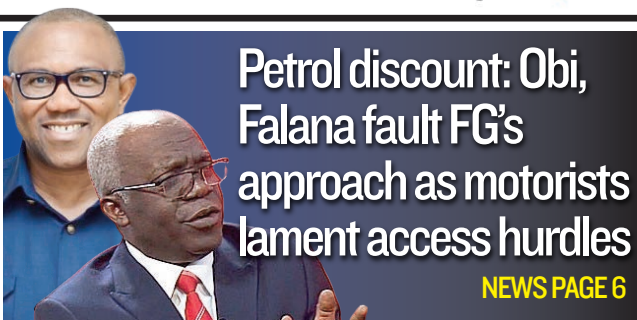




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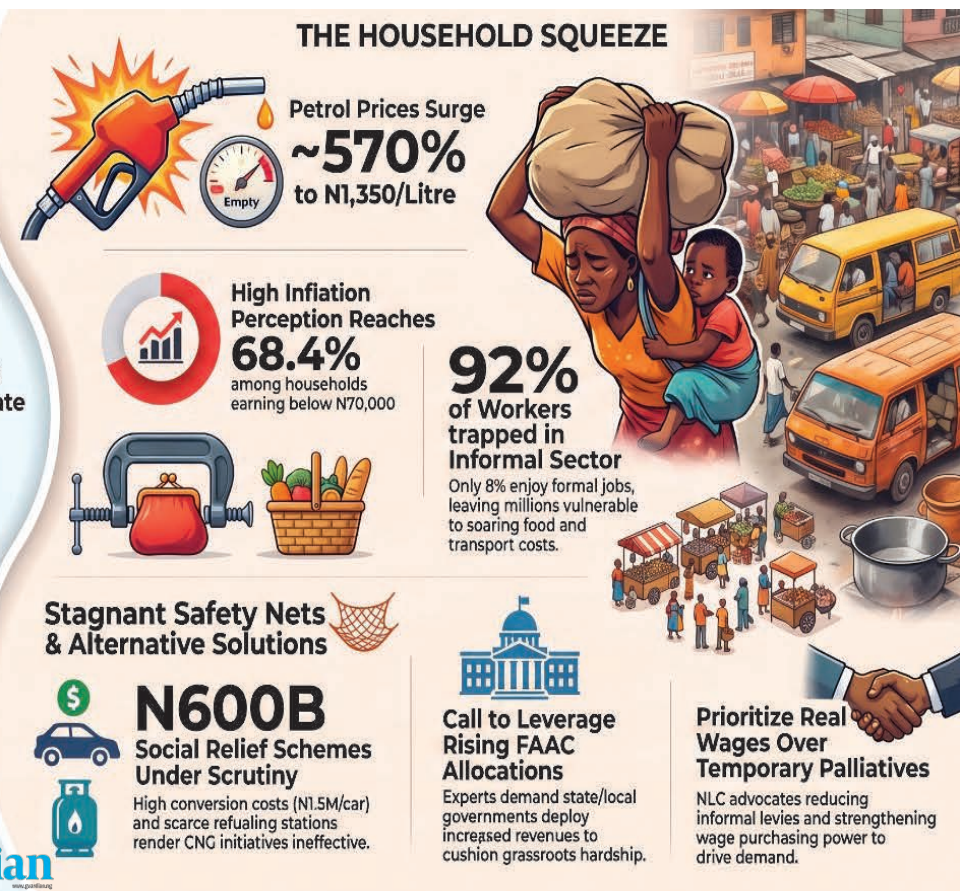
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OBIJACKSON AND NESTOIL GROUP RESTRUCTURE BOARDS. From left: Dr O.J. Mbonu; Barr Nduka Ikeyi; Engr. Chinazo Okoye; Mr Chino Obiagwu SAN; Chidi Anya; Engr. Dipo Olanrewaju; Mr Kenneth O. Aigbinode; Mr Gbenga Olaniyan; Engr. Ubaka Emelumadu; Mr. Wolfgang Goetsch; Mr. David Oye-Igbemo; Chief Victor Alonge; Mr. Abdulrahman Yinusa; Dr Suleyman Ndanusa; Engr Ernest Ozomma Akuezumba; Dr Akin Oparison; Prof. Christopher Bode; Barr Nnaji Igwe; Dr Ogechukwu Obiejesi; Mrs Folasade Akinmusire Group CS; Prof. Tagbo Oguonu; Mr. Fabien Monleau. Sitting: Engr Jafaru Damulak; Pastor Ben Akabueze; Dr. Mrs. Nnenna Obiejesi; Dr. Ernest Azudialu Obiejesi (OFR); Group Chairman; His Imperial Majesty, Oba Adeyeye Enitan Ogunwusi CFR, Ooni of Ife Ojaia II; Dr Theo Osanakpo; Dr Musa Wen Ibrahim.

Crash: Engineers seek comprehensive review of military flight safety

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ADC-PCC says police clampdown on 'Tinubu Must Go' rally shameful

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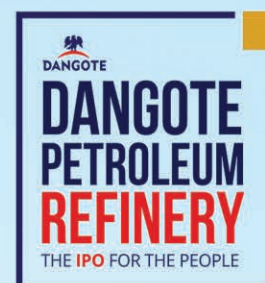
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2027: Northern govts' covert support unsettles Tinubu's camp

From Leo Sobechi (Abuja) and Adewale Momoh (Akure)

THE cold war between President Bola Tinubu and governors elected on the platform of All Progressives Congress (APC) has worsened, following the aloof posture of some northern chief executives towards the President's re-election bid.

This was as indications emerged that the party's Na-

APC NWC moves to check sabotage, bypasses govts in agents' selection

tional Working Committee (NWC) bypassed governors and directed its candidates to submit the names of their proposed party agents directly to the national secretariat to prevent possible sabotage during the 2027 general elections.

Upon his return from his recent overseas vacation, the President expressed dismay that state governors were not doing enough to enlighten their people on the achievements of his administration. Barely two months ago, the Vice President, Kashim Shettima, noted how not more than five state governors from the northern region were demonstrating tacit support for the President's re-election.

However, the Vice President's media office, while clarifying the statement, noted that Shettima was referring to the governors' posture in the lead-up to the 2022 APC presidential primary.

But, in a conversation with the governor of one of the North-West states yesterday, *The Guardian* was told that the Vice President's position reflected the present situation within the Progressive Governors' Forum (PGF), the umbrella caucus of the APC governors.

The governor, who is also seeking a second term, said that despite attempts to pretend that all was well between President Tinubu and the governors, the APC leadership's inability to resolve lingering misunderstandings within the party's ranks was taking its toll on the party's preparedness for next year's poll.

He disclosed that the majority of the APC governors in the North were not bold to canvass support for the President's second term, adding that a tour of most northern states showed that while some governorship candidates' bill-

boards in the city centres have the photos of the President and the Vice President, those in the hinterland do not showcase Tinubu.

Regarding the perceived estrangement of Imo State Governor Hope Uzodinma, who doubles as PGF Chairman and Scribe of the APC Presidential Campaign Council, he refused to elaborate on the relationship between the PGF chairman and the President.

"The much I can tell you is that we have a situation in the PGF, which is also affecting the Nigeria Governors' Forum (NGF). The President promised to wade into the misunderstanding among the governors, but no concrete action has been taken.

"There are governors who want the PGF chairman to hand over the office and face his assignments on the Campaign Council and the Renewed Hope Ambassadors.

But, the chairman maintains that the tradition has always been that handing over should be to a second-term governor after general elections," he said.

He said that three major considerations underlie the divided loyalty of some of his colleagues in the North, adding that the travails of the immediate past governor of Kaduna State, Nasir el-Rufai, despite his fight for the President's election, are among them.

The governor said Tinubu's directive to the Finance Ministry to publish disbursements is seen as a direct target at state governors, particularly on the use of local council funds.

He added that the President's open support for the Minister of the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Nyesom Wike, and his Rainbow Coalition was the last nail in the coffin of the icy relationship between the PGF and the Presidency.

THE move by APC NWC, *The Guardian* gathered, was designed to ensure that the party safeguards its electoral victory by bypassing state chapters that traditionally handle such submissions.

Read the remaining story on www.guardian.ng

Anxiety as NCC slams 30-day warning on non-compliant phone devices

By Adeyemi Adepetun

PHONE users in Nigeria are in a state of fear and confusion following a notice they got at the weekend of the possible blockade of their mobile phones after 30 cumulative days.

The notice, which flooded some users' mobile phones, came from the Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC). It formed part of the commission's planned Device Management System (DMS), designed to identify and eventually restrict devices that do not meet Nigeria's type-approval requirements.

For emphasis, type-approval for mobile phones in Nigeria is a mandatory certification process managed by the NCC under Section 132(2) of the Nigerian Communications Act 2003. It helps to ensure mobile devices function properly on local mobile networks without causing dropped calls, poor service or signal interference. It also helps protect users from counterfeit or substandard handsets that may pose health and safety risks, such as high electromagnetic radiation exceeding International Commission on Non-Ionising Radiation Protection (ICNIRP) limits.

The blockade exercise, according to NCC, is not targeted at any particular brand or model, but part of a broader effort to ensure that devices operating on Nigerian networks have been properly approved. Confirming the development yesterday, a senior NCC official said the enforcement "is necessary" because some devices being brought into Nigeria had not gone through the required type-approval process.

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ADC asks INEC to clarify allegations of ethnic-based postings

SERAP sues CBN over \$6.23m missing election funds, N1.63tr public funds

From Silver Nwokoro (Lagos) and Andrew Oota (Abuja)

THE African Democratic Congress (ADC) has tasked the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) with clarifying allegations that some of the postings and deployments recently carried out by the electoral body gave preference to officials from President Bola Tinubu's South-West.

Meanwhile, the Socio-Economic Rights and Accountability Project (SERAP) has sued the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) at the Federal High Court sitting in Abuja over its failure to account for missing \$6.23 million election funds and over N1.63 trillion other public funds.

In a statement issued by its National Publicity Secretary, Bolaji Abdullahi, ADC claimed to have intelligence and "direct complaints" regarding recent personnel changes and redeployments in some of the commission's "strategic departments and stations."

The opposition party said it received information that many officers from the North who had served in departments like Electoral Operations and Information and Communication Technology (ICT) were being redeployed to other departments. "We have specific names of officers moved from Electoral Operations and ICT in a number of northern states and replaced with officers from Lagos and other South-West states. INEC may dismiss this as routine. But we have noticed a pattern, especially along ethnic lines, and we are concerned," the party said.

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Tinubu



Amupitan



Cardoso

President cites World Bank report to defend reforms, stability

From Terhemba Daka, Abuja

PRESIDENT Bola Tinubu has cited the World Bank's latest assessment of Nigeria's economy as evidence that his administration's economic reforms are yielding results, even as he acknowledged the need to translate macroeconomic gains into improved living conditions for Nigerians. The President, who welcomed the bank's October 2026 Nigeria Development Update, said the findings showed that the economy was stabilising, government revenues rising, and states increasingly directing resources towards infrastructure and other development priorities.

However, the Nigerian Economic Summit Group (NESG) warned that worsening insecurity across the country threatens investment, agricultural production, infrastructure development, and economic growth, and called for coordinated interventions to restore confidence in the economy.

The World Bank report, entitled 'Beyond the Federal Purse: How Higher Revenues Re-

- Tasks govts as economy grows 4.2% in H1 2026, external reserves hit \$53.8b
- Insecurity threatens investment, economic growth – NESG

shaped State Priorities', found that Nigeria's economy grew by 4.2 per cent in the first half of 2026, compared with 3.9 per cent in the corresponding period of 2025, despite the effect of the conflict in the Middle East.

It also noted that the country's poverty rate stabilised for the first time since 2019, with the bank projecting a gradual decline as economic growth outpaces population growth.

Tinubu said the findings reinforced his administration's position that the removal of the petrol subsidy, the unification of the foreign exchange market, and efforts to strengthen fiscal discipline were creating the conditions for sustained economic growth.

He acknowledged that more work was required to ensure that the gains translated into tangible improvements in household welfare, particularly through lower food prices, job creation and expanded access to essential services.

"The dividends of reform are becoming visible. But more work remains to ensure they fully translate into better living standards for every household, starting with lower food prices and decent jobs for our young people," the President said.

According to the Bretton Woods institution, inflation declined from 27.6 per cent in January 2025 to 15.2 per cent in December 2025, although higher global fuel prices associated with the Middle East conflict slowed the pace of disinflation.

The bank projects that inflation will ease to about 12 per cent by 2028, while economic growth is expected to average at least 4.4 per cent between 2026 and 2028.

Nigeria's external position also improved during the period under review, with the current account surplus rising to \$12 billion, equivalent to 7.0 per cent of gross domestic product, in the first half of 2026, from \$8.6 billion a year

earlier.

Gross external reserves increased from \$45.5 billion at the end of 2025 to \$53.8 billion at the end of August 2026.

The report further attributed a significant increase in government revenues to reforms introduced since 2023, stating that federation revenues rose by 69 per cent in real terms between 2023 and 2025, with state governments emerging as the largest beneficiaries.

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NAFDAC intercepts N800m banned agrochemicals, others in six states

By Ijeoma Nwanosike

NATIONAL Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control (NAFDAC) has intercepted prohibited agrochemicals worth over N800 million in Ogun, Ondo, Osun and Oyo states.

Separate enforcement operations in Kebbi and Kano

Weak corporate governance threatens \$1tr economy target, says ICSAN

By Gloria Nwafor

NIGERIA'S ambition to build a \$1 trillion economy could be undermined if businesses fail to entrench accountability, ethical leadership and sustainable corporate governance, the Institute of Chartered Secretaries and Administrators of Nigeria (ICSAN) has warned.

The institute said sustainable economic growth required businesses to look beyond profits and embrace transparency, responsible decision-making and practices that create lasting value for investors, workers and society.

The President and Chairman of Council, ICSAN, Uto Ukpanah, stated this at the institute's 2026 yearly conference and diamond jubilee celebration in Lagos, where she called for a stronger balance between commercial interests and corporate responsibility.

IPO: Dangote Foundation targets 5m students, 2m women

IN a bold move to deepen retail participation in Nigeria's capital market, the Aliko Dangote Foundation (ADF) has unveiled a share grant initiative aimed at helping up to five million tertiary students and two million vulnerable women become shareholders in Dangote Petroleum Refinery and Petrochemicals through its Initial Public Offering (IPO).

The Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of ADF, Zouera Youssoufou, disclosed that the Foundation would match qualifying share subscriptions by eligible beneficiaries.

Under the programme, students who subscribe for a minimum of 10 shares worth N5,250 will receive an additional 10 shares funded by the Foundation, subject to the approved process and allocation, effectively doubling their holdings to 20 shares.

Speaking during a television interview, Youssoufou said the initiative was designed to turn the refinery's "People's IPO" vision into reality by giving traditionally underserved groups a direct stake in one of Africa's largest industrial assets.

- Warns of infertility, birth defects, cancer from pesticide misuse
- Offers free testing to protect consumers, avert export losses

states uncovered additional consignments of banned pesticides and unauthorised manufacturing facilities, raising concerns about the continued circulation of hazardous agricultural chemicals in Nigeria.

Despite regulatory restrictions, banned pesticides continue to enter the country's agricultural supply chain through smuggling, unauthorised local manufacturing and informal distribution channels.

NAFDAC warned that mis-

use of certain pesticides could cause infertility, birth defects, cancer and neurological complications, with some effects taking years to manifest.

Beyond the immediate health risks, excessive pesticide residues in agricultural produce could compromise food safety and expose Nigerian exporters to rejected consignments, financial losses and difficulties meeting international market requirements.

The agency's concerns

extend to both the use of prohibited products and the misuse of otherwise approved chemicals.

According to NAFDAC, applying pesticides at rates above the recommended levels, using them on crops for which they are not approved, and harvesting before the prescribed waiting period could expose consumers to unsafe residues.

Speaking at a press conference at NAFDAC's office in Isolo, Lagos, over the week-

end, the agency's Director-General, Prof. Mojisola Adeyeye, warned that improper handling and application of pesticides could have severe health consequences, including cancer and heart failure.

Adeyeye urged farmers to follow product label instructions, apply only the recommended quantities, and wear appropriate protective equipment when handling agricultural chemicals.

She cautioned against assuming that applying more pesticides would yield better results and

advised users who could not read product labels to seek assistance.

She also identified paraquat, chlorpyrifos and atrazine among the banned pesticide active ingredients still circulating through illegal channels.

The agency said all applicable phase-out periods under its regulatory measures ended on January 1, 2026, meaning products containing the prohibited ingredients could no longer be legally manufactured, imported, distributed, sold, or used in Nigeria.



Professor, Strategic Management and Governance, Lagos Business School, Franklin Nnaemeka Ngwu (left); Vice President, Deepwater Assets/Managing Director, Shell Nigeria Exploration and Production Company Limited (SNEPCo), Ronald Adams; Lagos State Deputy Governor, Dr Kadri Obafemi Hamzat; Dean of Lagos Business School, Prof. Olayinka David-West; Deputy Chief of Staff to the Governor, Mr. Samuel Egube; President, Lagos Business School Energy Club, Sebilat Quadri, and Commissioner for Energy and Mineral Resources, Biodun Ogunleye, during the Fourth Lagos Business School Africa Energy Conference (AEC 2026), held at the Honeywell Auditorium, Lagos Business School (LBS), Lekki-Epe Expressway, Lagos, on Saturday.

PHOTO: SUNDAY AKINLOLU

Adesina advocates use of African resources for productivity, prosperity

From Joke Falaju, Abuja

FORMER President of African Development Bank (AfDB), Dr Akinwumi Adesina, have urged the African continent to translate its demographic strength, natural resources and expanding markets into productive capacity and prosperity.

He also called for visionary and ethical leadership, deeper continental integration and investment in industrial capacity and technology to

help Africa achieve a more prosperous and competitive future in the global economy.

Delivering a keynote address at the Broad Pool of Ideas (BPI) Foundation's Iconic Leadership and Excellence Awards in Johannesburg, South Africa, he said Africa's greatest asset was its people, saying the continent's young population could become a major source of economic strength if supported by education, relevant skills, technology and opportunities to

create businesses and jobs.

Adesina, in a paper titled 'Africa's Next Leap: Visionary and Ethical Leadership for an Integrated and Prosperous Africa in the Global Economy', urged African governments, universities and vocational institutions to prepare young people not only to use emerging technologies but also to develop them.

