and a new direction for the state.

He expressed confidence that the partnership would produce a new government, adding that the participating parties were committed to working together to achieve their objective.

The PDP presidential candidate, Sandy Onor, said the rainbow coalition was designed to promote political cooperation, national integration and unity rather than create confusion in the political space.

Onor, however, launched a scathing criticism of the Governor Bassey Otu-led administration, describing its performance in the last three and a half years as disappointing.

He alleged that several projects across the state remained incomplete and accused the government of failing to demonstrate sufficient achievements in infrastructure and service delivery.

According to him, the PDP had deliberately refrained from criticising the administration for three years but could no longer remain silent over what he described as poor governance.

He also appealed to residents of different ethnic backgrounds, including Yoruba, Igbo, Hausa and Akwa Ibom communities, to join hands in rebuilding the state, assuring them that his proposed administration would recognise their contributions.

The PDP National Secretary, Chief Samuel Anyanwu, urged the coalition members to mobilise support across the 18 local councils, 196 wards and 3,241 polling units in the state.

Court orders hearing of CIFCFIN's suit against ICAN

FEDERAL High Court in Abuja has fixed December 9, 2026, for a definite hearing in the Chartered Institute of Forensics and Certified Fraud Investigators of Nigeria (CIFCFIN) suit challenging the power of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Nigeria (ICAN) to train and issue qualifying certificates to forensic professionals.

In a statement, the CIFCFIN said Justice Joyce Abdulmalik, in her ruling yesterday, directed ICAN to regularise and serve its processes on CIFCFIN as the matter was only billed for mention.

Counsel for ICAN, Ogochukwu Eze, had informed the court of his counter-affidavit and preliminary objection, adding that he would need time to respond to the substantive suit.

Responding, counsel for CIFCFIN, Shaibu Aruwa, SAN, said he would not respond to the counter-affidavit but to the preliminary objection.

PAP distributes 1,282 laptops to scholarship beneficiaries

By **Opeyemi Babalola**

PRESIDENTIAL Amnesty Programme (PAP) has said it has distributed an additional 1,282 laptops to beneficiaries of its scholarship scheme in Nigerian universities in the fourth phase of the initiative conducted this month.

The institutions covered in the exercise included Achievers University, Elizade University, Lead City University, Afe Babalola University, Gregory University, Lux Mundi University, Wigwe University, and Ritman University.

PAP Administrator, Dr Dennis Brutu Otuaro, said the initiative underscored the scheme's unwavering commitment to equipping the scholarship students with a vital tool to support their learning, research, and academic performance.

He urged them to use the device diligently and take their studies seriously, adding that education is a critical driver of socio-economic transformation, sustainable peace, and development in the Niger Delta.

DisCo woos estates as NERC warns against funding power infrastructure

From **Kingsley Jeremiah**, Abuja

THE Abuja Electricity Distribution Company (AEDC) is seeking stronger collaboration with real estate developers to expand electricity infrastructure in emerging estates, as the Nigerian Electricity Regulatory Commission (NERC) warns against compelling consumers to purchase transformers and other distribution equipment.

NERC also cautioned developers and property managers against transferring outstanding electricity debts from former tenants to new occupants or from previous property owners to new buyers.

Speaking yesterday in Abuja at a real estate developers' stakeholders' forum organised by AEDC, NERC's Deputy Manager, Consumer Protection Department, Mercy Ohamuche, insisted that electricity distribution companies (DisCos) are responsible for providing transformers and poles.

Plateau to support United Nigeria Airlines, woos investors

By **Olusegun Koiki**

GOVERNOR Caleb Mutfwang has promised United Nigeria Airlines (UNA) that the Plateau State Government would provide it with an enabling environment and necessary support to sustain its operations in the state.

Mutfwang pledged yesterday duringUNA's inaugural flight from the Murtala Muhammed Airport, Lagos, to the Yakubu Gowon Cargo International Airport, Jos, describing the flights' commencement as a strategic step towards boosting the state's tourism, investment and economic development.