He highlighted artificial intelligence, robotics, advanced manufacturing, biotechnology, cybersecurity and data sci-

ence as areas in which African talent should build capacity and compete.

In his view, the success of integration should be judged by the products and companies Africa creates, the value it retains and the competitiveness it achieves in global markets.

On industrialisation, Adesina pointed to Nigeria's \$20 billion Dangote Refinery as an example of the scale of industrial investment possible in Africa.

KPMG asks businesses to prepare for multiple scenarios ahead of 2027 polls

By Benjamin Alade

CHIEF Executive Officer, KPMG One Africa, Tola Adeyemi, has urged Nigerian businesses to prepare for multiple political and economic scenarios as the country approaches the 2027 General Elections.

Adeyemi said businesses must remain agile and resilient as political developments, global economic realignment, geopolitical tensions and changing policy directions create both risks and opportunities for companies operating in Nigeria.

Speaking at the KPMG-

*#FixPolitics conference urges Africans to reclaim political power

Franco-Nigerian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FNCCI) CEO Luncheon Series, themed "Political Dynamics and Global Realignment: A CEO's Playbook for Resilient Growth," Adeyemi said corporate leaders could not afford to base their strategies on a single expected outcome.

The presentation identified three broad scenarios for Nigeria following the 2027 elections: continuity if the incumbent retains power, policy recalibration if the opposition wins, and height-

ened uncertainty if an inconclusive election leads to a rerun.

According to Adeyemi, the ability of businesses to anticipate and respond to these possible outcomes would be critical to sustaining growth.

He said businesses needed to develop the capacity to anticipate emerging risks, absorb shocks, adapt their resources and priorities, and accelerate faster than competitors when new opportunities emerged.

Earlier in his remarks, Consul-General, France, Lagos, Laurent Favier, said

the gathering has become a trusted space to share ideas that could shape the economy.

He said the event would delve into how businesses could sustain better resilience during the election period.

He stated that the consulate hoped for a free and fair election in the country, while urging businesses to transform global economic risks to regional markets.

The Chief Executive Officer, NGX, Jude Chiemeka, said CEOs should be transformational in their approach while engaging technology as a major enabler.

OPay secures approval for NGX listing after U.S. IPO

By Helen Oji

OPAY has secured board and shareholders' approval to pursue a secondary listing on the Nigerian Exchange Limited (NGX) following the completion of its proposed primary listing on the New York Stock Exchange (NYSE).

It is a move that could allow Nigerian investors to own shares in the fintech company.

The company disclosed this in its Form F-1 registration statement filed with the United States Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) on October 9, 2026.

However, OPay stated that shares traded on the NGX may not be interchangeable with its American Depositary Shares (ADSs) on the NYSE unless arrangements are established to facilitate transfers between the two markets.

S'African govt grapples with violence in Durban, Soweto

ANTI-IMMIGRANT protests were tense over the weekend, with fresh reports of looting in Durban, where vehicles and shops were torched, and parts of the city centre were brought to a standstill.

Police are struggling to contain the violence and prevent further unrest, as over 15 suspects have been arrested.

The South African Police Service (SAPS) has announced that Acting National Commissioner, Lt-Gen Puleng Dimphe, will personally assess the security situation in Soweto.

Dimphe is expected to provide an update on police deployments in KwaZulu-Natal and Gauteng, as well as other areas identified as potential hotspots.

According to a SAPS media advisory, the acting commissioner will outline operational measures being implemented to maintain law and order, protect communities and respond to emerging security threats.

Crash: Engineers seek comprehensive review of military flight safety

By Olusegun Koiki

THE Institute of Nigerian Aeronautical Engineers

ABUAD to end medical slavery, unveils locally made herbal medicines

Faduyile urges govt to invest in medical education to transform healthcare

From Sunday Aikulola (Lagos) and Ayodele Afolabi (Ado-Ekiti)

THE Afe Babalola University, Ado-Ekiti (ABUAD) has called for a commitment to Nigerian-made herbal medicines, urging Nigerians to reduce their dependence on imported traditional medicines from China and India.

This call was made at the weekend during the AB Pharmaceuticals Business Summit organised by ABUAD, in collaboration with pharmaceutical marketers.

However, no fewer than three pharmaceutical products of the university, including AB Mal, ABUAD Virucidine, and AB Health Animation 250mg, were unveiled as part of efforts to expand the reach of the university's products.

The university said Nigeria's continued reliance on foreign herbal products amounted to a form of economic and medical dependence that must be urgently addressed.

MEANWHILE, the senator representing Ondo South Senatorial District, Prof. Francis Faduyile, has called for deliberate investment in medical education to transform the healthcare system.

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

Bolt, inDrive drivers to begin indefinite shutdown today over fares, others

AUATON says decision not attempt to introduce alternative ride-hailing apps

By Benjamin Alade

THE Amalgamated Union of App-Based Transporters of Nigeria (AUATON), Lagos State Council, has called on drivers operating on Bolt and inDrive platforms to withdraw their services from today over concerns about fares, welfare and rising operating costs.

However, Bolt has called for constructive dialogue with the union, saying it is committed to addressing drivers' concerns and has proposed a roundtable discussion with AUATON.

The union said the planned industrial action would continue indefinitely until its demands were addressed, accusing ride-hailing platforms of failing to adequately consider the economic realities facing drivers.

In a statement signed by its Public Relations Officer, Steven Iwindoye, AUATON said drivers had repeatedly raised concerns about fare structures, platform commissions, welfare provisions and inadequate protection against arbitrary deactivation, but had yet to achieve meaningful changes.

Deceased relative accuses military of cover-up

(INAE) has called for a comprehensive review of flight safety, aircraft maintenance, airworthiness and operational procedures in the Nigerian Air Force (NAF), following the crash of an ATR-42 aircraft that claimed 25 lives at Igbokoda in Ondo State on October 5, 2026.

The Institute also urged the authorities to ensure a thorough, transparent and timely investigation into the crash, stressing the need to identify the circumstances surrounding the tragedy and prevent a

recurrence.

In a condolence statement in Lagos, yesterday, President of INAE, Dr Charles Ebitei, expressed the Institute's sympathy to the NAF, the families of the deceased and the nation over the loss of lives.

The Institute welcomed the presidential directive to investigate the accident, describing a comprehensive probe as necessary to establish the facts and draw lessons to strengthen aviation safety.

It said the investigation should be complemented by

an assessment of existing flight safety arrangements, particularly aircraft maintenance practices, airworthiness standards and operational procedures.

According to the Institute, the circumstances surrounding the crash made it imperative for the relevant authorities to examine safety-related processes and identify any gaps that may require corrective action.

MEANWHILE, the brother of a NAF sergeant killed in the military aircraft crash in Ondo State has accused the authorities of downplaying

the circumstances surrounding the tragedy, alleging that the aircraft had developed a mechanical fault before the fatal flight.

In a video circulating on social media, the grieving man, who said his sister was among the victims, said her final messages to him indicated that the aircraft had developed a technical problem and had stopped in Benin City, Edo State, for checks before continuing its journey.

He accused the NAF of presenting a misleading account of the flight as a routine mis-

sion from Benin to Lagos, insisting that the aircraft had travelled from Abuja and stopped in Benin after developing what his sister described as a "snag."

Adebutu unveils *Itura De* agenda, pledges council autonomy, border community development

- Decries exclusion from INEC's list
- OmoOwo laments stunted development in Ogun East
- PDP, APC trade words over Adebutu's omission from INEC's final list

From Azeez Olorunlomu, Segun Ayinde (Abeokuta) and Tunde Bodunrin (Lagos)

THE 2027 governorship candidate of the Peoples Democratic Party in Ogun State, Oladipupo Adebutu, has highlighted local council autonomy and border community development as key components of his agenda if elected as governor.

Adebutu disclosed this while addressing the people of Remo during the PDP campaign tour of the area, stating that his *Itura De* agenda would return power to the people through functional council autonomy.

According to him, local councils should play a stronger role in addressing grassroots needs and determining development priorities within their communities.

MEANWHILE, the PDP and the All Progressives Congress (APC) in Ogun State have traded words over the omission of Adebutu from INEC's final list ahead the 2027 elections.

The state's PDP Chairman, Abayomi Tella, described the development as laughable and a reprisal attack from the APC to counter the claim on Solomon Adeola's indigeneship.

Coalition launches campaign for affordable public water services

By Bertram Nwannekanma

AFRICAN civil society organisations and trade unions have planned to launch a continent-wide campaign for publicly funded, affordable water services from October 12-18, 2026, with a call for stronger government accountability and democratic control of water resources.

The campaign, organised by the Our Water Our Right Africa Coalition (OWORAC), will hold during the sixth Africa Week of Action Against Water Privatisation, themed "Reclaiming Africa's Water Future: Public Water for All."

However, a major highlight will be the unveiling of the coalition's position paper, "Implementing the Africa Water Vision 2063: An OWORAC Coalition Position on Water Justice, Public Financing and Democratic Water Governance."

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Ekiti State Governor, Biodun Oyeibanji (left); his wife, Dr Olayemi; Senate Leader, Opeyemi Bamidele; Managing Director/CEO, Premium Trust Bank, Emmanuel Emefienim, and Deputy Governor of the state, Monisade Afuye, during the "Eight Hours Sacrifice of Praise" programme hosted by the First Family in Ado-Ekiti, at the weekend.

Ondo, firm seal \$362 million deal to build first titanium processing plant

From Adewale Momoh, Akure

ONDO State Government has signed a Public-Private Partnership (PPP) agreement with PyVee Limited, a Nigerian company with United States-linked technical partners, to develop West Africa's first and Africa's second fully integrated titanium value-chain processing plant.

The move aimed to position the state at the centre of a new strategic minerals corridor connecting Nigeria to American aerospace and defence supply chains.

Target 950 jobs, N480 billion yearly revenue, global links

The agreement, facilitated through the Ondo State Development and Investment Promotion Agency (ONDIPA), was signed at the Office of the Secretary to the State Government (SSG), Governor's Office, Alagbaka, Akure, under the administration of Governor Lucky Aiyedatiwa.

However, the state government, under the terms of the partnership, has allocated 100.079 hectares of land

at Alape, along Igbokoda-Ugbonla Road in Ilaje Local Council area of the state, a site selected for its access to lagoon, gas infrastructure for captive power generation, and proximity to the Deep Seaport and export logistics along the Lagos-Calabar Coastal Corridor.

The SSG, Dr Taiwo Fasoranti, who signed on behalf of the state, reaffirmed the state government's commitment to seeing the project through from land alloca-

tion to commissioning and positioning Ondo State as a serious destination for foreign direct investment in the mining and materials sector.

Also, Chief Executive Officer of ONDIPA, Emmanuel Omomowo, spoke on the agency's role in structuring and de-risking the transaction for both parties, from due diligence on PyVee's technical and financial capacity to the equity-for-land arrangement that gives the state a stake in the SPV.

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

Groups raise alarm over political intolerance ahead of 2027 polls

By Seye Olumide

THE pan-Yoruba socio-political organisation, Afenifere, and the Foundation for Peace Professionals (PeacePro) have raised concerns over political intolerance and identity-based discrimination ahead of the 2027 general elections, urging political actors to embrace issue-based campaigns and respect democratic principles.

While Afenifere warned against inflammatory and inciting statements that could heat up the polity and constrict the democratic space, PeacePro called on the Federal Government and law enforcement agencies to prosecute politicians who use indigeneity to discrimi-

Demand civilised campaigns, warn against identity-based discrimination

nate against candidates when evidence establishes an offence under the Electoral Act 2026.

The interventions come as political parties and aspirants intensify preparations for the elections, with disputes over candidates' backgrounds and eligibility emerging alongside broader concerns about the conduct of political campaigns.

Afenifere expressed its position in a communiqué yesterday after its monthly National Executive Committee (NEC) meeting held in Lagos at the weekend.

The communiqué was signed by its National Leader, Oladipo Olaitan, and its newly appointed substantive

Secretary-General, Alade Rotimi-John.

The organisation called for civilised electioneering in accordance with global best practices and challenged the Federal Government to ensure credible elections by allowing the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) to operate independently.

It also expressed concern over the country's socio-economic situation.

Afenifere faulted what it described as the government's casual approach to its responsibilities concerning security, economic management and the welfare of citizens.

It, however, criticised the

proposed stabilisation mechanism announced by the Minister of Finance and Coordinating Minister of the Economy, saying that a reported ceiling of N1,350 per litre for fuel fell short of public expectations.

It called for an immediate reduction in petrol prices to between N350 and N400 per litre, saying this would help ease the economic difficulties confronting Nigerians.

The group also demanded an upward review of the N70,000 national minimum wage, saying that persistent inflation had eroded workers' purchasing power and rendered the existing wage inadequate under the prevailing economic conditions.

High energy cost, shrinking formal jobs worsen plight of working poor

By Gloria Nwafor

AHEAD of the crucial negotiation for the country's minimum wage review, the rising number of working poor, spike in the percentage of workers outside formal employment and the sheer size of individuals earning N70,000 and above have raised questions about the relevance of national wage setting, an exercise designed to protect workers against abusive remuneration.

Amid grumblings in the labour movement circle that the N70,000 minimum wage falls below what anybody can consider a living wage, the latest inflation expectation survey of the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) puts the high inflation perception of households earning below N70,000 at 68.4 per cent – the highest.

Understandably, at a 15.4 per cent inflation rate, or less than half of what it was at its peak in 2024, those earning below the minimum wage consider the current price level very high, the CBN said. They pointed to high energy costs, insecurity, interest rates, and the exchange rate as key drivers of inflation.

Last week, fuel prices were adjusted to a ceiling of N1,350 a litre by the Federal Government, about 570 per cent above the pre-subsidy removal pump price.

The government had promised to cushion the economic pains of subsidy removal on poor workers. But the impacts of the promised social safety programme and compressed natural gas (CNG) revolution have been scanty.

Part of the fiscal gains of the subsidy removal was expected to be used to fund the social schemes. Three years later, not many Nigerians admitted their lives have been im-

- **Poor earnings test relevance of minimum wage setting**
- **FG's N600b social intervention impact remains insignificant, faces scrutiny**
- **State governments urged to leverage rising FAAC sharing to cushion pains**
- **Sub-nationals must step up in social intervention, Muda insists**

pacted by the schemes.

The Federal Government said over N9 trillion or about 180 per cent of its share of the proceeds went into financing of wage adjustment of its workers, which are estimated at 1.2 million or 0.5 per cent of individuals affected by the removal of fuel subsidy.

The CBN survey aligns with other reports, including that of the Nigerian Economic Summit Group (NESG), which puts the number of workers engaged in the unregulated informal sector at 92 per cent, leaving only eight per cent for the entire formal private and public sectors of the economy.

Three years after President Bola Tinubu decided to end the petrol subsidy programme, the government reportedly saved at least N15.8

trillion in direct cost stoppage and pooled a cumulative N60.75 trillion in the Federation Account Allocation Committee (FAAC). But the windfall has not translated into relief for millions of ordinary Nigerians. Inflationary pressures, rising energy costs and the squeeze on small businesses continue to deepen the cost-of-living crisis, leaving vulnerable households struggling to survive.

Targeted social safety nets remain largely on paper while rising food prices, transport costs and high utility bills have eroded household incomes, pushing millions further below the poverty line.

Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), already burdened by high operating expenses, continue to struggle with reduced consumer de-

mand, underscoring the widening gap between improved micro-outlook and general welfare.

Analysts have blamed inefficient revenue management and inadequate independent revenue generation by different tiers of government as factors that prevent the government from investing in programmes that can lift the majority out of misery.

While government revenues surged, intervention CNG buses and conditional cash transfers have been poorly executed.

For workers, the combined impact of inflation and currency depreciation has translated into a steady decline in real income. Salary earners have struggled to keep pace with rising household expenses, leaving many fami-

lies spending a greater proportion of their income on food and transportation alone.

The Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC) rejected the Federal Government's social intervention programmes as a sustainable response to the hardship triggered by the removal of fuel subsidy and other economic reforms, urging the government to prioritise higher wages and policies that enable Nigerians to earn sustainable incomes.

Assistant General Secretary of the NLC, Chris Onyeka, said the government's approach of distributing palliatives and other interventions would not address the structural causes of poverty, arguing that putting more money in the hands of workers would have a wider multiplier effect on the economy.

Speaking on the impact of the reforms and the way forward, Onyeka said workers' incomes should be strengthened because wage earners spend largely on locally produced

goods and services, thereby stimulating demand, production and employment.

According to him, stronger purchasing power would enable workers to support their dependents, increase demand for locally manufactured products and encourage manufacturers to expand production and employ more people.

Onyeka criticised the administration's reliance on social intervention programmes, questioning the transparency and effectiveness of mechanisms used to identify beneficiaries and distribute funds. He also called for greater transparency in the social register, arguing that workers' representatives and civil society organisations should participate in its compilation to ensure that genuine vulnerable Nigerians are captured.

The NLC official said government could also provide immediate relief to informal workers by reducing fees and levies imposed on market traders and commercial transport operators by local and state authorities.

He argued that reducing such charges would immediately increase the disposable income of low-income earners without requiring the government to distribute cash.

Onyeka faulted the condition of federal roads across the country, saying poor infrastructure and insecurity were worsening the cost of doing business and the movement of people and goods.

He urged the administration to move beyond political expediency and focus on policies capable of restoring purchasing power, creating jobs, improving infrastructure, securing the country and making economic activity more productive.

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Former Vice President and Sardauna Zazzau, Namadi Sambo (left); Sultan of Sokoto, Sa'ad Abubakar III; Kaduna State Governor, Uba Sani; Emir of Zazzau, Nuhu Bamali; and former Governor of Kaduna State/Dallatun Zazzau, Dr Ramallan Yero at the public presentation of the History of the Zazzau Emirate (1808-2025), held at the Emir's palace, Zaria...yesterday.

Petrol discount: Obi, Falana fault FG's approach as motorists lament access hurdles

From Terhema Daka, John Akubo (Abuja), Yetunde Ayobami Ojo, Kehinde Olatunji and Silver Nwokoro (Lagos)

PRESIDENTIAL candidate of the Nigeria Democratic Congress (NDC) Peter Obi and human rights lawyer Femi Falana have faulted the Federal Government's approach to petrol pricing, questioning the effectiveness and sustainability of its 30-day petrol discount as motorists lament difficulties accessing the relief.

While Obi criticised the intervention as inadequate to address the economic hardship facing Nigerians, Falana advocated a domestic production cost pricing model to bring down pump prices.

The Human and Environmental Development Agenda (HEDA) and the Lagos State chapter of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) also called for transparency and sustainable relief, even as the All Progressives Congress (APC) and the Presidency defended

- **Obi questions policy impact, demands comprehensive economic strategy**
- **Falana seeks domestic production cost pricing**
- **Motorists cite app restrictions, digital access barriers**
- **HEDA seeks cash transfers, transport support, lower food costs**
- **Presidency rejects subsidy return, defends price modulation**
- **PDP demands pricing transparency, APC defends intervention**

the initiative as a temporary measure to cushion the impact of high fuel prices.

Obi described the discount as a reactive measure that fails to address the economic hardship facing Nigerians.

In a statement posted on his X handle titled, "One Month Discount on Petrol: From Reactive Policies to Flawed Outcomes", the former Anambra State governor said the intervention prioritised political optics over sound economic planning.

Obi said he had delayed commenting on the announcement to assess its outcome before concluding that the measure was inadequate.

"Now, having assessed the outcomes, the policy is a sub-

stitution of political optics for sound policy," he said.

He traced the current economic hardship to the removal of petrol subsidy on May 29, 2023, arguing that the decision was taken without adequate consultation or a proper assessment of its implications for the economy and ordinary Nigerians.

He also faulted the subsequent floating of the naira and the implementation of tax reforms, accusing the administration of introducing major economic changes without proper sequencing or sufficient consideration of their effects on households and businesses.

According to him, the combined impact of the policies

has been rising prices, worsening poverty, shrinking business opportunities and increasing pressure on Nigerian families.

Questioning the objectives of the 30-day petrol discount, Obi asked: "What really does the President Bola Tinubu-led government want to achieve with a one-month discount of less than five per cent on fuel cost?"

He also questioned whether the intervention could reduce poverty, unemployment, insecurity and inequality, or stimulate productivity and exports.

Obi further asked whether the measure was a trial balloon for a possible return to fuel subsidy or a politically

motivated intervention ahead of the 2027 general election. He, however, provided no evidence to support the suggestion that the discount was linked to electoral considerations.

"Too many questions, no answer!" he said.

Falana urges FG to adopt local production cost pricing for petrol

LAWYER and human rights activist, Femi Falana, urged the Federal Government to end petrol imports and adopt a domestic production cost pricing model to reduce pump prices and ease the economic burden on Nigerians. Falana called on the government to abandon the Import Parity Price method, arguing that it ties domestic petrol prices to international import costs despite Nigeria's crude oil resources and domestic refining capacity.

His position comes amid public demands for lower petrol prices and reports of a proposed price-modulation

mechanism that would set a ceiling of N1,350 per litre on the ex-gantry or landing cost of petrol.

He also questioned the effectiveness of the 30-day promotional programme under which NNPC retail outlets are offering a N66-per-litre discount on petrol.

According to the Nigerian Midstream and Downstream Petroleum Regulatory Authority (NMDPRA), Nigeria has approximately 22,681 registered filling stations, while NNPC operates about 900 outlets.

Falana questioned how the temporary discount could benefit a substantial proportion of Nigerians when the national oil company's retail outlets account for only a fraction of the country's registered filling stations.

He argued that the Import Parity Price method would not deliver a significant reduction in petrol prices because it links domestic pump

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FG to transition from financing electricity tariff shortfall to bilateral deals

By Waliat Musa

THE Federal Government is planning to move away from indefinitely financing electricity tariff shortfalls towards bilateral power agreements that link electricity supply more directly to payment, as it seeks to address revenue leakages and persistent gas supply constraints affecting power generation.

The Minister of Power, Joseph Tegbe, disclosed this at the Harvard Business School Association of Nigeria (HBSAN) Energy Conference at the weekend, where he outlined plans to reform elec-

tricity market arrangements, improve revenue collection, strengthen transmission infrastructure and tackle the alleged unauthorised use of electricity by companies connected to the national grid.

Tegbe said the government could not continue covering tariff shortfalls indefinitely, stressing that changes to the market structure and design were necessary to prevent a recurrence of the financial difficulties that have burdened the sector.

“We can’t keep covering tariff shortfalls until we give power to every Nigerian. So, what we need to do is move

to bilateral agreements. And where are the bilateral agreements going? Mainstream supply and demand. Because mainstream will supply you what you pay, rather than somebody saying, ‘Don’t pay me more; they take money and give you more,” he said.

He said the government is reviewing assumptions underpinning electricity tariffs and examining how the market could be structured to improve financial sustainability.

Beyond market reform, Tegbe raised concerns about companies allegedly taking electricity from the national

grid outside authorised arrangements, saying the government intended to act against them.

He said some companies were directly connected to the grid and taking as much as 150 megawatts of electricity daily.

“We’re going after those companies. We’re going to baptise those companies. And when we are going to baptise those companies, we’re going to put them on the grid.”

The minister did not identify the companies involved or clarify whether the 150MW represented their

combined consumption or the amount taken by individual companies.

The proposed electricity market reforms also depend on resolving persistent challenges in the gas-to-power value chain, particularly the commercial terms governing gas supply, the cost of transportation and outstanding payments to producers.

The Chief Executive of the Nigerian Midstream and Downstream Petroleum Regulatory Authority (NMDPRA), Mallam Rabiu Abdullahi Umar, said Nigeria needed to move beyond repeated dis-

cussions about gas-sector reforms and focus on implementing existing plans.

He said the Gas Aggregation Company of Nigeria (GACN) had an important role in ensuring that gas supply commitments were fulfilled, but challenges persisted in meeting domestic obligations.

Umar said the authorities were working on arrangements to allow gas to be redirected to locations where it is needed when an obligated supplier could not deliver, while another operator had available supplies.

Oborevwo to overhaul dilapidated public schools in Delta

DELTA State Governor, Sheriff Oborevwo, has directed the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education to assess all dilapidated public primary and secondary schools across the state for immediate rehabilitation.

Oborevwo issued the directive at the weekend during the inauguration of the newly completed Model Technical College, Oghareki, in Ethiope West Local Council Area.

“I have directed that all schools in Delta State that are in deplorable condition, whether primary or secondary, should be assessed for immediate rehabilitation,” he said.

The governor urged the relevant authorities to begin the scoping without delay, stressing his administration’s commitment to building an efficient and robust education system.

He said the State Executive Council had recently directed the education ministries to identify public schools requiring urgent intervention.

Early intervention, expanded access to mental healthcare dominate summit

By Ijeoma Nwanosike

CALLS for early intervention and expanded access to mental healthcare dominated the fourth Vanguard Mental Health Summit, as stakeholders urged the government, schools and communities to strengthen support for young Nigerians amid widespread treatment gaps, inadequate services and growing concerns over cyberbullying.

More than three years after Nigeria enacted the Mental Health Act to improve access to care and protect the rights of people with mental health conditions, implementation remains inadequate, with 33 states yet to domesticate the law and over 90 per cent of young Nigerians requiring mental healthcare reportedly going untreated.

Held at the Civic Centre in Lagos, the summit, themed “Advancing Youth Mental Health in Nigeria through Access, Action and Advocacy,” also highlighted the need for school counselling services, safer digital spaces and healthier online habits to protect young people’s psychological wellbeing.



Nigeria Democratic Congress (NDC) candidate, Enugu West Senatorial District, Uche Eneh (left), with the NDC governorship Ccandidate in Enugu State, Christian Chinyeaka-Ohaa, during the flag-off of the governorship campaign in Enugu at the weekend.

PHOTO: NAN

NUFBTE urges reps to halt passage of CETA Bill

From Sodiq Omolaoye, Abuja

THE leadership of the National Union of Food, Beverage, and Tobacco Employees (NUFBTE) has urged the House of Representatives to withhold concurrence on the Customs, Excise Tariffs, Etc. (Consolidation) Amendment Bill, 2025 (CETA Bill), currently before the chamber.

In an open letter addressed to the Speaker of the House of Representatives, Abbas Tajudeen, which was co-signed by the President, NUFBTE, Garba Dankama, at the weekend, the union warned that passing such legislation at this time would place an ad-

ditional burden on Nigerian workers and the manufacturing sector, given the impact of ongoing economic reforms on their shoulders.

The 2025 CETA Bill proposes replacing the predictable N10-per-litre specific tax on soft drinks with a percentage levy per litre on the retail price of the products.

Dankama said Nigerian workers cannot survive an additional, poorly designed tax burden, warning that the proposed legislation could turn an already difficult operating environment into a catastrophic one for the sector.

He explained that with the manufacturing sector, and the food, beverage, and tobacco sectors in a state of acute distress, passing the CETA Bill would inflict irreversible damage to an already fragile industrial base and threaten the livelihood of workers who depend on it.

“Capacity utilisation across manufacturing has declined sharply as producers contend with prohibitively high borrowing costs, rising energy and logistics expenses, persistent constraints in foreign exchange access, and weakened consumer purchasing power. Several production

lines have been scaled back or shut down entirely.

The Non-Alcoholic Drinks (NAD) sector, which anchors hundreds of thousands of jobs across farming, haulage, distribution, and retail, cannot absorb an additional tax escalation without triggering a wave of further closures, retrenchments, and value chain collapse,” he stated.

Dankama expressed confidence that the leadership of the House of Representatives would protect the interests of Nigerian workers while supporting the manufacturing sector through the current economic difficulties.

NPA to fix rail, cargo logistics gaps at inland dry ports

By Adaku Onyenucheya

THE Nigerian Ports Authority (NPA) has moved to address rail connectivity and logistics challenges affecting inland dry ports as part of efforts to integrate the facilities into the nation’s port system and improve cargo movement across the country.

The move followed a meeting between the NPA management, led by its Managing Director, Dr Abubakar Dantsoho, and the Executive Director of Dala Inland Dry Port, Mr Ahmad Rabiu, alongside representatives of Funtua Inland Dry Port, at the authority’s corporate headquarters in Marina, Lagos.

In a statement from the NPA

management made available to journalists yesterday, the discussions focused on strengthening institutional collaboration, addressing infrastructure constraints and improving operational efficiency across Nigeria’s maritime logistics chain.

Speaking during the meeting, Dantsoho stressed the need to upgrade inland dry port infrastructure and technical capacity to complement ongoing modernisation efforts at the nation’s seaports.

He said the facilities must be equipped to handle increasing cargo volumes and support the broader transformation of Nigeria’s maritime sector.

“For our Inland Dry Ports to function at the same velocity as the ongoing modernisation

across our seaports, we must proactively upgrade dry port infrastructure and technical capacity,” Dantsoho said.

He explained that the integration of digital platforms, including the Port Community System (PCS) and the National Single Window, into seaport operations must be matched by corresponding improvements at inland dry ports.

“As we integrate digital systems such as the Port Community System (PCS) and the National Single Window in our seaports, the dry ports must deploy modern equipment and advanced technical capabilities to handle larger cargo volumes and bigger vessels coming to our coast,” he added.

The NPA managing director

also called for increased private-sector investment in inland dry port infrastructure, noting that stronger investment would be critical to improving cargo handling capacity and operational efficiency.

He cited APM Terminals’ establishment of an Export Processing Terminal in Northern Nigeria as an example of private-sector participation in the development of inland logistics infrastructure.

Dantsoho assured stakeholders that efforts to optimise the inland port system were underway and confirmed plans to visit the Dala and Funtua facilities to assess their operational conditions and infrastructure requirements.

Abuja Continental Hotel denies staff victimisation over union affiliation

THE management of the Abuja Continental Hotel has denied alleged victimisation of staff for belonging to labour unions.

In a statement, which was made available to *The Guardian*, the management of the hotel said: “Our attention has been drawn to various publications and assertions in the media credited to the Trade Union Congress (TUC) regarding a meeting scheduled for October 12.

“We consider it imperative to place the facts in proper perspective and reassure our workforce, our guests and all stakeholders.”

It stressed that “the welfare, safety, dignity and professional growth of its workers are and remain the foundation of its business. Abuja Continental Hotel is built by its people. We have no policy.

According to the statement, the hotel noted that no written or unwritten directive had been given prohibiting staff from exercising their constitutional right to freedom of association. It added that at no time had the company victimised any employee on account of union affiliation.

MTN fixes network outages in Lagos, others, apologises to subscribers

By Adeyemi Adepetun

TELECOMMUNICATIONS firm, MTN, said it has resolved recent network outages that disrupted services in Lagos, Oyo, Rivers, Delta states, and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Abuja, assuring subscribers that connectivity has now been restored.

The company, in a notice at the weekend, apologised to millions of affected customers for the inconvenience caused, noting that the downtime was due to technical issues that have since been fixed. MTN pledged to strengthen its infrastructure to prevent a recurrence and maintain reliable service delivery.

The notice reads: “Yhello, some of us experienced a service disruption that affected our ability to stay connected. “We know how important it is to stay in touch with people, businesses, and moments that matter most.”

'Why more women choose singlehood over marriage'

From Kingsley Jeremiah and Desmond Okocha, Abuja

SOME younger women have expressed that they would rather secure their emotional well-being, financial independence and career ambition than enter marriages that they fear could limit their potential.

This comes as marriage, once considered a near-inevitable milestone in a woman's life, is increasingly becoming a choice rather than an expectation, as more young women in Nigeria and across the world embrace singlehood altogether during their prime adult years. Speaking to The Guardian, they argued that marriage should not come at the expense of personal growth or fulfilment.

The trend is reflected in global and Nigerian data. A research study published by the United States-based Institute for Family Studies showed that only 23 per cent of 25-year-old women had ever been married, while the proportion of 35-year-old women who had married fell from 90 per cent in 1980 to 60 per cent in 2025.

Experts seek private sector model for North-East airline

By Olusegun Koiki

AVIATION experts have welcomed the regional airline proposed by the North-East Governors' Forum (NEGF), saying it would improve air connectivity, support economic recovery and facilitate the movement of passengers across the region.

However, they cautioned that the carrier's success would require a viable business model, adequate funding, professional management and a thorough assessment of passenger demand. They also warned against political interference and the use of public funds to sustain an unprofitable operation.

The Chief Executive Officer of Transmeridien Agency International Ltd., Peter Adenihun, told The Guardian in Lagos over the weekend that the North-East needed better air connectivity, particularly as the region continues to recover from years of insecurity and economic disruption.

According to him, the region remains poorly connected by air, with limited direct flights between its major cities, and a heavy dependence on connections through Abuja and Lagos. He noted that travellers seeking to move between cities such as Gombe and Maiduguri often connect through Abuja.

Adenihun noted that a reliable regional airline would reduce travel time, improve business interactions,

Amnesty blames child marriage, school dropout on poverty

From Azimazi Momoh Jimoh (Abuja), Rauf Oyewole (Gombe), Segun Ayinde (Abeokuta) and Joy Dennis (Yola)

POVERTY and entrenched social attitudes are driving many Nigerian girls out of school into early marriage, thereby demanding stronger government action to protect girls' rights and keep them in school, Amnesty International (AI) has warned.

It added that poverty remained one of the major factors pushing families to marry off their daughters, particularly when parents lack the resources to keep them in school, with Nigeria having the highest rate of girl child marriage globally.

Speaking during a programme it organised in Yola, Adamawa State, to mark the 2026 International Day of the Girl Child, AI Nigeria's Media and Communications Manager, DooshimaTsee, said the

• UNICEF, others urge protection for minors, investment in girl child

inability of many girls to complete their education has limited their ability to develop their potential and participate fully in society.

In the meantime, ahead of the 2026 International Day of the Girl Child, the non-governmental Helpline Social Support Initiative (HSSI) has called for stronger laws and concrete measures to end child marriage, prevent abuse and protect girls' rights.

In a statement yesterday, themed "End Child Marriage and Invest in Girls' Rights," HSSI President, Dr Jumai Ahmadu, urged governments, families and community leaders to prioritise the safety, education and empowerment of the girl-child.

According to Amnesty, some parents see child marriage as one of the few options in the face of economic hardship.

She noted that Amnesty's intervention was aimed not only at educating girls about their rights but also ensuring that they know where to seek help when those rights are violated.

Also, Amnesty facilitator, Rubeca Malgwi, noted that girls continue to face discrimination in education, household responsibilities, safety, freedom of expression and access to menstrual hygiene, with everyday experiences often determining whether they could remain in school.

Meanwhile, HSSI has stressed the need for practical interventions that safeguard their welfare and equip them with the confidence and opportunities to shape their futures. It disclosed that the Voice of the Girls Parliament helps young girls to understand their rights, express

their concerns confidently and engage with those responsible for their welfare.

Noting that the initiative encourages girls to speak confidently and engage respectfully with adults and institutions responsible for their protection, she warned, however, that such respectful advocacy must not discourage girls from speaking out against abuse, intimidation or injustice.

Still on the Day of the Girl Child, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) has called on parents, traditional rulers, governments and community stakeholders to intensify efforts to end child marriage and invest in the development of the girl child.

The Chief of Field Office, UNICEF Bauchi, Dr Nuzhat Rafique, made the call during the activities marking the celebration in Gombe State over

the weekend, organised in collaboration with Gombe and Bauchi states.

According to her, ending child marriage requires coordinated interventions across education, health, nutrition and social policy, alongside deliberate investments in girls' growth and development.

ADC-PCC says police clampdown on 'Tinubu Must Go' rally shameful

From Andrew Oota, Abuja

THE African Democratic Congress Presidential Campaign Council (ADC-PCC) has condemned the Kano State Police Command's disruption of the "Tinubu Must Go" rally in Kano, describing the action as shameful, unconstitutional and a disturbing descent into authoritarianism.

In a statement yesterday by its Director of Media and Publicity, Kola Ologbondiyan, the council accused the police of violating Nigerians' fundamental rights to peaceful assembly and freedom of expression, as guaranteed by the 1999 Constitution, as amended.

The rally, led by Abba Hikima and organised by concerned youths, was reportedly disrupted when police operatives barricaded the venue and allegedly intimidated participants. Despite the police action, the council said the youths demonstrated courage and determination by refusing to be silenced and insisting on making their voices heard.