Represented by the Speaker, Plateau State House of Assembly, Naanlong Daniel, the governor also expressed the government's readiness to work with the airline to expand air connectivity between Plateau State and other parts of the country, assuring investors that the state was open for business.

He explained that the government was intentional about repositioning the state as a preferred tourism and investment destination, noting that improved air connectivity was critical to achieving that ambition.

For his part, the Managing Director of UNA, Osita Okonkwo, said the commencement of operations into Jos was a long-term business decision rather than a seasonal service introduced to take advantage of the Christmas travel rush.

Manufacturers seek tobacco exclusion from NAFDAC bills, decry multiple regulations

By **Tobi Awodipe** and **Innocent Anoruo**

• RDI, MCA hail health council on alcohol policy adoption

THE Manufacturers Association of Nigeria (MAN) has urged the National Assembly to immediately exclude tobacco products from the National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control (NAFDAC) (Repeal and Enactment) Bill, 2026, and the Food, Medical Products and Related Products (Registration, Etc.) Bill, 2026.

It warned that their passage without clear exclusions could create overlapping regulatory responsibilities, increase compliance costs and expose manufacturers to regulatory uncertainty.

In another development, Renevlyn Development Initiative (RDI) and the Motivator's Crib Africa (MCA) have commended the federal government for adopting the Nigeria Alcohol Policy and its Multisectoral Implementation Plan (2026- 2030).

The policy was among 22 resolutions adopted by the NCH at the recently ended 67th National Council on Health (NCH) meeting in Lafia, Nasarawa State, where the NCH proposed institutionalising essential public health functions at national and sub-national levels to strengthen governance and improve healthcare delivery.

ON its part, MAN argued that the proposed provisions could introduce parallel regulatory requirements for an industry that already operates under a dedicated tobacco-control framework established by the National Tobacco Control Act, 2015, and the National Tobacco Control Regulations, 2019.

In a statement yesterday, the MAN Director-General, Segun Ajayi-Kadir, said the existing tobacco-control framework already provides defined responsibilities for relevant government institutions, covering public-health oversight, technical standards, conformity assessment, customs and border enforcement.

He argued that the Repeal and Enactment Bill would extend NAFDAC's functions into areas relating to tobacco product approval, technical specifications, manufacturing, trade and enforcement, while the Registration, Etc. Bill would introduce additional requirements for registration, authorisation, renewal, research and product evaluation.

Ajayi-Kadir warned that applying these provisions to tobacco products would result in repeated submissions, inspections, testing and regulatory charges, potentially increasing the cost of compliance and delaying legitimate business activities.



Director of Special Duties, Federal Ministry of Budget and Economic Planning, Dr Gloria Ahmed (left); Borno State Commissioner for Planning and Economic Development, Maina Yaumi; and Minister of Budget and Economic Planning, Abubakar Bagudu, during the presentation of Borno State Government's Letter of Intent to join the Open Government Partnership in Abuja yesterday.

Katsina probes Daura emir, suspends official engagements

From **Sodiq Omolaoye**, Abuja

•PWAN warns monarchs not above GBV laws as tourist receives threats

SEQUEL to the allegations of sexual assault made against him by a foreign female tourist, Mirka Cze, the Katsina State Government has constituted a committee to probe the allegations against the Emir of Daura, Umar Faruk Umar, saying it requires careful attention and appropriate action.

In a statement yesterday, the Commissioner for Information and Culture, Dr Bala Salisu Zango, the government also announced the suspension of the traditional ruler's official engagements and travels pending the outcome of the investigation.

The Czech Republic-born tourist had alleged that the monarch held her hand, hugged her and kissed her cheek before touching her breasts without her consent, despite her repeated objection.

In the meantime, Cze said she has been receiving threats from Nigerians over the allegation, sharing screenshots of the private messages and public comments on her Instagram page on Monday.

Meanwhile, the Rule of Law and Empowerment Initiative, also known as Partners West Africa Nigeria (PWAN), has warned that traditional rulers are not above the law and cannot use their positions or authority to justify conducts that amount to gender-based violence (GBV).