Emir confirms Abdulrazaq for Zazzau title

From Owede Agbajileke, Abuja

IN recognition of his contributions to community development and philanthropy in the emirate, the Emir of Zazzau, Ahmed Bamalli, has confirmed a former chief financial officer of the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC), Isiaka Abdulrazaq, as TafidanYaman Zazzau.

The Office of the Council Secretary of the Zazzau Emirate confirmed the appointment in a letter dated October 7, 2026, and signed by the Magatakardan Zazzau, Yusuf Hayat.

Abdulrazaq retired from the NNPC in 2019 after a distinguished career in Nigeria's energy sector. He previously served at the National Electric Power Authority, later known as the Power Holding Company of Nigeria, where he rose to the position of executive director, finance and accounts.

A son of the late former Tafidan Zazzau, who received the traditional title in 1962, AbdulGaniyu, his appointment also continues his family's longstanding relationship with the Zazzau traditional institution.



Senator Ede Dafinone (left); Governor of Delta State, Sheriff Oborewori; Orodje of Okpe Kingdom and Chairman, Delta State Traditional Rulers Council, His Royal Majesty, Maj.-Gen. Felix Mujakperuo (rtd), and former governor James Ibori during the commissioning of the Model Technical College, Oghareki, in Ethiopia West Local Council Area of the state, over the weekend.

Operator decries delay in AKK pipeline completion

From Kingsley Jeremiah, Abuja

PRIVATE sector operators are demanding accountability over the repeated shifts in the delivery timelines of the Ajaokuta-Kaduna-Kano (AKK) gas pipeline, as delay threatens Nigeria's ambition to expand Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) adoption.

The Private Sector Alliance for Accelerated CNG Growth, through its convener, Charles Yakub, said the uncertainty surrounding the \$2.8 billion,

614-kilometre pipeline could undermine investor confidence and slow the development of affordable gas-powered transportation and industrial activities.

The development comes as the current government is seeking to reduce transportation costs by leveraging CNG as an alternative and cheaper fuel.

Yakub, in a statement, demanded transparent completion deadlines, independent verification of

construction progress and sustained commercial gas supply through the pipeline.

The construction of the AKK pipeline, designed to transport natural gas from Ajaokuta in Kogi State to Kano State, commenced in 2020 under the administration of former President Muhammadu Buhari.

The project forms part of Nigeria's broader gas infrastructure development strategy to increase domestic gas consumption, support

power generation and stimulate industrialisation.

Initially expected to be delivered within 24 months, the project has missed several completion targets, with its delivery now facing further uncertainty amid projections that full completion could extend into 2027.

Yakub questioned the repeated changes to the project's timeline, asking the Nigerian National Petroleum Company Limited (NNPC).

HURIWA tasks Tinubu on abducted 80 Borno schoolchildren

By Bertram Nwannekanma

THE Human Rights Writers Association of Nigeria (HURIWA) has urged President Bola Tinubu to intensify efforts to rescue about 80 schoolchildren and teachers reportedly held captive by terrorists in Borno State.

Warning that their prolonged captivity must not be allowed to fade from public attention, the association said the victims, abducted in separate attacks between May and June 2026, had reportedly spent nearly six months in captivity, thereby raising concerns about the effectiveness of security meas-

• Zamfara council chairman laments over 200 persons in captivity

ures to protect schools and vulnerable communities.

This comes as the Chairman of Bungudu Local Council Area in Zamfara State, Nura Abdullahi, has disclosed that over 200 people were still with the bandits after he escaped from captivity, raising fresh concerns over the fate of hundreds of abductees in the troubled state.

Abdullahi disclosed this in an interview with DW Hausa, following his recent escape after he was abducted on July 25, 2026, when gunmen attacked his residence in Bun-

gudu town.

In a statement yesterday, HURIWA's National Coordinator, Comrade Emmanuel Onwubiko, said the president has a constitutional and moral responsibility to ensure the safe return of the abducted victims. He urged Tinubu to provide decisive leadership and ensure effective coordination among security agencies to secure their release.

According to HURIWA, the victims' continued captivity had caused severe distress among their families, some

of whom had questioned why their children remained in captivity while pupils abducted in a separate incident in Oyo State were released after 57 days.

The association said the families' concerns deserved urgent attention, adding that repeated assurances from the authorities should be accompanied by verifiable progress in rescue efforts.

The victims were reportedly abducted in two separate attacks in Mussa and Lassa communities in Askira/Uba Local Council Area of Borno State.

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‘Atiku should step down for Northern youths to prepare for 2031’

Elder statesman and former Deputy National Chairman of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), Chief Olabode George, spoke with KEHINDE OLATUNJI on Nigeria’s challenges of nation-building, political leadership, zoning and the need to place national interest above personal considerations.

After decades of nation-building, why has Nigeria continued to grapple with ethnic and religious divisions, and what are the underlying factors?

OVER the years, we have experienced the good, the bad and the ugly. Politically, however, we have not progressed as much as we should. If 66 years of independence mean anything, Nigeria ought to be a much better and more attractive country today.

I grew up here. I was born and attended primary school on Lagos Island, so Nigeria helped to mould me. That is why I am deeply concerned about what is happening to the country.

Look at the hunger that is generating anger among the people, inadequate healthcare, and the challenges in education. Even the rich travel abroad for medical treatment. Our problems go beyond the economy. One of our greatest challenges is the failure to build a strong sense of nationhood that transcends ethnic, religious and regional identities.

Our First Republic failed partly because of the manner in which the British amalgamated the country without sufficient consideration for the different peoples, cultures and political systems. Before independence, most political parties were also largely organised along regional and ethnic lines.

The military intervened, but the fundamental problems remained. Minorities were often excluded, while successive political leaders exploited ethnic and religious sentiments for political advantage. Instead of allowing citizens to compete on the basis of ideas, competence and programmes, politics has too often revolved around where a person comes from or the religion he or she professes.

We have also failed to build institutions that inspire equal confidence among Nigerians. When people believe that access to political power, appointments, resources and opportunities depends on their connections, ethnic background or religion, they naturally retreat into their communities for protection and patronage.

Poverty, insecurity and inequality have worsened the situation. When people are hungry, unemployed or feel excluded, politicians can more easily mobilise them along ethnic and religious lines. Historical grievances and mutual suspicion have also remained unresolved.

We need a genuine sense of nationhood in which every citizen feels a sense of belonging. That was why the late former Vice President Alex Ekwueme and other political leaders, popularly associated with the G14, brought people from different parts of the country together to develop a new political arrangement. Former governor of old Oyo State, Chief Bola Ige; Abubakar Rimi of Kano; Chief Solomon Lar of Benue; Professor Jibril Aminu and others discussed how to prevent another military intervention and promote national cohesion.

They developed the idea of six geopolitical zones: North-West, North-Central, North-East, South-West, South-East and South-South. The objective was to ensure that every part of the country had a sense of belonging and that no region felt permanently excluded from the political process.

The PDP built on this principle and emerged as a party with a strong national presence. Its zoning arrangement sought to balance political power between the North and South, recognising our diversity while encouraging

different parts of the country to work together.

Even the All Progressives Congress (APC), despite initially distancing itself from zoning, adopted a similar approach to balancing key positions. President Bola Tinubu is from the South, the Vice President is from the North, the Senate President is from the South, and the Speaker of the House of Representatives is from the North.

The idea was to address tribalism and religious bigotry while strengthening national unity. However, political balancing alone cannot solve our problems. We must build institutions that treat citizens fairly, provide equal opportunities and protect everyone, regardless of ethnicity or religion.

Above all, we must reach a point where being Nigerian means more to us than being Yoruba, Igbo, Hausa, Fulani, Christian or Muslim. Until we deliberately promote that consciousness through our institutions, education system and leadership, ethnic and religious divisions will continue to undermine nation-building.

Why has the vision of national integration been difficult to sustain?

The greatest problem has been selfishness and personal ambition. People have increasingly placed individual ambitions above the broader objective of nation-building.

For the sake of peace and our love for Nigeria, why can’t political leaders put the country first? This failure has contributed to the crisis in the PDP and affected our politics generally.

I have been away for about seven weeks and have had time to reflect on what has happened to Nigeria, a country once regarded as the Giant of Africa.

We must remember our history. Nigeria played a major role in the liberation of Southern Africa,

particularly the struggle against apartheid in South Africa. I was in the Navy, and part of my federal civil servants’ salaries was deducted to support the liberation struggle. We also supported liberation efforts in Angola and Zimbabwe.

The speech delivered by former Head of State, General Murtala Muhammed, in Addis Ababa demonstrated Nigeria’s influence on the continent and beyond. We had crude oil, and we used the resources and influence it provided to support liberation movements and assert our position internationally.

Nigerians must wake up and decide what kind of country we want. Nation-building is not a 100-metre race; every generation must build on the achievements of the previous one.

What we need is a genuine commitment to nationhood, where loyalty to Nigeria comes before ethnic, religious and personal interests. That is how we can begin to rebuild the stable and attractive country Nigeria ought to be.

Nigeria was once known as the ‘Giant of Africa’. Given the challenges you have highlighted, has the country lost that status?

We must first understand how Nigeria acquired that status and why its influence has diminished over the years.

Nigeria earned the description “Giant of Africa” around the time of independence in 1960 because of its large population, vast natural resources, economic potential, and strategic importance. There was also an expectation that an independent Nigeria would provide leadership on the continent.

Over the years, the country demonstrated some of that influence through its foreign policy and interventions in Africa. However, we have

struggled to translate our enormous potential into sustained development, good governance and improved living standards.

Nigeria was once the Giant of Africa. In virtually every profession, no matter how highly placed, you will find a Nigerian or someone of Nigerian descent recognised as an authority.

But when these people return home, what do they see? Consider their first impression at the Murtala Muhammed International Airport in Lagos. We have been carrying out repairs and renovations there for years. An airport is often a visitor’s first impression of a country. Compare ours with the airport in Accra. What is wrong with this country?

Those of us who have experienced both military and civilian rule have witnessed different phases of Nigeria’s history. We have seen the effects of military rule on governance, but we also experienced the camaraderie among those who served together. That bond made us solid like gold.

Today, Nigeria is grappling with banditry and insecurity. The first responsibility of any government is to guarantee the safety of its people and territory. When a government cannot adequately protect its citizens, it raises serious questions about its capacity to fulfil one of its most fundamental duties.

We are also witnessing the emergence of a generation of young people involved in criminal activities. I am told that some parents even send their children to what they call “Yahoo School”. That is a disturbing direction for the country.

In my time, such behaviour would not have been tolerated. Today, however, we hear of young people becoming involved in Internet fraud and other criminal activities. Visit Panti Police Station and see some of the young people who get into trouble.

When I reflect on these developments, I think about what I would call our own Route 66. In America, Route 66 became an important symbol of the country’s history and development.

Nigeria is at a similar crossroads. We must ask ourselves where we are heading as a nation and what we must do to reclaim our standing in Africa and the world.

Would you blame Nigeria’s current predicament on leaders who place personal ambition above national interest? How is this affecting zoning and political stability?

Yes! Nigeria is bigger than any individual, and political leaders must be willing to subordinate personal ambition to national interest.

I believe zoning, as advocated by the late Alex Ekwueme and the G14, should be constitutionally recognised to help manage Nigeria’s ethnic, regional and political interests. When politicians disregard established agreements to pursue personal ambitions, they undermine trust and threaten national cohesion.

Consider Ekwueme, who aspired to become president but did not abandon the party when his ambition was not realised. I also once aspired to become party chairman, but I stepped aside when I realised that pursuing my ambition could divide the party. That is the kind of sacrifice Nigeria needs today. No individual’s ambition should take precedence over the country’s unity, stability, and national interest.

With the 2027 election approaching, what is your advice to former Vice President Atiku Abubakar and other politicians seeking the presidency?

Atiku is pursuing a personal ambition rather than putting the

nation’s interests and goodwill first. There should be an open debate among the presidential candidates, and Atiku should be asked: “What exactly are you running for? You have contested several presidential elections. Must it always be you?”

This is a country of more than 200 million people. Every election cycle, you come forward to say you want to be president. What exactly are you looking for? You have had your opportunities.

I appeal to the Arewa Consultative Forum to call him to order and preserve the organisation’s respectability. He should graciously accept that enough is enough. If he does so, people will remember him for taking the right decision at the right time.

Let the competition for the presidency remain in the South for now. By 2031, when someone from the North comes forward to contest, I will be happy to lead the campaign.

Brilliant young people in the North should begin preparing themselves. Many have respected the existing arrangement. How many have come forward to insist that they must become president now? Let us allow peace to prevail in this country.

What should President Bola Tinubu do to reduce political tension and address the growing hardship among Nigerians?

I am advising the President because the buck stops at his desk. Political manoeuvrings and complicated conspiracies are not helping him or the country.

He must act in the national interest. My advice to the Commander-in-Chief is simple: get rid of those holding him back. He does not need them.

Look at the millions of Nigerian children going hungry. It is painful. I commend Nigerians for remaining calm, but their silence should concern those in authority. It should serve as a warning.

Those in government must do what is just before Almighty God and right before the people. The consequences of continued political tension could be unimaginable.

We remember the crisis in the Western Region, particularly the events in Ibadan in 1962, and the chain of events that eventually contributed to the Civil War. We do not want a repetition of our history. We must learn from it.

Aso Rock is the people’s house; it is not a private enterprise. The people’s votes put the President there, and he must govern in their interest.



George

Kano Gov. Abba Yusuf Reconciles DSP Barau, Abba Bichi on Political Feud

KANO State Governor, Alhaji Abba Kabir Yusuf, has facilitated a reconciliation between the Deputy Senate President, Sen. Barau I. Jibrin, and the Chairman House Committee on Appropriations, Hon. Abubakar Kabir Bichi, Member Representing Bichi Federal Constituency as part of efforts to strengthen unity and cohesion within the All-Progressives Congress (APC) in Kano State.

The reconciliation meeting, which took place in Abuja in the early hours of Wednesday, lasted for two hours and provided an opportunity for the two prominent APC leaders to address their differences and discuss the need to work together for the collective interest of the party.

Governor Yusuf urged Senator Barau, Hon. Bichi and their teaming supporters to sheathe their swords and drop all grievances, stressing that the success of the APC at all levels requires unity, mutual understanding and collective commitment among its leaders and members. Ahead of the 2027 elections, the Governor emphasised the importance of working to-

As Leaders Call for Unity to Achieve Success in the Forthcoming 2027 Elections

gether for the success of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu, GCFR, the Kano State Government and all APC candidates, while calling on party members across the state to put the overall interest of the APC above individual differences. He noted that political disagreements are part of democratic engagement, but such differences should not be allowed to undermine the unity, stability and progress of the party. He called on supporters of both leaders to embrace the spirit of reconciliation, avoid inflammatory statements, character assassination or any other negative action capable of disuniting the party members.

The Governor further stressed that the APC remains one family and that all stakeholders have a responsibility to ensure that internal crises are resolved through dialogue, consultation and mutual respect. The party leader in Kano also expressed confidence that the reconciliation would contribute to greater unity among APC leaders and supporters in

Kano State and strengthen the party's collective efforts ahead of the 2027 general elections.

"Henceforth, I do not expect any of your supporters to come out and abuse one another. We must put a stop to this unnecessary distractions," Said Governor Abba Yusuf.

The reconciliation process, which was blessed with the endorsement of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu, GCFR has brought to an end a major misunderstanding between the two political figures in Kano State.

Gov. Abba K. Yusuf further assured the President and National Leader of the party, the National Chairman, the State

Chairman and all critical stakeholders that the APC is set to win all elective positions in Kano come 2027 by God's Grace.

In their separate responses shortly after the meeting, Sen. Barau Jibrin and Hon. Abubakar Kabir Bichi cautioned their supporters against fueling the internal conflicts within the APC family in Kano State, assuring their continued support, loyalty and commitment to the success of the party at all levels. They also expressed appreciation to the Governor for his timely intervention to wade into the situation, offer a truce and lasting reconciliation to the ongoing crisis.



Kano Rates High in Climate Governance in Nigeria

KANO State has moved from 35th position in Nigeria's climate governance ranking in 2024 to fourth in the 2025 assessment, after a deliberate institutional reforms and stronger coordination in climate action.

The Commissioner for Water Resources, Environment and Climate Change, Dr. Dahiru Muhammad Hashim, disclosed this in Abuja at the launch of the third edition of the Sub-National Climate Governance Performance Rating and Ranking (SCGPR 3.0). Hashim said the assessment had provided states with an opportunity to examine their performance, learn from one

another and identify institutional changes needed to strengthen climate governance.

According to him, Kano's significant improvement followed deliberate efforts by the administration of Governor Abba Kabir Yusuf to strengthen coordination, develop a policy framework and focus more on implementation and reporting.

He explained that the state had improved engagement among government institutions, development partners and communities, while also paying greater attention to monitoring and documentation of climate-related inter-

ventions.

The commissioner said the experience had shown that rankings alone could not produce meaningful change unless governments acted on the findings.

An assessment can show where a state stands, but improvement depends on the decisions taken after the findings are received," he said.

Hashim noted that the state's climate governance efforts were being driven by the recognition that environmental pressures had consequences for wider development.

He said flooding continued to threaten homes and infrastructure, while land degrada-

tion affected agricultural productivity and water insecurity placed additional pressure on households and businesses.

The commissioner disclosed that Kano had also advanced work on its Climate Change Bill, which he said would provide a stronger legal foundation for sustained climate action.

He stressed that clear responsibilities and accountability were necessary to ensure that progress achieved under one administration would not be lost with changes in leadership.

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

Gov. Yusuf Visits Chiromawa Attack Victims, Condolences Bereaved Families

KANO State Governor, Alhaji Abba Kabir Yusuf, has expressed sorrow over the recent attack in Chiromawa, Garun Malam Local Government Area, assuring residents of continued protection of lives and property.

The Governor gave the assurance on last week during a visit to the community, where he sympathised with the Sarkin Noma of Kano State, Alhaji Yusuf Nadabo, who was abducted during the incident.

He also condoled families of those who lost their lives and visited residents who sustained injuries.

The Governor, who was in Saudi Arabia to perform Umrah when the attack occurred, prayed for the peaceful repose of the deceased and wished the injured a speedy recovery.

He also prayed to Almighty Allah to prevent a recurrence of such incidents in Chiromawa and other parts of the state.

Governor Yusuf assured residents that the state government was intensifying efforts to strengthen security through collaboration with relevant security agencies.