PWAN Executive Director, Kemi Okenyodo, stated this yesterday in Abuja during an interview on the sidelines of PWAN's project experience-sharing and close-out event on its Strengthening Police-Community Engagement to Prevent and Combat Gender-Based Violence in Nigeria.

HOWEVER, in the reactions that trailed the news, some Nigerians expressed anger that shepublicised the allegation, accusing her of defaming the emir, with some calling for her arrest, whilea user identified as kabirbindawa threatened violence against people from her country, saying Nigerians abroad could be targeted.

FG launches electric mobility initiative, unveils 50MW solar mini-grid

From **Rauf Oyewole**, Bauchi

•Expands NEDC interventions across North-East

A MAJOR electric mobility initiative involving the deployment of 10,000 electric vehicles and a 50-megawatt (MW) solar-powered mini-grid programme has been unveiled across the North-East as the federal government pushes efforts to accelerate post-insurgency recovery and economic development in the region.

The initiative, being implemented by the North-East Development Commission (NEDC), forms part of a broader multi-sectoral intervention covering transportation, renewable energy, infrastructure, housing, education, healthcare, agriculture and humanitarian assistance across Adamawa, Bauchi, Borno, Gombe, Taraba and Yobe states.

Unveiling the interventions yesterday, Vice President Kashim Shettima commended the resilience of the North-East residents despite years of insurgency, insecurity and economic hardship.

Shettima said the federal government remained committed to rebuilding affected communities, restoring livelihoods and creating sustainable economic opportunities through targeted development programmes.

He stressed that the region's recovery must extend beyond addressing the consequences of insurgency to include economic renewal, infrastructure development and improved living standards.

Shettima further noted the potential of electric mobility and renewable energy initiatives to support transportation, economic activities and environmental sustainability.

Also speaking at the event, the Managing Director of NEDC, Dr Mohammed Alkali, said the commission was expanding its development interventions to address the interconnected challenges confronting communities across the six states.

Under the electric mobility programme, the commission's current deployment plan comprises 10,000 electric tricycles, 300 electric taxis and 30 electric buses, supported by solar-powered battery-swapping hubs.

Alkali disclosed that pilot implementation had already seen the deployment of over 200 electric vehicles, recording an estimated 50 per cent reduction in carbon emissions from the deployed vehicles.

Alia mourns APC party faithful lost in Benue crash

•Gov, Suswam lead campaign flag-off as Moro backs Aondoakaa to win state

From **Felix Uroko**, Makurdi

GOVERNOR Hyacinth Alia of Benue State has mourned the tragic loss of some All Progressives Congress (APC) faithful in a motor accident at Achoho en route to the official flag-off of the Tinubu/Alia 2027 campaigns.

Expressing griefover the many lives lost and the others with varying degrees of injury, Alia said:"It is a moment of deep sorrow for the entire state, particularly for the APC family, as we mourn those who were on their way to demonstrate their unwavering support for the progress and development of our state."

He condoledwith the bereaved families and directed the relevant government agencies to ensure the best possible medical attention for the injured, according to a statement from his Chief Press Secretary, Tersoo Kula.

Meanwhile, the APC has intensified its mobilisation for the 2027 general elections in the state, with Alia, former governor Gabriel Suswam and other prominent political figures rallying supporters at the party's campaign flag-off in Gboko.

At the event held at the J.S. Tarka Township Stadium, Alia said he was surprised at the turnout.

Geidam warns against internal sabotage as Buni targets 3m votes for Tinubu

From **Muhammad Maitela** (Damaturu) and **Njadvara Musa** (Maiduguri)

THE Minister of Police Affairs and Chairman of Critical Stakeholders in Yobe State, Senator Ibrahim Gaidam, has warned members of the All Progressives Congress (APC) against anti-party activities ahead of the 2027 general elections.

Gaidam spoke on Monday during the flag-off of the APC's 2027 election campaign in Damaturu, saying the party would not tolerate any attempt by members to undermine its electoral prospects through internal sabotage.

In Yobe State, Governor Mai Mala Buni said he was targeting no less than three million votes for President Bola Tinubu's re-election and other candidates as he flagged off the APC campaign train in the state.

Buni, speaking at the event in Damaturu, called on youths and women across the state to mobilise massive support for the president and the APC gubernatorial candidate, Baba Wali, in the 2027 general elections.

TheGuardianSports

www.guardian.ng

Guardian Nigeria GuardianNigeria 08136370421 Guardiannigeria

CAS confirms Senegal as authentic 2025 AFCON winners

By **Christian Okpara**

THE Court of Arbitration for Sports (CAS), yesterday, adhered to the age-long rule that the referee's decision is final in football to reinstate Senegal as the real winners of the 2025 Africa Cup of Nations.

Yesterday's ruling rendered the Confederation of African Football (CAF) Appeal Panel's decision to hand over the trophy to Morocco null and void.

Senegal won the Africa Cup of Nations on the field in a chaotic final in Morocco in January, and then lost it in a legal case in March because their players walked off the field in protest in second-half stoppage time.

But in rejecting the CAF decision, CAS cited referee Jean-Jacques Ndala's decision to let the game resume after the protest.

Tournament regulations said a team which refuses to play should be considered to have lost the game, but CAS said those rules were meant only for cases "when a team's conduct leads the referee to call off the game permanently."

Ndala "did not err in law" when he resumed the game, CAS added.

Senegal won the final 1-0 after extra time with chaos on the field and violent clashes in the stands. The result was overturned two months later as a 3-0 default win for Morocco by an appeals panel appointed by the Confederation of African Football (CAF).

CAF accepts CAS's decision, Morocco disagrees

The Teranga Lions beat the host nation Morocco, also known as the Atlas Lions, after a 15-minute delay in play. At 0-0, Senegal's team walked off the field to protest Morocco being awarded a penalty kick in the last minute of regulation time.

Match referee Ndala of Congo eventually allowed the game to restart, Morocco's penalty by Brahim Diaz was saved, and Senegal won in extra time.

The laws of football state that referee decisions are final.

In the first legal case in March, CAF appeal judges cited AFCON tournament regulations that if a team "refuses to play or leaves the ground before the regular end of the match without the authorisation of the referee, it shall be considered loser and shall be eliminated for good from the current competition."

The CAS judges heard evidence at a one-day hearing last month and the court promised a verdict by the end of November with a full written ruling of its judges setting out reasons for their decision.

In their position, Senegal argued that the referee, Jean-Jacques Ngambo Ndala, decided to resume the match at 90+19' and let it finish.



Senegal defeated Morocco 1-0 in the disputed 2025 AFCON final in Rabat, Morocco.

Biffo assumes duty, vows to revitalise Enyimba

By **Christian Okpara**

ENYIMBA Football Club of Aba's new technical adviser, Abdullahi Biffo, has promised to make the two-time African champions great again.

Biffo, who said that the Peoples Elephant are too big a club to go down to the lower division, took over the club at the weekend following the dismissal of the Kanu Nwankwo-led board and the club's former technical crew, led by Emmanuel Deutsch.

However, he was not in charge of the team when they met Abia Warriors in a EuroMatch Nigerian Premier Football League (NPFL) game at the weekend. That game, which ended in a goalless draw, was managed by the club's new head coach, Gabriel Ezema.

Biffo's first game is a home match against Barau FC in Aba and the former Kwara United and Sporting Lagos coach, said that he is in Aba to make the people happy again.

Zenith Bank Delta Principals' Cup organisers announce new pathway for best players

Asagba, Unity Sec School for tomorrow's official kick-off

From **Monday Osayande**, Asaba

THE organisers of the Zenith Bank sponsored Delta Principals' Cup, Hideaplus Limited, yesterday, announced a new pathway to professional football for the best players discovered during the 2026 edition of the tournament.