He disclosed that he had discussed measures to improve security operations in Kano with the Minister of Defence, (State) H.E. Muhammad Bello Matawalle.

The Governor urged residents to remain vigilant and provide credible information about suspicious movements and activities to security agencies.

He also called on residents to report anyone suspected of harbouring criminals or providing support to bandits and kidnappers.

Governor Yusuf stressed that security was a collective responsibility, urging traditional rulers, community leaders, religious leaders, and residents to work closely with the government and security agencies.

Speaking on behalf of those affected, the Sarkin Noma of Kano State, Alhaji Yusuf Nadabo, thanked the Governor for his concern and support.

He prayed for lasting peace and security in Kano State and Nigeria.



Hon. Abubakar Kabir Abubakar, member representing Bichi Federal Constituency of Kano state, Governor Abba Kabir Yusuf and Deputy President of Senate and Senator representing Kano North Senatorial district Barau I. Jibrin during a reconciliation meeting in Abuja.

Two Months of Action: Kano's New Front in the War Against Drug Abuse (Final Part)

YET, perhaps the most important shift in the strategy is the recognition that enforcement alone cannot end drug abuse. A person addicted to drugs may be arrested, prosecuted or convicted, but if the underlying problem remains untreated, another vulnerable young person can take his or her place.

How the Task Force has therefore combined enforcement with prevention, rehabilitation and reintegration.

Its sensitisation campaign has taken the anti drug message into communities, schools, markets, religious institutions and other public spaces. The objective is to prevent young people from entering the cycle in the first place.

At the same time, individuals already affected by drug abuse are being referred for rehabilitation. About 125 people have been referred to the Kano Re-

formatory Institute in Kiru for treatment and rehabilitation. The growing demand for rehabilitation has, however, created another challenge. The Kiru facility has reportedly reached capacity as more families voluntarily seek help for relatives affected by drug abuse.

Rather than viewing this only as a problem, the Task Force sees the increasing demand for rehabilitation as an indication that families are becoming more willing to seek assistance.

The Kano State Government has consequently provided an additional facility in Tofa Local Government Area to expand rehabilitation services. The new facility is expected to provide space for more people requiring treatment and rehabilitation.

But recovery is only one stage of the process. What happens

after rehabilitation may determine whether the intervention produces lasting results. A young person who leaves rehabilitation without employment, skills, family support or a productive means of livelihood can easily become vulnerable to the same environment that contributed to the original problem.

This is why the Task Force is now engaging industrial stakeholders and other partners on employment, skills acquisition and economic reintegration. The stated target is ambitious: to take 10,000 youths off the streets, rehabilitate them, equip them with useful skills and reintegrate them into society.

The plan represents a shift from seeing drug users only through the lens of enforcement to recognising that some require medical, psychological, social and economic inter-

vention.

Recent reports indicate that the Task Force's rehabilitation proposal includes medical detoxification, structured rehabilitation, vocational training and support for economic reintegration. The Chairman has identified trades and practical skills as part of the strategy for helping beneficiaries become economically productive.

This approach also places an important responsibility on the wider society.

Government can provide facilities. Security agencies can make arrests. Courts can determine cases. Health professionals can provide treatment. Trainers can provide skills. But communities must provide acceptance and support for those who successfully complete rehabilitation.

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



Commissioner for Water Resources and Environment, Dr. Dahiru Hashim (middle) while receiving an award on behalf of the Kano state government.



Gov. Abba Kabir Yusuf in the midst pupils of public school in Kano



PUBLIC ADMINISTRATOR OF THE YEAR AWARD (PAYA 2026)

NOMINEES:

* HAJIYA BINTA LAMI ADAMU BELLO, OON	Director General, National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP)
* MR. OLABODE SHUAEEB AGORO	Head of Service, Lagos State
* MRS. ESUABANA NKO ASANYE	Permanent Secretary, Federal Ministry of Women Affairs
* PROF. SAAD ALIYU AHMED, FNIM	Medical Director, Federal Medical Centre, Abuja
* DR. ABUBAKAR DANTOSHO, Ph.D	Managing Director/Chief Executive Officer, Nigerian Ports Authority (NPA)
* DR. ABBA ABUBAKAR ALIYU, Ph.D	Managing Director/Chief Executive Officer, Rural Electrification Agency (REA)
* ENGR. CORNELIUS OLUWASEGUN ADEBAYO, FNSE	Executive Secretary/Chief Executive Officer, National Agricultural Land Development Authority (NALDA)
* DR. OLUFEMI OGUNYEMI	Managing Director/Chief Executive Officer, Nigeria Export Processing Zones (NEPZAL)
* DR. KAZEEM KOLAWOLE RAJI	Director General/Chief Executive Officer, National Board For Technology Incubation Centre (NBTI)
* MRS. OLUBUNMI OLUWASEUN KUKU	Managing Director/Chief Executive Officer, Federal Airport Authority of Nigeria (FAAN)

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NDLEA re-arrests 83-year-old drug convict, nabs S'African with 32.7kg cannabis

By Bertram Nwannekanma

THE National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) has re-arrested an 83-year-old woman, Uloma Uchechi Sunday, barely a year after her conviction for drug offences, and arrested a South African woman with 32.74kg of cannabis at the Port Harcourt International Airport, Rivers State.

The agency also intercepted large consignments of illicit drugs across several states and recovered firearms and ammunition in Plateau State.

According to the NDLEA, Uloma was arrested on October 7 at her residence in Ite-Uzo, Umuaguma, Obingwa Local Council of Abia State, with methamphetamine and

Colorado, a synthetic cannabinoid, allegedly concealed around her waist with a wrapper.

Her arrest followed intelligence reports that she operated a drug joint allegedly harbouring criminal elements terrorising the community.

She was first arrested on May 17, 2025, alongside her 32-year-old daughter, Chisom Uchechi. The agency said operatives recovered methamphetamine, skunk, fresh cannabis leaves and tramadol from them.

Both women pleaded guilty and were sentenced to 12 months' imprisonment or a fine of N200,000 each. They paid the fines and were released.

• Seizes drugs across states, recovers rifles, ammunition in Plateau



83-year-old suspect.

At the Port Harcourt International Airport, NDLEA operatives, working with the Nigeria Customs Service, arrested a South African woman, Gebashe Sithandiwe



Suspect with seized illicit drugs.

Jessie, with 30 parcels of Thai Loud, a cannabis strain, weighing 32.74kg. The drugs were allegedly concealed in two travelling bags.

The agency said the suspect

arrived from Thailand through Doha aboard a Qatar Airways flight and admitted to previously trafficking drugs through other African countries.

At the Murtala Muhammed International Airport, Lagos, operatives intercepted 354,000 tablets of Tapentadol, each containing 250mg, weighing 307.2kg, in nine cartons shipped from Pakistan.

In another operation, 75.9kg of Colorado was recovered from six Ghana-Must-Go bags in a consignment from the United Kingdom.

Four suspects, including a clearing agent, an Uber driver and a clothing trader, were arrested in connection with the shipment.

In Cross River State, operatives arrested Adama Inuwa, 46, at Iyala Nkun village, Ikom, recovering 1,100kg of cannabis in 181 bags and 17.15kg of cannabis seeds.

BCPG seeks stricter building compliance, stronger collaboration in Ogun

By Bertram Nwannekanma

THE Building Collapse Prevention Guild (BCPG), Ogun State Chapter, has called for stronger collaboration among regulatory authorities, construction professionals, artisans, developers and property owners to improve building safety and prevent structural failures across the state.

The call was made at a joint Building Safety Awareness Programme organised in collaboration with the Ogun State Building Production Management Authority (OGBPMA) at Oronna Hall, Ilaro, under the theme, "Building Safe, Compliant and Quality Structures."

The programme brought together building developers, artisans, built-environment professionals, property owners, community representatives and residents from Ilaro and the wider Yewa community to discuss compliance with building regulations and measures to prevent structural failures.

Speaking at the event, the Chairman of BCPG, Ogun State Chapter, Adedayo Ogunsola, said preventing building collapse required sustained professional vigilance, effective regulatory oversight and cooperation among all stakeholders involved in construction.

He explained that the Guild

comprised registered members from seven built-environment professional groups: town planners, land surveyors, architects, engineers, estate surveyors and valuers, quantity surveyors, and builders.

Their combined expertise, he said, enabled the organisation to monitor construction activities and promote compliance with established building standards.

Ogunsola said the Guild worked with OGBPMA officials to encourage developers to adhere to approved building plans, proper construction procedures and statutory requirements.

Police arrest robbery suspect in Delta, record four sexual assault cases in Bauchi

From Monday Osayande (Asaba) and Rauf Oyewole (Bauchi)

THE police in Delta State have arrested a 26-year-old man over his alleged involvement in armed robberies in Asaba and neighbouring communities, recovering an AK-47 rifle and two locally made guns.

Also, the Bauchi State Police Command arrested four suspects in connection with four reported sexual assault cases involving three minors and a 20-year-old woman within three days.

In Delta, the police spokesperson, Bright Edafe, said the suspect, identified as Sunday Nimel, was arrested on October 7, 2026, at about 10:30 p.m. during an

intelligence-led operation by operatives of the Commissioner of Police's Special Assignment Team (CP-SAT), Ughelli, and local vigilantes.

Edafe said the operation followed credible intelligence linking Nimel to an alleged armed robbery syndicate operating in Asaba and surrounding communities.

According to him, information obtained from the suspect during interrogation led operatives to a hideout near Okpanam City Gate, where they recovered an AK-47 rifle, two locally made cut-to-size guns and three rounds of live ammunition.

He said investigations were ongoing to establish the full

extent of the suspect's alleged involvement and identify other members of the suspected syndicate.

The Commissioner of Police, Samuel E. Eralé, commended the operatives for the arrest and reaffirmed the command's commitment to dismantling criminal networks across the state.

He urged residents to provide credible and timely information about suspicious activities to support efforts to prevent crime and protect life and property.

In Bauchi, the police spokesperson, SP Nafiu Habib, said the four cases were reported between October 8 and 10 in Ningi, Shira, Katagum and Bauchi metropolis.

Experts warn against youth drug abuse, cite mental health, road safety risks

By Bertram Nwannekanma

HEALTH and safety professionals have warned that substance abuse among young people threatens mental health and road safety, calling for early intervention, public awareness and improved access to professional treatment.

They spoke at an event organised by WalrusX and Terra Kona Decks of the National Association of

Seadogs (NAS), in partnership with the Kairos Embrace Foundation, to mark World Mental Health Day in Ikorodu, Lagos.

A consultant psychiatrist at the Lagos University Teaching Hospital, Dr Shakiru Oyedokun, said the occasion provided an opportunity to raise awareness about mental health conditions, available treatments and the stigma that prevents many people from seeking help.

Speaking on this year's theme, Lived Experience: Re-voices, Re-change, Oyedokun stressed the importance of allowing people who had experienced mental health challenges to share their stories and encourage others facing similar difficulties.

He expressed concern about substance abuse among young people, warning that it could impair judgment, emotional regulation and their ability to function effectively.

Ijaw leaders warn of ethnic crisis, demand probe into alleged Edo court attack

From Joseph Kanjo, Benin

THE leadership of the Soron Ibe-Ijaw, comprising five Ijaw kingdoms in Edo State, has called on security agencies to investigate an alleged attack on Ijaw indigenes at the Edo State High Court in Benin City on October 6, warning that failure to bring the perpetrators to justice could heighten ethnic tensions.

The leaders urged the Department of State Services (DSS), the Assistant Inspector-

General of Police, Zone 5, and the Edo State Commissioner of Police to identify and prosecute those responsible for the incident.

They expressed concern over what they described as the failure of the Edo State Government to protect Ijaw indigenes, who were reportedly attacked while attending court to represent the Gelegelegbene community in a suit instituted against them by the Ughoton community.

The dispute is part of a long-

standing controversy over the indigenous status of Ijaw people in Edo State, with disagreements over land ownership and claims of indigeneity resulting in legal battles between some Ijaw and Benin communities.

In a statement signed by the chairman, Elder Edmond Doyah Tiemo; High Chief Robinson Ogunkoruwei; Toru Ibe Agagha; and Dr Freedom Atigbi, and made available to journalists at the weekend.

LASTMA rescues 670 crash victims, records 1,409 accidents in nine months

By Eniola Daniel and Benjamin Alade

THE Lagos State Traffic Management Authority (LASTMA) has responded to 1,409 road traffic crashes and rescued 670 victims across Lagos State in nine months, underscoring the demand for emergency response

services amid persistent road safety concerns.

The agency disclosed this over the weekend, saying its operatives had continued to respond to crash scenes, rescue victims and manage traffic to prevent secondary accidents.

According to LASTMA, its personnel conduct

preliminary assessments at crash scenes, evacuate victims, divert traffic and ensure that emergency responders have unhindered access to affected areas.

The agency also coordinates its operations with the Lagos State Emergency Management Agency (LASEMA), Lagos State Ambulance Service (LASAMBUS), Lagos State Fire and Rescue Service and other relevant emergency response organisations to provide

assistance to victims.

The General Manager of LASTMA, Olalekan Bakare-Oki, reaffirmed the agency's commitment to strengthening emergency response, improving public awareness and promoting compliance with traffic regulations.

He urged motorists to observe speed limits, obey traffic signals, wear seat belts and ensure their vehicles were roadworthy.



LASTMA official during emergency operation.

PUBLIC APOLOGY AND RETRACTION

I, Foster Nkama Obo, Of Ebuawana Edda, Ebonyi State, hereby tender my sincere apology to my former wife, Mrs Obiari Igweoko, and members of her family for the disparaging statements I published about them on Facebook and other and other social media platforms.

I hereby retract the offending statements and withdraw any false or unjustified allegations contained therein. I deeply regret the embarrassment and distress caused by my conduct and undertake not to repeat such acts.

I humbly ask my former wife and her family to accept my apology.

Foster Nkama Obo
Date: 10 - 10 - 2026

Hot Lines: 08034990344 and 08160223638

Rivers council begins crackdown on illegal structures, roadside trading

From Ann Godwin and Gabriel Godfrey, Port Harcourt

THE Obio/Akpor Local Council in Rivers State has intensified its campaign against illegal structures and roadside trading, citing concerns over flooding, traffic congestion, blocked drainage channels and public safety.

The exercise, which covers Rumuosi, Rumuokoro, Aluu, Eleme Junction and the Obiri-Ikwerre axis, among other areas, is aimed at reclaiming public spaces, clearing drainage channels and curbing indiscriminate refuse disposal.

The enforcement follows recent flooding in Obio/Akpor and Port Harcourt, which displaced residents and damaged properties and businesses.

Blocked drains, refuse dumps and structures obstructing waterways have

been identified as factors contributing to the problem. Although the clearing of the



Refuse evacuated from blocked canal at SARS road in ObioAkpor Local Council of Rivers State.

Rumuokoro canal has reportedly eased flooding in the area, communities including Rumuekini, Rumukpoku and Eneka continue to grapple with floodwaters.

The operation, directed by the council chairman, Dr Gift Worlu, also seeks to improve access roads, ease traffic congestion and address security concerns associated with unauthorised structures on government property.

The chairman of the New Democratic Front in Obio/Akpor and supervisor of the exercise, Obi Amadi, said a final announcement was made on Friday before the enforcement began.

He said similar operations had been carried out around the University of Port Har-

court and in Ozuoba, Rumuekpe, Rumuodara, Rumuigbo, Obiri-Ikwerre and Rumuokoro. Other areas covered by the wider exercise include Rumuomasi, Rumuosi, Aluu and Eleme Junction.

Amadi said the campaign was also intended to address the growing use of road shoulders, drainage channels and other public spaces for commercial activities, which restricts movement and impedes the flow of rainwater. "In busy areas, roadside stalls and the display of goods on drainage channels can reduce available road space, contribute to congestion and obstruct the flow of rainwater," he said.

The team leader and coordinator of the University of Port

Harcourt Joint Task Force under the Obio-Akpor Government Sanitation Authority, Edward Monday, said the council had repeatedly notified occupants of temporary structures along roads and on government property to remove them.

He said the demolition followed earlier visits to the affected areas, including an inspection on Friday involving the university's chief security officer, the police area commander and the area police sanitation team.

Monday attributed part of the flooding problem to trading activities around drainage channels, waterways and canals, warning that obstructions could prevent rainwater from flowing freely.

NAPTIP warns against informal settlements of sexual offence cases

From Rotimi Agboluaje, Ibadan

THE National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP), in partnership with the European Union (EU) and International IDEA, has stepped up efforts to improve media reporting of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) in Oyo State.

The initiative includes a mentorship programme for members of the Oyo State SGBV Media Corps, aimed at strengthening journalists' capacity to report cases responsibly, protect survivors' identities and promote accountability in the justice system.

identities and promote accountability in the justice system.

Speaking at the programme held at Golden Tulip Hotel, Ibadan, the Head of Media and Public Relations at NAPTIP's Abuja headquarters, Vincent Adekoye, cautioned against resolving sexual offence cases through informal arrangements outside established judicial processes.

Adekoye said allegations of criminal offences should be handled through the appropriate legal channels, stressing that competent courts were responsible for making

binding judicial pronouncements on criminal matters.

He warned that informal settlements of sexual offence cases could undermine justice and allow alleged perpetrators to escape accountability.

The NAPTIP spokesperson called for stronger cooperation among law enforcement agencies, the judiciary, social workers, community leaders and non-governmental organisations to address sexual and gender-based violence.

He also urged journalists to adopt survivor-centred reporting practices, warning

against publishing names, images or other details that could reveal survivors' identities and expose them to further harm or stigmatisation.

Adekoye said journalists should go beyond reporting individual incidents to investigating institutional and systemic failures that could prevent survivors from obtaining justice.

He added that responsible reporting could raise public awareness, hold institutions accountable and encourage survivors to seek help through appropriate channels.

World Cleanup Day: FBRA recovers three tonnes of recyclables in Lagos, Oyo

By Bertram Nwannekanma

THE Food and Beverage Recycling Alliance (FBRA) has recovered 3,000.92kg of recyclable materials across Lagos and Oyo states to mark World Cleanup Day 2026, engaging 419 participants in community cleanup, recycling awareness and buyback initiatives.

The activities combined on-the-ground waste recovery with public sensitisation, stakeholder engagement and economic incentives to promote responsible waste disposal and strengthen Nigeria's recycling value chain.