At a press conference to herald the ninth edition of the tournament, the CEO of Hideaplus, Tony Pemu, also announced a new partnership with the Palace of the Asagba of Asaba and the good people of Asaba.

"Through this partnership, the talented players that will be discovered from this ninth edition will be picked directly into the newly- unveiled Asaba City Football Academy," Pemu said.

"In the past, after the Principals Cup, many of our brilliant young players went back home and their talents faded away because there was no structure to continue their development.

"From this ninth edition, our scouts will be watching every match — from the preliminaries in the local councils, to the zonals, to the quarter-finals, semi-finals and the final. The best players discovered will be given the opportunity to join the Asaba City Football Academy, where they will be properly trained, mentored, educated, and developed."

Speaking also at the press conference, the sponsors of the tournament, Zenith Bank, represented by the Team Lead, Kelvin Asogwa, said the success of the financial institution is tied to the success of the community they serve and reason why they are proud to sponsor the tournament every year.

While appreciating the state government and the consultant to the tournament, Asogwa said that Zenith Bank is passionate about the youth as they are the future of the state and the country.

Eze relishes second title as FirstBank Lagos Open ends in style

By **Eniola Daniel**

MONDAY Eze was ecstatic as he strolled to receive his second consecutive FirstBank Lagos Open title at the Ikoyi Club 1938 Golf Section on Sunday.

The defending champion was excited not only by the N10 million winner's prize money, but also by the quality of opposition he had to navigate to get to the podium.

Eze, who competed alongside other professional golfers, gathered a total of 39-stableford points to top the category, while Kenyan Sam Njoroge with a score of 35-stableford points came second. Ikoyi-based Tajudeen Ajayi, with a score of 34-stablepoints came third.

The landmark 65th FirstBank Lagos Amateur Open Golf Championship came to a thrilling end with Enugu-based Michael Isife claiming the amateur crown.

Waking from a slow start, Isife fired from all cylinders for a closing 73-to overcome a three-shot deficit going to the finals, winning the competition by four-shots over hard fighting Olalere Olakunle, who closed with 80 to duck in the second position.

Lucky Onjefu was further down on the leaderboard playing 231-gross over 54-holes. Onjefu completed the top three in gross category.

Although Eze claimed the main trophy at the event, it was Isife who shined the most. Competing across a demanding 54-hole stroke-play format in the World Amateur Golf Ranking (WAGR) event, Isife outpaced a competitive field to emerge victorious.

The victory marks a major milestone for the Enugu-based golfer, who improved on his top-five finish at the 64th edition in 2025 to lift one of Nigeria's most coveted trophies.

Coca-Cola reunites with CAF, sponsors 2027 AFCON

By **Christian Okpara**

Coca-Cola has explained its decision to reunite with the Confederation of African Football (CAF), with the firm named as the official competition sponsor of the TotalEnergies Africa Cup of Nations (AFCON) 2027, set to hold in East Africa.

The firm said, yesterday, that the renewed partnership marks an exciting new chapter in its longstanding connection to African football, bringing together two icons united by a shared passion for the game and its ability to connect people across the continent.

Through its partnership with CAF, Coca-Cola said that it will celebrate the people, cultures and shared experiences that make African football unique, connecting the game with music, creativity, and local expression while creating opportunities for fans to experience the excitement of AFCON 2027.

Explaining his firm's return to African football, President, Coca-Cola's Africa operating unit, Luis Felipe Avellar, said: "African football is a powerful source of pride, unity and inspiration across our continent. Coca-Cola is proud to reunite with CAF and return to a tournament that holds such a special place in African football.

"As we look ahead to the TotalEnergies CAF AFCON 2027, we are excited to celebrate the fans and communities who make the game what it is across the continent."

Also speaking on the renewed partnership, CAF President, Patrice Motsepe, said: "CAF is excited to welcome Coca-Cola back to African Football after almost 30 years and we are confident that the partnership between CAF and Coca-Cola will contribute to the development and growth of Football on the African continent and advance Coca-Cola's commercial and stakeholder interest.