In Ikorodu, Lagos State, FBRA recovered 2,226kg of recyclable materials and brought together 301 participants for a community-based cleanup and recovery exercise in Agebele.

ble materials and brought together 301 participants for a community-based cleanup and recovery exercise in Agebele.

The initiative was organised in collaboration with the Let's Do It Nigeria team, the Lagos State Ministry of the Environment and Water Resources, the Lagos Waste Management Authority (LAWMA), environmental organisations, street sweepers, government representatives, Zyntomax, FBRA's collection partner in Ikorodu, and member companies of the alliance.

Participants embarked on an awareness walk through the community, collecting waste

and recyclable materials along the route while sensitising residents to proper waste disposal and the importance of recovering materials for recycling.

The exercise also featured a community buyback programme that allowed residents to exchange recyclable materials for product incentives, helping to channel recovered materials into the formal recycling chain. Zyntomax supported the collection and recovery of materials gathered during the exercise.

In Ibadan, Oyo State, FBRA recovered an additional 774.48kg of recyclable materials and engaged 118 participants through its sponsorship of a recyclables buyback scheme at the Oyo Waste Summit 3.0.

Beyond the recovery exercise, the alliance contributed to policy and industry discussions on sustainable waste management.

Its Executive Director, Agharese Onaghise, presented a paper on Extended Producer Responsibility for the Packaging Industry in Nigeria.

FBRA also hosted a panel session featuring six of its member companies, which discussed industry innovations in managing post-consumer packaging materials across different waste streams.

LAWMA seals 25 buildings in Okota, distributes 172 recycling bins in Ikoyi

By Bertram Nwannekanma

THE Lagos Waste Management Authority (LAWMA) has intensified efforts to improve sanitation and promote recycling in Lagos, sealing more than 25 buildings in Okota over environmental infractions while distributing 172 recycling bins to households in Osborne Estate, Ikoyi.

The two initiatives form part of the authority's efforts to curb indiscriminate waste disposal, encourage waste separation at source and reduce the volume of refuse sent to disposal sites.

In Okota, LAWMA's Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer, Dr Muiyiwa Gbadegesin, led an enforcement operation on Sunday to clear accumulated waste along Ago Palace Way, where

illegal dumping on road medians and around bridge abutments had become a recurring problem.

The exercise involved the deployment of compactor trucks, a payload, tipper trucks and street sweepers to evacuate the waste and restore environmental order along the affected corridor.

More than 25 buildings, including a Mobil filling station, were sealed for various environmental and regulatory violations, including the erection of illegal stalls on road setbacks and harbouring street traders whose activities contributed to littering and indiscriminate waste disposal.

The authority's advocacy team also sensitised residents and other members of the public on proper waste disposal, urging them to use



LAWMA officials evacuating waste and restoring environmental order in Okota yesterday.

approved channels rather than dump refuse on roads and medians.

Gbadegesin warned that LAWMA would enforce regulations against illegal street trading and those who pa-

tronised traders operating in prohibited locations, noting that such activities obstruct movement, undermine public order and contribute to environmental degradation.

Police arrest 26 robbery, cult suspects in Oyo, Bayelsa

***Give owners 14 days to claim abandoned property in Abia**

From Rotimi Agboluaje (Ibadan) and Julius Osahon (Yenagoa)

POLICE in Oyo and Bayelsa states have arrested 26 suspects in separate operations targeting armed robbery and cult-related violence, recovering firearms, ammunition and other weapons.

While operatives in Oyo State arrested three suspected armed robbers following a distress call in Ibadan, their counterparts in Bayelsa State apprehended 23 suspects over alleged involvement in renewed cult clashes that reportedly claimed more than five lives.

In Oyo, the spokesperson, DSP Olayinka Ayanlade, said the suspects were arrested at about 9.15 p.m. on Thursday, October 8, following a report that armed men were attacking residents and dispossessing them of their belongings around Sumal Junction Roundabout, Ibadan.

Ayanlade, in a statement issued on Sunday, said the Divisional Police Officer of Oluyole Division deployed a patrol team to the scene after receiving the distress call, leading to the arrest of the suspects.

ing to the arrest of the suspects.

They were identified as Sunday Obasola, 29; Kayode Bamikole, 28; and Durodoye Ayobami, 23.

The police said preliminary investigations indicated that the suspects had allegedly robbed a tricycle driver and two passengers, while other people sustained injuries during the operation.

Items recovered included a black TVS motorcycle with registration number AKN 808 QF, a locally fabricated cut-to-size pistol and a live cartridge.

The police said the exhibits had been secured, while the suspects remained in custody.

The case has been transferred to the Violence Crime Response Unit, Eleyele, Ibadan, for further investigation.

In Bayelsa, the police said the 23 arrests followed intelligence-led operations conducted between September 23 and October 8 across communities identified as flashpoints for cult-related violence.

Army seeks stronger security cooperation with Immigration, NAFDAC

From Rotimi Agboluaje, Ibadan

THE General Officer Commanding (GOC), 2 Division of the Nigerian Army, Major General Auwalu Mahmuda, has called for stronger cooperation among the Army, Nigeria Immigration Service (NIS) and National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control (NAFDAC) to tackle security challenges and protect public health.

Mahmuda made the call while receiving the Comptroller of Immigration in Oyo State, Ephraim Ogbemudia, and the South-West Zonal Director of NAFDAC, Dr Isaac Anjorin Kolawole, during separate visits to the division's headquarters at Adekunle Fajuyi Cantonment, Ibadan.

He said no agency could effectively address the country's security challenges in isolation, stressing the need for sustained cooperation, timely intelligence sharing and coordinated operations.

According to him, stronger institutional relationships would improve operational effectiveness and enable the agencies to respond more efficiently to criminal activities.

Mahmuda also urged the visiting officials to maintain cordial relations with host communities, noting that public trust could encourage residents to provide credible information to security agencies.

He assured both organisations of the division's continued support, describing effective partnerships as essential to protecting life and property.

Earlier, Ogbemudia commended the Army for its efforts to address security challenges in Oire Local Council of Oyo State.

He praised the GOC and troops of the division for their commitment, adding that prevailing security concerns required a coordinated response from relevant agencies.



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Editorial

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Fuel subsidy debate: Addressing fiscal gains, household pains

THE recurring debate over the merits and drawbacks of the Tinubu administration's removal of the fuel subsidy reflects renewed interest in a balanced evaluation of the issue. If the discourse aims to advance the wellbeing of Nigerians, it is a matter of public interest, beyond mere politicking. The well-worn issues must be borne in mind. They include the sleaze entrenched in the fuel subsidy; the unsustainable use of scarce public funds to ensure the supply of cheap petrol while the country struggled to pay salaries; the servicing of foreign debts with almost all revenue generated, leaving little or nothing for capital projects and infrastructure; and the indisputable fact that much of the subsidy was enjoyed not by ordinary Nigerians for whom it was originally intended, but by people in neighbouring countries who easily exploited the loopholes created during the implementation of the subsidy.

Juxtaposed with these facts is the reality of galloping inflation triggered by the removal of the fuel subsidy. This was expected because the removal in 2023 meant an immediate hike in fuel prices, which translated into higher costs of goods and services across the country. While the federal government embarked on several measures, including cash distributions and palliatives, as well as long-term plans to make living easier and more affordable for the general population, these measures had little impact on poor Nigerians.

The 36 states have a lot more money to spend, but many apparently did not spend to lift the poor, but rather spent in ways that widen the gap between the haves and the have-nots. The bottom line is that the prosperity that President Bola Tinubu has been preaching is yet to reach the roots and, after three years, many Nigerians are understandably losing patience.

Complicating this scenario is the war in Iran, following simultaneous attacks on the country by the United States and Israel, which have affected oil movement in the Strait of Hormuz, jerking up the price of oil in the international market,

with the consequent galloping increases in petrol prices. While most countries of the globe are adversely affected by the development, Nigeria's situation has been worsened by the absence of a functional government refinery, thus forcing a reliance on the Dangote Refinery.

The result is that while Dangote ensured a steady, uninterrupted supply of petroleum products, these come at high prices determined by the international market, quite unaffordable to the ordinary Nigerian. Sadly, the opposition harps on the economic hardship without suggesting a viable alternative to cushion the hardship, until recently, when one of the major opposition candidates for the 2027 Presidential election, Alhaji Atiku Abubakar, a former Vice-President, boldly stated that, if elected in the 2027 Presidential election, he will reverse the policy and modify it. Since then, this issue has elicited comments from various stakeholders in the Nigerian economy.

With the removal of the fuel subsidy, according to the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) data, average petrol retail price per litre in the country moved from N238.11 in May 2023 to N626.7 in August 2023, N769.6 in August 2023, N769.62 in May 2024, N1,396 in September 2026 and currently an average of N1,350 which is more than five times more expensive than the price per litre in May 2023. This was largely driven by the transportation cost multiplier on the movement of commodities and persons across the country.

This excruciating situation has been compounded by the depreciation of the naira, which fell from about N460 to the dollar in 2023 to roughly N1,326 by September 2026. This resulted in a steep rise in the cost of living and a serious squeeze on real incomes. Even where nominal salaries increased, they could not keep pace with the combined rise in transportation, food, energy, housing and other essential costs, leaving millions of citizens in desperate situations. Prices of virtually all goods and services across the economy skyrocketed and inflation increased immediately.

Atiku Abubakar's suggestion has raised some pertinent questions on this issue. First, should the decision to remove the subsidy be sustained, or should there be a policy reversal, given the seemingly unending economic pains among the popu-

lace? What are the issues?

First, it must be recalled that the nation battled to manage the economy with great difficulty throughout the years of subsidy, thus prompting the Tinubu administration to immediately remove the subsidy on its first day in power. Before the subsidy removal, Nigeria was spending an estimated \$10 billion to \$15 billion annually on petroleum product imports.

The Tinubu administration's efforts to ameliorate the high transport cost situation appear to have had limited success. The government's Presidential CNG Initiative, which was launched formally in 2023 but now rebranded as the Presidential Initiative on CNG and Electric Vehicles (PI-CNG & EV), is having some challenges. The programme had set an explicit target of one million vehicle conversions, thousands of CNG buses on Nigerian roads, and a downward pull on the demand for petrol strong enough to show up in the national consumption figures. This has been largely unsuccessful as many vehicle owners are yet to embrace the initiative; some even know little or nothing about it. Some who know and showed up for conversion to CNG were disappointed with inadequate preparation by the authorities and shortage of kits that further frustrated the implementation.

The removal of the fuel subsidy has its merits. According to Taiwo Oyedele, the Minister of Finance and the Coordinating Minister of the Economy, in August, during the presentation of the economic reform scorecard, the subsidy removal generated about N15.8 trillion in fiscal gains between June 2023 and December 2025. Undoubtedly, fiscal sustainability has been strengthened in the country and the sub-national governments have been able to pay salaries and embark on public projects in their various states, which were not so before then.

While political office holders have been empowered financially by this policy, it has also increased the cost of governance across the various tiers of government, many of which embarked on extravagant spending that has little or no benefit to the ordinary

Nigerian. Corruption appears to have received a boost also among this class of leaders. On the other hand, many stakeholders have rightly questioned the federal government on why it has increased borrowing from both the domestic and foreign debt markets. This has had the effect of crowding out the private sector in the domestic credit market and made the cost of borrowing very high. Why should public borrowing still be rampant even after the removal of the fuel subsidy? The government needs to come up with a convincing answer to this puzzle.

Second, the administration's promise that savings from the removal of the fuel subsidy payments would be re-channelled into public infrastructure, education, healthcare and job creation has not manifested to the desired level. Even with huge amounts of loans distributed to needy students through the students' loans scheme (NELFUND), many parents are groaning under heavy education bills, rehabilitation of public infrastructure is slow, housing and healthcare delivery have been priced out of the reach of the average Nigerian, while job creation is still largely haphazard and unreliable.

Given the very ugly experience and drain of public resources ingrained in the fuel subsidy regime before 2023, Nigeria can hardly afford a return to that era. That will clearly reverse visible gains of the removal. Although three years is rather short to recover from the drastic reforms of the administration, Nigerians are right to complain of their pains, particularly in the absence of a marked relief in the foreseeable future. This is a challenge that governments at all levels need to resolve, first by cutting governance costs, spending judiciously in the public interest and coming up with genuine and transparent remedies to reduce hardship in the land.

Granting subsidies in the economy is not strange to macroeconomic management worldwide. But it must be tailored to clear economic goals that guarantee visible improvement in the living conditions of the citizens.

LETTER

At 66: Nigerians must be more Nigerian to Nigeria

SIR: At Nigeria's 66th Independence Anniversary, we celebrate not merely the passing of another year but the enduring resilience of a nation blessed with immense human and natural resources. Despite numerous challenges, Nigerians have continued to demonstrate remarkable courage, creativity, and determination. This anniversary therefore provides an opportunity to reflect on our journey, appreciate our progress, and renew our commitment to the ideals that unite us as one people under one nation.

At this important milestone, I believe Nigerians must become more Nigerian to Nigeria. Too often, we focus on what the country should do for us while paying less attention to what we owe the country. Genuine patriotism is not measured only by speeches, ceremonies, or public displays of national pride. It is reflected in everyday actions, responsible citizen-

ship, and a sincere commitment to advancing the common good above personal interests and temporary gains.

The Holy Qur'an offers a timeless principle for national renewal. Allah says: "Indeed, Allah will not change the condition of a people until they change what is in themselves" (Qur'an 13:11). This profound verse reminds us that meaningful transformation begins within individuals before it becomes visible in communities, institutions, and nations. Lasting progress emerges when citizens cultivate discipline, integrity, responsibility, and a genuine desire to contribute positively to society and national development.

Nigeria's future cannot depend solely on governments, political leaders, or public institutions. It also depends on ordinary citizens who choose honesty over corruption, excellence over mediocrity, and service over selfishness.

The teacher inspiring young

minds, the entrepreneur creating opportunities, the farmer feeding communities, the civil servant acting with integrity, and the parent nurturing responsible children all contribute significantly to building the nation we desire for generations yet unborn.

As a people, we must also exercise patience, constructive engagement, and faith in the capacity of our nation to overcome present difficulties. In this regard, Nigerians should support and trust the ongoing reform efforts of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu, while remaining committed to accountability and national progress.

Transformational journeys are often challenging at the beginning, but citizens and leaders alike must work together with sincerity, sacrifice, and perseverance to achieve lasting results for future generations.

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Ayodeji AbdulWahid AbdulRauf is President of Nasrul-Lahi-L-Fatih (NASFAT).



Opinion

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Benchmarking Tinubu's administration, leadership possibilities

By Tunji Olaopa

LEADING the Nigerian state, by any standard of leadership, is the most tasking of any leadership endeavor one can consider. Leading such a post-colonial state must be situated within the historical and political context of the trajectory of the state—it is postcolonial, it is plural with the enormous weight of over two hundred million people fragmented into nations and ethnicities; it has been misgoverned for over six decades, its governance template has remained external, and its current human development standing is abysmal. How should such a leader bearing the weight of over two hundred million Nigerians and their collective disaffection be assessed and then judged?

That question is a fundamental one because a leader can be mis-assessed and hence unfairly judged based on parameters and criteria that could make no sense of the context of governance and the specific challenges of the leadership. In other words, one must be careful in judging a leader based on frameworks that are not carefully crafted to connect leadership achievements to the contexts where those achievements could make the most impacts. I am specifically saying that President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's leadership achievements must be properly situated and benchmarked against the highest parameter that the African continent can produce.

There is no other leadership benchmark for measuring leadership quality on the continent than the Mo Ibrahim Prize for Achievement in African Leadership. In looking forward to the general elections in 2027, this leadership prize constitutes the framework that enables a far more rigorous and issue-based discussion than the staccato burst of uninformative and inchoate reactions from oppositional political parties.

The question then is: what does the Mo Ibrahim leadership prize enable us to benchmark against the current governance efforts and future development possibilities of the Tinubu administration? What can Nigeria and her governance matrixes learn from the African good leadership practices to raise the governance standards, post-2027?

Established in 2006, the award for Achievement in African Leadership celebrates an outstanding and democratically elected African executive leadership (head of state or government) that has demon-

strated an unparalleled merit in facilitating the protection of human rights, strengthen democracy and democratic institutions, and enable sustainable development. The award is not an annual one. Rather, it is constituted whenever the committee is made aware of any candidates with the possibility for being conferred with it. And over the twenty years since it was established, the African Leadership award has gone to recipients: Joachim Chissano, Mozambique (2007), Nelson Mandela, South Africa (2007), Festus Mogae, Botswana (2008), Pedro Pires, Cape Verde (2011), Desmond Tutu, South Africa (2012), Hifikepunye Pohamba, Namibia (2014), Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, Liberia (2017), and Mahamadou Issoufou, Niger (2020). Unfortunately for the continent, the prize was not awarded since 2020 as no qualifying candidates had been found to possess the qualities the award demands.

Unfortunately, also, no Nigerian executive leader has made the cut too. Those who have won, including Mandela and Tutu who got the prize on special recognition, have contributed outstanding development to their various states, and impacted democratic governance. Former president Issoufou drove down poverty in fragile Niger from 48 per cent to 40 per cent through solid macro-economic growth.

Mandela and Chissano strengthened the democratic transition process by letting go of power after their various terms, despite their popularity. Johnson Sirleaf, despite the deep challenge of governing a war-torn country, was able to lay the foundation for a lasting national unity in ways that also enabled social inclusion and economic opportunities especially for women. Former President Pohamba supervised a series of formidable and resilient democratic institutions that made democratic governance possible and all too easy. This also coupled with a vigorous anti-corruption framework that assists the task of good governance.

Benchmarking the Tinubu administration against these past laureates, as well as the African leadership ideals of the Mo Ibrahim Foundation, might first appear as an exercise in futility at several points. First, the prize is not awarded until three years after the prospective candidate has left office. And President Tinubu is barely out of office. Second, the Tinubu administration does not ap-

pear anywhere near the achievements that the past laureates of the award recorded. And third, it appears too foolhardy to even put President Tinubu in contention for the African Leadership award when Nigeria's governance and development matters stand too dismal. But then it is only a superficial consideration of the issues that would raise these points. A deeper scrutiny yields a different understanding.

Highlighting the African Leadership award as a benchmark for spotlighting the achievements or otherwise of the Tinubu administration is first a very good way to redirect the campaign focus that has hitherto been directed at witch-hunting the reputational credentials of the president when there are more significant matters of state that could swing the upcoming general elections in 2027 in favor of millions of Nigerians. But more than this, the African Leadership prize provides a framework by which a government could orient itself on what real leadership means especially within a specific governance context that is not defined by external parameters.

The focus of the Mo Ibrahim Achievement in African Leadership award is a leadership that is grounded firmly in human development that impacts the millions of people that live in any African states. This speaks concretely to government policies that lift people out of poverty, that undermine the cankerworms of political and bureaucratic corruption in ways that undermine infrastructural development, that pour government's considered funding into health-care and education, that deepen the respect for democratic accountability and transparency, and so on. Within this context of governance standard, we must be sufficiently fair as not to simply deny the efforts that the almost-four-years of the Tinubu administration has yielded.

In crafting the Renewed Hope Agenda, and aligning it with the objective of making Nigeria a \$1trn economy by 2030, the Tinubu administration signaled a powerful governance and development focus that has produced some massive macro-economic achievements. In other words, the administration, since its inception, has strategically pursued structural reforms of all sorts that are meant to rehabilitate Nigeria's lost decades in governance and development planning.

A few of these are worth itemising. Take security

simply because it constitutes the bedrock of any national development. Given the alarming rate at which insecurity, through banditry, kidnapping and insurgency, has continue to undermine Nigeria's investment profile, the Tinubu administration has raised a multi-level reform approach that infuses a N500 billion emergency security fund that is meant to tackle banditry and insurgency through military intervention and intelligence gathering. This is bolstered by the significant constitutional move to decentralise the structure of the police force while also expanding the strength of the security forces.

Next is the all-purpose tax laws reform that serves as a complement to reforms for economic growth. The Nigeria Tax Act, Nigeria Tax Administration Act, Nigeria Revenue Service Act, and the Joint Revenue Board Act are all meant to fundamentally overhaul Nigeria's tax architecture in an even more significant step to clear the cobwebs attached to the ease of doing business while also enhancing the tax administration regime for government to earn more money for development purposes.

While the inflation rate jumped to an all-time high due to the removal of petrol subsidy and the floating of the foreign exchange in 2023, further consistent policy actions have since seen inflation dropped to 15.39 per cent in 2026, with food inflation falling from 20.31 per cent in July 2026 to 19.57 per cent.

But then, more is required. Economic reforms must be steered consciously and steadily towards people-centered governance frameworks that will not achieve macroeconomic stability on the one hand, while millions keep suffering economic deprivations on the other. In other words, macro-economic stabilisation of the Nigerian economy must be transformed into micro-economic human development policies that have the capacities to change the citizens' welfare and well-being. The growth of the Gross Domestic Product cannot win the Mo Ibrahim Achievement in African Leadership prize; it must be Gross Domestic Happiness that tracks the real happiness and well-being of the citizens.

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

Prof. Olaopa is chairman Federal Civil Service Commission and Professor of Public Administration.

Relief without reversal: Press release is not policy

By Chiwuike Uba

A COMMERCIAL bus driver in Lagos does not read fiscal frameworks. He reads the number on the pump. Every naira on that board eventually reappears in his fares, the price of tomatoes and the running costs of small businesses. A petrol shock does not stay at the filling station. It travels through transport, food distribution, electricity generation and logistics until it lands in the household budget.

Against this background, the Presidency's statement of October 8, 2026 deserves scrutiny. The government argues that subsidy removal was necessary and will not be reversed, while households deserve protection from global petrol shocks. Nigeria need not choose between reversing reform and abandoning vulnerable households to adjustment. The problem is that the announcement asserts a reconciliation without demonstrating it. Calling a measure "not a subsidy" does not automatically make it fiscally neutral, economically efficient or free of distortion.

Relief, or just the promise of relief?

The first task is to distinguish what has been announced from what is operational. The Presidency's October 8 statement said NNPC Retail would forgo its retail profit margin and sell petrol at cost for 30 days, prioritising vulnerable households and commercial transport operators. It also referred to a proposed N1,350 ceiling on ex-gantry or landing cost. These are distinct interventions, and the proposed ceiling is not a pump-price guarantee.

On October 9, NNPC confirmed that a N66-per-litre promotional discount, introduced on October 1, for Nigeria's Independence anniversary, would continue until October 31. Reports indicated that access depended on the NNPC Fuel App rather than being automatically available to customers paying directly at the pump. NNPC also stressed that the promotion applied at its retail outlets and did not establish a uniform national pump price or change the market-based pricing framework.

The relationship between this promotion and the separate 30-day margin-forgoing arrangement remains unclear. Are they the same intervention, overlapping arrangements or separate measures? Until the government clarifies this, Nigerians should not assume that the promotional discount represents the entire relief package. An announced benefit is not necessarily an accessible benefit.

Nor does the label "commercial decision" settle every question. If NNPC temporarily gives up its retail margin, its earnings fall. The public needs to know how the arrangement will operate, what it will cost the company and whether it is commercially sustainable.

If the relevant landing cost is N1,300 per litre, NNPC says it will sell at that price without adding its retail margin. But "cost" requires a clear definition. Depending on the supply arrangement, landing cost may include product or refining cost, freight, insurance, handling, logistics and applicable charges. Without a published methodology, consumers cannot establish what cost is recognised or whether it represents the full economic cost of supply.

If NNPC absorbs the reduction through lower margins, the consequences differ from an arrangement supported by cross-subsidies or government compensation. These possibilities should not be confused or left unexplained. Households deserve to know what they will save, for how long and under what conditions.

Who pays when the price is capped?

The proposed N1,350 ex-gantry or landing-cost ceiling raises a different question. Under the approach described by the Finance Minister, refiners and importers would absorb temporary cost increases and recover the shortfall when crude prices or the exchange rate become more favourable. The rationale is that a relatively stable price may be easier for households to manage than sharp increases followed by reductions.

There is merit in that reasoning. Households struggle with sudden price increases, while transport fares often rise quickly but fall slowly. Price smoothing can therefore reduce volatility without necessarily constituting a conventional fuel subsidy.

But a price ceiling does not eliminate costs. It determines who bears them and when. If the eligible wholesale cost is N1,500 per litre and the ceiling is N1,350, the deferred difference is N150 per litre. Across one million litres, that amounts to N150 million before financing charges. This is illustrative, not an estimate of the national cost, which requires verified volumes, an evidenced cost gap and a defined recovery mechanism.

Is this a subsidy? Not automatically. If suppliers participate voluntarily, finance the gap and recover it in full, the arrangement may amount to intertemporal price smoothing. A supplier's commercial loss does not, by itself, become a government liability. The answer, however, depends on the terms of participation and recovery.

Is participation voluntary or compelled? Who verifies claimed costs? Who finances the shortfall? What happens if elevated crude prices persist for months? Budget expenditure, forgone margins, supplier-borne losses and government guarantees are different concepts, with different fiscal implications.

If government guarantees the shortfall, compensates suppliers or assumes obligations they cannot recover commercially, the arrangement may create contingent liabilities or other fiscal expo-

sures requiring assessment and disclosure. The absence of an immediate budgetary payment does not establish fiscal neutrality. This is not an allegation that hidden liabilities exist; it is a demand that the risks be properly examined.

There is also a supply risk. A ceiling without a transparent cost formula and credible recovery mechanism could expose suppliers to unsustainable losses, squeeze working capital and discourage deliveries. Supply could tighten, producing queues, rationing and unofficial premiums. Consumers might then pay in waiting time and additional charges what they were promised they would save at the pump.

A ceiling suppliers trust may stabilise prices. One they consider commercially unsustainable could undermine supply. Price stability cannot be secured by decree alone; it requires credible rules.

Forward crude sales to domestic refineries could strengthen supply security, provided allocations are transparent and commercially sustainable. But forward contracts do not create barrels. Whether they lower petrol prices depends on crude availability, pricing formulas, refining efficiency, financing, foreign-exchange exposure and logistics. Domestic refining can improve supply security, but affordability depends on the economics of delivering products to consumers.

Who gets the relief, and who gets left behind?

The test of targeted relief is not government intention but the benefit reaching intended households. Giving priority to commercial transport operators is reasonable because transport costs affect food prices, access to work and business expenses. Yet lower pump prices do not guarantee proportionate reductions in fares or food prices. Operators may retain some savings, particularly where competition is weak, while fuel-price increases are passed on quickly.

If government expects fares to fall, it should track them route by route and publish the results.

Increased funding for cash transfers is also welcome, but a funding announcement is not a payment. Who qualifies? How are beneficiaries identified? How much will they receive, when will payments arrive, and how can excluded households challenge decisions? Without clear answers, coverage, adequacy and timeliness cannot be assessed.

Poor targeting excludes those who need assistance most. Delayed transfers arrive after families have borrowed, reduced meals or postponed essential spending. Implementation is not a secondary administrative concern; it determines whether the policy works.

To be continued tomorrow.

Prof. Uba is a public affairs analyst.

Opinion

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To support Nepal, waive remittance fees

By Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala
and Dilip Rath

THE flash floods that struck Nepal on August 26 claimed more than a thousand lives and destroyed livelihoods, homes, farms, and public infrastructure. With reconstruction and the economic recovery now underway, support for the survivors can travel fastest through payment networks and family ties—as is usually the case when disasters strike developing countries.

By waiving fees on these remittances for at least two months, money-transfer companies and banks could help Nepal move from rescue and relief toward reconstruction. Struggling Nepali families would receive more than two and a half times the \$49.6 million that the United Nations is trying to raise through its emergency appeal.

Nepal is among the world's most remittance-dependent economies. Remittances exceeded \$16 billion in the last fiscal year, equivalent to more than a quarter of GDP. More than 3.5 million Nepalis work abroad, and the global Nepali diaspora numbers more than six million—one-fifth of

the country's population. These expatriates are sending financial help to families in the affected districts, as are people and charitable organisations of many nationalities. But these transfers will be worth more, and will bring greater relief, if they are allowed to move free of charge.

Remittances are a lifeline. Families use this income for groceries, medicines, and health care. For a flood-displaced household, such transfers are what puts a meal on the table and pays for antibiotics that a relief camp cannot supply. Even in normal times, a share of remittance income goes directly into housing. In the weeks ahead, remittances will help rebuild houses, school buildings, and village roads. They will keep children in the classroom, help businesses cope, and restore livelihoods by restocking destroyed shops, replacing lost livestock, and replanting flooded fields.

The remittance industry has waived fees before in response to natural disasters, including after Haiti's earthquake in January 2010, Pakistan's floods in 2010, the Philippines' typhoon in November 2013, and Nepal's earthquake in April 2015. During the three months following the earth-

quake, remittances to Nepal increased by 18–26 per cent from the previous quarter, and it is estimated that a fee waiver was worth \$40–50 million per month to Nepali families.

Some of Nepal's own money-transfer companies have already led the way this time, but only for a short period. What is needed now is for the international money-transfer operators and banks that handle the bulk of Nepal's inbound remittances to do the same.

A fee waiver would be worth even more this year than it was in 2015. According to Nepal Rastra Bank, remittances to Nepal averaged \$1.5 billion per month during the last two months, up nearly 25 per cent from a year earlier. If remittances continue at this pace and rise by a further 20 per cent over the next two months—in line with the 18–26 per cent surge seen after the 2015 earthquake—the total would reach about \$3.6 billion. A fee waiver would then amount to \$126–144 million, assuming an average fee of 3.5–4 per cent for sending \$200. And since actual fees can rise to 6–12 per cent on some remittance services, the potential savings may be even larger.

In addition to being several times greater than

the UN's appeal to raise nearly \$50 million, such a contribution would be timely and targeted, because the money would be disbursed directly from overseas relatives to the households that know where it is needed. It is also highly likely that a fee waiver would further increase remittance volumes through formal payment networks.

The cost borne by money-transfer companies and banks that choose to help Nepalis in their time of need is entirely manageable. In fact, the revenue forgone in the near term by waiving fees could bring new customers, increase transfers through formal channels, and earn lasting goodwill from families rebuilding homes, farms, and livelihoods. After a disaster of this scale, keeping more of every remittance in the hands of Nepali families is the right thing to do—and sound business. *Okonjo-Iweala, a former Foreign and Finance Minister of Nigeria, is Director-General of the World Trade Organisation. Rath is CEO of Rath Global, an advisory and analytical services firm that specialises in remittances, cross-border payments, diaspora bonds, and development finance.*

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The challenge before Ekiti State and my snake bite story

By Tunji Olowolafe

AFTER the Kiriji War of 1877 to 1886, our forefathers chose these iconic hills, for their majestic beauty, strategic security and temperate climate. Perhaps that is why Ekiti people carry such unmistakable pride in our heritage, our value and our good looks. Some may even boldly argue that we are the best-looking people in Africa. Both my parents came from Are-Ekiti, the heart of Ekiti, making me – a true son of the soil. Perhaps that is my principal qualification.

My father was just six years old when his parents passed away. Orphaned and destitute, he became an apprentice to a travelling balawo, moving from town to town. My father shared that, they would contaminate the local streams ahead of their arrival in a village and enter the settlement offering herbal remedy. That was how a six-year-old child found food, a few coins and shelter.

Then Christian missionaries spotted him in one of those villages and asked why such a bright boy was not in a classroom. They enrolled him in school, and that destitute boy went on to excel in his studies, becoming one of the indigenous corporate directors at Total Nigeria Limited.

First, on governance – Ekiti has been blessed with successive leaders, who each contributed to building our State. We honour Otunba Niyi Adebayo, Ekiti's first elected civilian governor, who established the foundation of our democratic governance, and his wife, Erelu Angela Adebayo, now Nigeria's Ambassador to Portugal. We are equally grateful to every governor who has served since then: our current standing reflects their cumulative stewardship.

Second, our education tradition. Education is the central priority in Ekiti homes. Our state hosts seven federal, state and private universities, alongside seven polytechnics and eight colleges of education, health, science and technology. Among them are Ekiti State University, today the best state-owned university in Nigeria, and Afe Babalola University, one of the top three private universities in the country. Per capita, we are an intellectual powerhouse.

In an average Ekiti household, if you do not have a master's degree by 30, your family may begin organising midnight prayer sessions for you. This year, the highest-scoring candidate in the national JAMB examination came from our State. I recall, 42 years ago, when I informed my family that I would not pursue specialist clinical residency training after my MBBS – I kid you not, they wept openly!

Third, our collective future. Artificial intelligence, robotics, biotechnology, automation and new energy systems are transforming how humanity learns, works, produces and trades at an unprecedented speed. Disruption is inevitable, what remains to be determined is who will lead and who will lag behind. AI will always be directed by people with knowledge, skill, imagination and integrity.

Ekiti has comparative advantages to lead – a culture that values merit and ethics, strong tertiary institutions, and a disciplined work ethic. Our professionals excel naturally from Journalism, Medicine, Engineering to Law, where figures like chief Wole Olanipekun SAN, represents our tradition of excellence.

The central question is, how do we translate – our academic knowledge – into social and economic transformation that eliminates poverty in communities and creates sustainable wealth. It requires emphasis on three fundamentals: reliable power, practical vocational skills and direct connections to industrial supply chains and global markets.

Ekiti State comprises 177 political wards. I propose an immediate, ward-by-ward technical audit to establish local microgrids powered by renewable energy in each ward. In many wards a solar microgrid of 300 to 500 kilowatts can power a school, a health Centre and a cluster of workshops and small businesses. These projects are bankable, and within the States execution capacity. Support from Rural Electrification Agency (REA) will accelerate this effort.

The future economy will reward practical competence. Our primary investment as a state must be vocational education: solar installation, welding, fabrication, machinery repair, food processing and high-value technical trades.

Ekiti has already established six government technical colleges

equipped with modern workshops and apprenticeship pathways. However, six colleges cannot truly address the demand from the hundreds of thousands of youths across our sixteen local governments who want practical training. We must expand this capacity by modernising the curriculum and directly hiring master vocational instructors from nations with elite technical education systems – such as Switzerland, Germany, Canada and South Africa – to train our faculty and connect our colleges digitally to clients and employers everywhere.

We must elevate technical professions. Skilled trades are primary, high value career positions. Industry partnership is key to this transition. When major industrial firms participate in curriculum design, deploy engineers to teach, and recruit directly from technical workshops, youth participation will follow employment opportunities. We have seen this model succeed: EKSU civil engineering students have undergone practical training on the Lagos Calabar Coastal Highway for six months!

When, and not if, industrial developments like Dangote Refinery routinely recruit certified welders, fitters and instrumentation technicians from our own Ekiti Technical Colleges, technical education will be recognised as a promising career path. Pathways must be flexible, allowing certified technicians to advance to academic leadership and University Engineers to master specialised practical trades. We must link power with skills, skills with enterprise, enterprise with physical and digital infrastructure.

On the digital side, the Ekiti Knowledge Zone is now under way. Conceived under former Governor Kayode Fayemi and being implemented by Governor Biodun Oyejobi. Once complete, it will give our young people a place to build technology ventures without leaving Ekiti, serving clients in Lagos, London and Singapore, and bringing that income home to Ekiti. That is how education becomes wealth.

On the physical side, the Ekiti Agro-Allied International Cargo Airport perfectly illustrates what continuity in leadership can achieve. The former Governor Engineer Segun Oni conceived the idea. Former Governor Dr Ayodele Fayose, acquired and cleared the site. Dr Kayode Fayemi began construction and I congratulate Governor Biodun Oyejobi who brought this vital gateway to completion.

Equally vital are our road networks. Few people understand this better than Aare Afe Babalola, SAN. He was one of the strongest voices in the struggle for Ekiti State. At an age when most people retire, he founded Afe Babalola University. A few months ago, Baba Afe expressed concern about the Ado-Ijan-Ilumoba-Ikole federal road, which leads to his university.

Thanks to the advocacy of Senate Majority Leader, Senator Opeyemi Bamidele, the contract has been awarded and work has begun. For this, we are deeply grateful to the President, Bola Ahmed Tinubu.

Ekiti's development requires a strong culture of empirical inquiry.

When I was a young boy, I was bitten by a snake. My grandmother quickly prepared a traditional herbal remedy and applied it to the bite. She assured me with absolute conviction that it would neutralise the venom and permanently protect me from snakes in future.