Solution

S	U	L	T	A	N		N	A	G
U		A		L		D			I
N	A	M	E	S		O	V	E	N
D		I		O	W	E			
R	U	D	E		O		S		D
Y		O		G		H	A	L	E
			G	A	S		M		R
B	I	R	O		A	L	I	B	I
I			T		K		N		D
N	O	D		S	E	D	U	C	E

TheGuardian
Conscience, Nurtured by Truth
Guardian Nigeria GuardianNigeria 08136370421 Guardiannigeria
Wednesday, November 25, 2026



CAS confirms Senegal as authentic 2025 AFCON winners

/31



Oluwafemi Adekoya

Why Lagos cannot afford to lose control of its waste

MY daily commute to and from work presents two experiences. In the morning, one can literally see the PSP operators trying to evacuate the waste along the Itire axis all the way to Apapa-Oshodi Expressway, especially at the Ilasa axis. The return journey presents a different scenario. It's as if the waste were never evacuated. It makes one wonder if the Centre of Excellence is losing its war against waste.

The truth is, however, glaring: Lagos risks losing control of one of the most basic functions of a modern city: keeping its streets, drains, markets and neighbourhoods free of refuse. The evidence is visible in the middle of the roads, under bridges, along canals and outside markets, where waste returns almost as quickly as it is cleared. It's no longer a sanitation problem but an emergency that should be treated as such.

The warning signposts have done nothing to deter the bad behaviour of roadside dumping. Aside from the nuisance of Lagos louts, the waste crisis questions whether Lagos can still guarantee public health, protect its drainage system, preserve its coastal environment and maintain the confidence of residents in public institutions. A review of the recent governorship debate raised critical issues and solutions, even though the candidates agreed that the system is under strain.

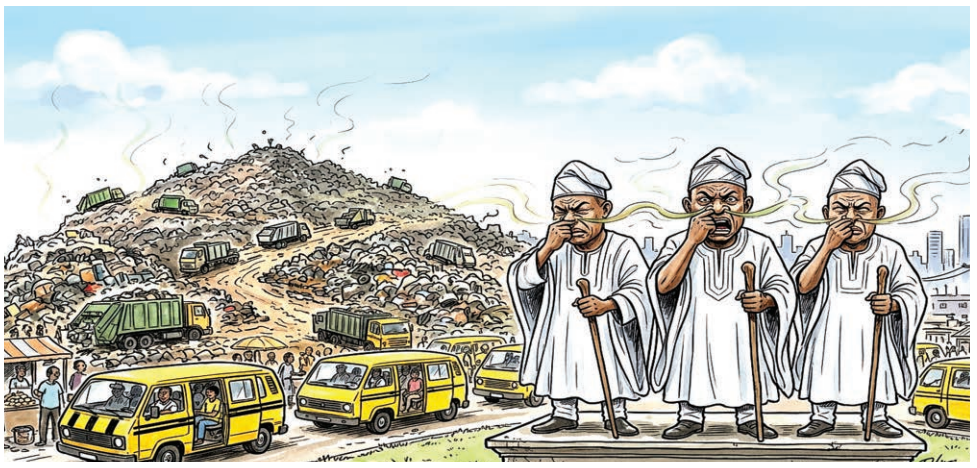
The Lagos Waste Management Authority (LAWMA) claims that Lagos generates between 13,000 and 14,000 metric tonnes of waste daily, a burden intensified by dense settlement, limited land and rising consumption. The authority also launched a 60-day emergency cleanup operation to remove refuse from major highways and public spaces, while deploying night-time evacuation teams and surveillance to deter illegal dumping. But I dare to say the emergency cleanup is already overwhelmed.

The uncomfortable truth is that Lagos is increasingly reacting to waste after it has already been dumped. The state's own environment agency has described roads, road medians, markets and motor parks as places disfigured by refuse from residents who do not patronise authorised Private Sector Participation (PSP) operators. The cycle is familiar: a black spot is cleared, residents return within hours or days, and the pile grows again.

This is what "losing control" looks like. It does not mean the state has abandoned waste management altogether. It means the system no longer reliably prevents dumping, collects waste on schedule, reaches every neighbourhood fairly, or persuades residents that compliance is worthwhile. When people see uncollected refuse, broken or absent bins, blocked drains and inconsistent enforcement, they conclude—often rationally—that dumping on the roadside is the only available option.

During the guber debate, Gbadebo Rhodes-Vivour of the African Democratic Congress described Lagos as "a state that stinks," arguing that the deterioration in refuse collection reflects years of poor management rather than population growth alone. His most important claim was that Lagos once managed waste more effectively despite a growing population. He cited an alleged decline from about 1,000 collection trucks under former Governor Babatunde Fashola to about 200, and argued that centralisation had weakened local-government participation.

The precise figures deserve verification before they become campaign folklore. But the underlying point is valid: capacity, accountability and local presence matter. A megacity cannot manage



waste from a distant command centre alone. Rhodes-Vivour's proposal to return a greater role to local governments and require household waste separation is therefore worth taking seriously, especially because separation can make recycling economically viable and reduce the volume sent to landfills.

Deputy Governor Obafemi Hamzat and the All Progressives Congress candidate offered a different but complementary diagnosis. He argued that Lagos must move beyond collecting refuse only to dump it in landfills, because the state's waste volume and limited land make material recovery essential. He pointed to plans for transfer stations at Olusosun and Solus III in Alimosho, a material recovery facility at Erekiti, and similar facilities planned for other locations.

Hamzat also conceded that waste management remains a challenge, citing inadequate collection trucks, reception facilities and transfer stations. That candour matters. Lagos does not need slogans about a "smart city" if residents cannot obtain a reliable bin, pay a fair fee, see a collection truck on schedule, or report a missed pickup without frustration.

Funso Doherty of the Nigeria Democratic Congress widened the debate further. He argued that waste is accumulating faster than it is being collected, and that the problem includes liquid and human waste, not only household refuse. He also raised concerns about pollution from the Olusosun dumpsite and its effects on nearby communities. This is an important corrective to a narrow conversation about plastic sachets and roadside heaps. Waste management includes drainage, faecal sludge, markets, hospitals, construction sites, waterways and the people who live beside dumpsites.

It is tempting for officials to frame the crisis primarily as a failure of resident attitude. There is truth in that. Some households and businesses evade PSP fees, refuse to use approved operators, or treat road medians as free disposal sites. LAWMA has repeatedly urged residents to patronise assigned PSP operators, pay promptly and stop using highways and road medians as dumping grounds.

But attitude is shaped by service. A resident who pays for collection but does not receive it cannot reasonably be treated as the principal offender. A trader who has no nearby bin, a tenant whose landlord has not enrolled the building, or a market woman whose waste is collected irregularly will eventually dump waste somewhere. The state cannot demand civic virtue while delivering civic failure. In my CDA, the former PSP operator was sacked for not providing service after payment. The present PSP operator is held to his contract and held accountable for its weekly operations on a group WhatsApp platform. Payment compliance has also improved when residents saw service being delivered.

Lagos has shown before that it can build systems at scale. The PSP scheme for domestic waste collection began in 1997 with pilots in Kosofe and Bariga, before being extended across the state; LAWMA took over its management in 2007. The scheme's enduring lesson is that private operators can expand collection capacity, but only when contracts are clear, tariffs are fair, coverage is monitored and residents trust the service.

Lagos needs a five-part plan, implemented publicly and measured monthly.

Guarantee universal collection access. Every street, market, school, motor park and low-income neighbourhood should have a named PSP operator, a published collection schedule, an affordable payment option and a functioning complaint line. No resident should be asked to obey a rule the state has not made usable.

Restore neighbourhood-level accountability. Local governments, community development associations, market associations, traditional institutions, landlords and artisans should co-own local sanitation targets. LAWMA has already proposed mobilising these stakeholders to curb indiscriminate dumping; the challenge is to give them real authority, data and support rather than ceremonial roles.

> "Lagos has the money, talent and civic energy to manage its waste. What it lacks is not ambition but consistency: a system that reaches every community, a fee structure residents regard as fair, infrastructure placed where people live and trade, and firm enforcement without being cruel."

Put bins where people actually generate waste. Lagos needs densely placed, regularly emptied public bins at transport hubs, markets, bus stops, pedestrian areas and commercial corridors. A bin that overflows is not waste infrastructure; it is an invitation to litter.

Separate waste at source and create markets for recyclables. Households, schools and businesses should be required and supported to separate organic waste, plastics, paper and residual waste. Buy-back centres, aggregation points and partnerships with informal waste pickers can turn separation into income rather than an additional burden. Rhodes-Vivour's recycling proposal and Hamzat's material-recovery agenda should be merged into one practical programme.

Enforce fairly, transparently and proportionately. Repeat commercial dumpers, construction sites and market operators should face firm sanctions. But petty offenders should first receive warnings, community-service options and access to proper disposal points. Criminalising poverty without providing alternatives will not clean Lagos; it will simply deepen resentment.

Changing public attitude requires more than radio jingles. Lagosians respond to visible fairness. When a resident sees a truck arrive on schedule, a bin emptied before it overflows, a drain cleared before the rains, and a market cleaned without favouritism, compliance becomes easier to defend.

The state should also make the cost of dumping socially visible and
enforcement must be predictable. Night surveillance and arrests may deter some offenders, but they cannot replace functioning services. LAWMA's recent operations in Ikeja and Mosan-Okunola, including apprehensions for dumping on road medians, should be paired with clear publication of where residents can legally dispose of waste and how to enrol with PSP operators.

Lagos has the money, talent and civic energy to manage its waste. What it lacks is not ambition but consistency: a system that reaches every community, a fee structure residents regard as fair, infrastructure placed where people live and trade, and firm enforcement without being cruel.

The governorship candidates have identified parts of the answer. Rhodes-Vivour is right that decentralisation and recycling deserve a place in the solution. Hamzat is right that Lagos must invest in recovery facilities and reduce dependence on landfills. Doherty is right that the crisis extends beyond visible refuse to liquid waste, pollution and the communities living beside dumpsites.

But Lagos does not need another debate about who cares more. It needs a public compact: the government will provide accessible collection, bins, drainage protection and fair enforcement; residents, businesses and markets will pay and dispose properly.

If that bargain is not restored quickly, roadside dumping will become more than an eyesore. It will become proof that Africa's largest city economy can build bridges and towers, yet still lose control of the refuse at its feet. *Èkó ò ní bàjẹ́ o!*

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)

What TheGuardian stands for
Conscience, Nurtured by Truth

- *The Guardian* is an independent newspaper, established for the purpose of presenting balanced coverage of events, and of promoting the best interests of Nigeria. It owes allegiance to no political party, ethnic, community, religious or other interest groups. Its primary commitment is to the integrity and sovereignty of the Federation of Nigeria, and beyond that, to the unity and sovereignty of Africa.
- *The Guardian* will at all times uphold the need for justice, probity in public life, equal access to the nation's resources and equal protection under the law of Nigeria for all citizens.
- *The Guardian* journalist must whole-heartedly subscribe to the 1979 Code of Conduct for Nigerian journalists as amended in 1998.
- *The Guardian* believes, therefore, that it is the moral duty of every journalist to have respect for the truth and to publish or prepare for publication only the truth and to the best of his knowledge.
- It is the duty of *The Guardian* journalist to resist and refrain from earning other than his just salary or allowances from his employers: not to demand, and to refuse any reward if offered in cash or kind for publishing news or comments.
- The motto of *The Guardian* is Conscience Nurtured by Truth.

Please report any of our erring journalists to these dedicated telephone numbers: 014489600, 07098147948, 07098147951 Or our e-mail: Complaints@guardian.ng