My childhood friends took that second promise very seriously. Whenever our football landed deep in the bush, they would send me in to fetch it. After all, I was the boy the snakes had officially agreed to leave alone!

However, my late uncle, Professor Femi Elegbeleye, took me to Lagos University Teaching Hospital for a clinical antivenom treatment, years later, during my medical training, I understood lethal risks of untreated snake bites.

My grandmother acted out of love, using the knowledge she trusted. My uncle also acted out of love, using empirical medical science. The lesson is not to disparage tradition, but to insist that when lives, health or livelihoods are at stake, we must seek the best evidence available. That is the culture I want for Ekiti: where a child

can question an assumption without being accused of disrespect, and where our universities, workshops and artisans test ideas and put working solutions into people's hands.

In Are-Ekiti, the town where I am reliably informed that all Ekitis originated from, the Tunji Olowolafe Foundation, which Governor Oyejobi inspired me to set-up is investing in that future – where assumptions are tested and practical solutions verified. It began by listening to our community.

The Are-Ekiti Progressive Union told us plainly what the community needed most. Are-Ekiti had no secondary school of its own. Together, we set out to implement to achieve this objective. The Gbemisola Olowolafe Memorial Community Secondary School, approved and managed by the State Government, opened in September 2025 with 100 students, and today it has over 170.

Our ambition is to grow into a world-class school of 600 students grounded in science, technology, languages, arts, and sports. Adjacent to the school, an ICT Centre – GOMTECH – offers courses in artificial intelligence, coding, graphic design, and Mandarin.

People often ask me why I have not built myself a big country mansion in Are-Ekiti. Perhaps I will someday. But right now, I would much rather build a school where a child can discover what he or she is truly capable of. My hope is that one of its graduates will become so successful that he or she will build me a beautiful home in Are. That would be a return-on-investment worth waiting for!

The same thinking drives our work at Ekiti State University, where the Governor appointed me Chancellor in 2024. Through Project Digi-Teach EKSU, we are bringing all 650 lecturers to full digital teaching proficiency, and our Trading Room has grown into a Senate-approved diploma programme in financial markets.

We have also installed high-speed Starlink internet at 12 locations across the campus, from the library and the faculties to the ICT Experience Centre. Across board, the idea is the same: converting knowledge into application. The result is a graduate who leaves EKSU with practical, digital and industry-ready skills.

None of this would be possible without a committed partner. The Vice-Chancellor of Ekiti State University, Professor Joseph Babatola Ayodele, together with his management team and faculty, has worked hand in hand with us on every one of these initiatives. Prof., please be upstanding, Sir. Ladies and gentlemen, let us give the Vice-Chancellor and his team a round of applause.

This brings me back to my central question: how do we turn what we know into progress that lifts our communities out of poverty? I believe the answer lies in bringing knowledge and innovation together.

When I was a boy travelling home for Christmas, I would see cocoa farmers drying their beans on tarpaulins beside the road. Then the ideregbes, our notorious local goats, would stroll by and eat the harvest as though it had been laid out as their afternoon snack. To a young child, it was a funny sight.

Today, as an investor, it is no longer funny if our farmers still dry cocoa on open roadsides, where it is spoilt or eaten by livestock – ideregbes are eating dollars. So, I ask, with all our universities, engineers, scientists and skilled artisans, why have we not produced an affordable, solar-powered cocoa dryer for every cocoa-growing community in Ekiti? Cocoa is a major crop. According to the Ministry of Agriculture, Ekiti produced 4,500 tonnes in 2025, and that is not counting unrecorded production, or the share consumed by the goats! Let us set a clear state objective: cocoa must become chocolate at source.

The same principle applies to our solid minerals. Honorable Minister Dele Alake has championed the policy that Africa must stop exporting raw minerals and build the capacity to process them at home. That work begins with knowing what lies beneath our soil. To support this, the Tunji Olowolafe Foundation is collaborating with Ekiti State University to modernise its Department of Geology with dedicated solar energy, high-speed Starlink connectivity, computer hardware and advanced field-testing equipment. EKSU geology students already rank among the top three in international academic competitions; within five years, our goal is to establish this department as the premier geology faculty in Africa.

Dr Olowolafe is Chancellor, Ekiti State University.

CRUDE OIL PRICE UPDATE Brent crude: \$104.6 | WTI crude: \$100.0

FOREX MARKET UPDATE I&E Window: N1,368.33

NGX suffers five-day rout as Dangote IPO wipes off N1.58 trillion

By Helen Oji

INVESTORS' rush to raise funds for the Dangote Refinery Initial Public Offering (IPO) triggered five consecutive sessions of losses on the Nigerian Exchange Limited (NGX), wiping N1.58 trillion off the market's value.

The sell-off came as retail investors, high-net-worth individuals (HNIs) and institutional investors repositioned their portfolios ahead of the October 13 closing date of the offer, with selling pressure spreading across equities, fixed income and the foreign exchange markets.

At the close of trading last week, the All-Share Index (ASI) fell 0.97 per cent to 248,363.55 points, while market capitalisation fell by N1.58 trillion to

N161.26 trillion.

Consequently, the market's year-to-date return moderated to 59.60 per cent.

Executive Director of Halo Capital Management Limited, Dr Paul Uzum, explained that the rush to participate in the Dangote Refinery IPO is creating pressure on the stock market as investors sell existing shareholdings to raise cash for the offer.

He said retail investors, high-net-worth individuals and institutional investors are repositioning their portfolios ahead of the October 13 closing date, driving selling pressure that has contributed to the market's five consecutive sessions of decline.

He said the impact extends beyond equities, as investors

are also liquidating fixed-income investments and selling dollars to obtain the funds needed to subscribe to the offer. This shift across asset classes is pressuring the stock market while redirecting liquidity toward the Dangote Refinery share sale. Investors who would otherwise have retained their positions in listed companies are selling some of their holdings to free up cash for the IPO.

"Many investors, retail, HNIs and institutional investors, are raising last-minute funds to participate in the offer. The impact

can be seen across the financial market, the stock market, the fixed income market, and the forex market.

"Investors are selling off some of these investment classes to raise funds to participate in the offer, triggering a bearish stock market. With the mop of liquidity from the market and approaching 2027 elections, no one is very sure how long the bears will last," he said.

The development indicates how a major public offering can influence activity across different segments of the financial

market, particularly when investors seek to raise substantial funds within a limited period. As the October 13 deadline approaches, the urgency to secure funds for participation could sustain selling pressure on equities, even as investors weigh the IPO's relative appeal against their existing investments. Uzum's explanation suggests that the current downturn is linked, in part, to this competition for available investment funds.

He, however, warned that the duration of the bearish trend remains uncertain, given the

liquidity being withdrawn from the market and the approaching 2027 general elections.

In addition, Highcap Securities managing director David Adonri attributed the persistent decline in the equities market to a shift in attention toward the Dangote Refinery initial public offering (IPO), which closes on October 13. He said investor enthusiasm was slowing, and the approaching deadline for the offer was drawing attention and funds away from other investment opportunities.

'Why Nigeria's recovery must deliver jobs, higher incomes'

By Helen Oji

COWRY Asset Management has called for Nigeria's economic recovery to become more broad-based, productive and sustainable to improve household welfare, strengthen private investment and create jobs on a scale that matches the country's rapidly growing population.

The firm said the central challenge was no longer simply whether the economy was recovering, but whether the improving macroeconomic conditions could translate into better living standards, stronger business activity and wider employment opportunities.

In its economic outlook, Cowry Asset Management said Nigeria's growth prospects were improving, but warned that the gains remained vulnerable to external shocks and domestic political pressures ahead of the 2027 general elections.

According to the firm, maintaining the credibility of ongoing economic reforms would be critical to sustaining the recovery, particularly as global uncertainties, rising debt-service obligations and possible changes in international monetary policy threaten the outlook.

The World Bank projected

Nigeria's economic growth to rise from 4.0 per cent in 2025 to 4.3 per cent in 2026 and 4.4 per cent annually in 2027 and 2028. The National Bureau of Statistics reported that GDP grew by 4.43 per cent year-on-year in the second quarter of 2026, up from 4.23 per cent a year earlier. Agriculture expanded by 4.39 per cent, up from 2.82 per cent, while services grew by 4.6 per cent and real oil GDP rose 7.3 per cent. Oil contributed 0.2 percentage points to overall growth, while industrial growth slowed to 4.0 per cent from 7.5 per cent.

Business activity strengthened, with the Stanbic IBTC Purchasing Managers' Index rising to 54.3 points in August from 52.5 points in July. Employment expanded for the 15th consecutive month, although hiring remained modest. Financial services, information technology, real estate and agriculture continued to support economic activity, while industrial performance remained uneven.

Inflation is projected to fall from 23.0 per cent in 2025 to 15.7 per cent in 2026 and 12.2 per cent by 2028. However, high food, energy and transportation costs continue to pressure household incomes, particularly among low-income earners.



Brand Manager, Digital and Internal Communications, Access Pensions, Chiamaka Onwuneme (left); Head, Business Development, Lagos, Access Pensions, Adaora Ude receiving the Retirement Asset Management Leader of the Year Award from former MD/CEO, Ecobank Nigeria, Patrick Akinwuntan; Unit Head, Corporate Communications, Access Pensions, Mojisola Coker and Head, Personal Pension Plan, Access Pensions, Chukwuma Amaonwu during the BusinessDay Banks and Other Financial Institutions and Awards 2026, in Lagos.

SEC warns investors against unregistered investment platforms

By Helen Oji

THE Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) has warned Nigerians against investing through WAYVEPAY, an online investment platform not registered to solicit funds from the public or operate in Nigeria's capital market.

The commission said the platform operates through a website, various social media channels, and a mobile application, and warned investors against conducting investment transactions with the entity or its representatives.

SEC advised members of the public to steer clear of WAYVEPAY and its agents in any business relating to the Nigerian capital market, stressing that anyone who deals with the platform does so at their own risk.

The commission warned that investing through unregistered

and unregulated entities exposes investors to the risk of fraud and possible loss of their funds.

It urged Nigerians to verify the registration status of companies and other entities offering investment opportunities before committing their money.

Investors can confirm the status of fintech operators through the commission's dedicated portal or the commission's website to check registered capital market operators.

The commission also reiterated the importance of dealing only with appropriately registered entities to reduce exposure to fraudulent investment schemes and protect their funds.

Meanwhile, the naira depreciated by 0.08 per cent at the official foreign exchange market last week, closing at N1,331.19 to the dollar, as renewed pressure across Nigeria's currency mar-

kets coincided with volatility in the global oil market amid heightened geopolitical tensions in the Middle East.

The local currency also weakened in the parallel market, losing 1.81 per cent week-on-week to close at N1,361 to the dollar, reflecting pressure across both segments of the foreign exchange market.

The depreciation occurred despite a modest improvement in Nigeria's external reserves, which rose by 0.18 per cent week-on-week to \$55.05 billion. The increase indicates a slight improvement in the country's external liquidity position, although the naira continued to face pressure.

Developments in the international oil market remained a key factor for Nigeria's foreign exchange outlook, as crude oil prices were poised for a weekly gain following heightened geopo-

litical tensions around the Strait of Hormuz, a strategic waterway for global oil shipments.

Reports of tanker attacks in and around the Strait heightened concerns about possible disruptions to global crude oil supplies. Although reports of productive talks between the United States and Iran initially reassured the market, they did not remove concerns about the potential impact of further escalation on oil shipments and supply.

Brent crude traded at \$103.10 per barrel, while the United States benchmark, West Texas Intermediate (WTI), stood at \$90.84 per barrel. Both benchmarks edged lower from their opening levels but remained above their weekly opens, indicating prices maintained their overall upward trend during the period.

FG moves to enforce performance targets for MDAs, cuts business costs

From Collins Olayinka (Abuja) and Isaac Chibuike (Lagos)

THE Federal Government is moving to hold Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) to measurable performance targets, with a proposed framework to eliminate overlapping regulations, multiple fees and bureaucratic delays that increase the cost of doing business.

The Minister of Finance and Coordinating Minister of the Economy, Taiwo Oyedele,

announced the initiative during a strategic engagement with heads of agencies and senior government officials at the Federal Ministry of Finance headquarters in Abuja.

Under the proposed framework, agencies will be required to agree to measurable service-delivery commitments, including faster processing times, compliance with published deadlines and reductions in unnecessary regulatory procedures.

Oyedele said the next phase of Nigeria's economic reforms must address the administrative bottlenecks businesses encounter when dealing with government institutions, arguing that public agencies should facilitate investment and expansion rather than impose avoidable costs on operators.

He urged agencies to remain within their statutory mandates and eliminate duplicate documentation requirements, multiple charges and procedures that impose additional

burdens on businesses.

To address these challenges, the minister proposed a 'One Government' approach under which institutions would coordinate their activities instead of requiring businesses and other applicants to navigate conflicting demands from multiple agencies.

Where regulatory responsibilities overlap, he said, the objective should be to establish one lead agency, one process and one fee.

The proposed changes could reduce the time and administra-

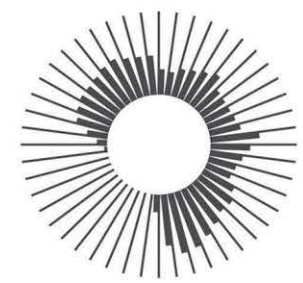
tive expenses businesses incur in obtaining approvals, complying with regulations and accessing government services, although the extent of any savings will depend on the framework's implementation.

Oyedele also called on agencies to consult relevant stakeholders before introducing new regulations, evaluate the economic implications of proposed measures and coordinate with other institutions whose mandates may be affected.

He stressed the need to provide

reasonable notice before major policy or regulatory changes take effect, giving businesses sufficient time to adjust their operations and compliance systems.

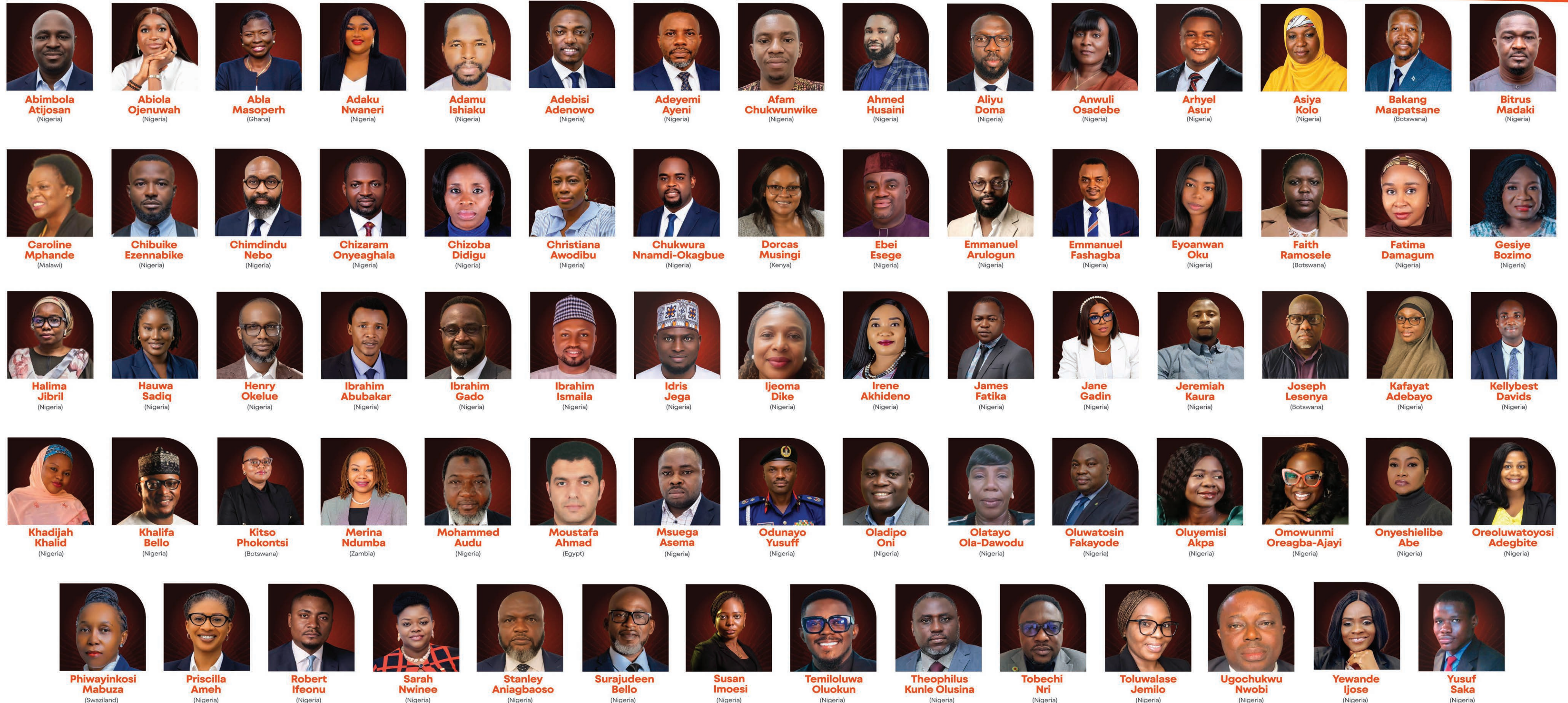
Beyond service delivery, the minister directed agencies to remit government revenues promptly and in full, transfer operating surpluses to the Consolidated Revenue Fund and submit audited accounts in accordance with applicable laws.



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FG unveils digital database to screen government contractors

From Collins Olayinka, Abuja

THE Federal Government is set to unveil a National Database of Contractors, Consultants and Service Providers (NDC CSP) to strengthen the screening, classification and management of companies seeking government contracts.

The Director-General of the Bureau of Public Procurement (BPP), Dr Adebowale Adedokun,

said this in Abuja at a strategic engagement with professional bodies on public procurement reforms and professionalising procurement.

The BPP boss said the initiative, driven by the Bureau of Public Procurement (BPP), is designed to categorise contractors and service providers by technical competence, areas of specialisation, financial capacity, and past per-

formance before they participate in relevant public procurement opportunities.

The database is expected to give government Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) centralised access to information on contractors, including their certifications, financial records, performance history, and compliance status.

Under the new categorisation and classification framework, contractors will no longer be treated as a homogeneous pool of suppliers, as eligibility for specific procurement opportunities will be linked to established capacity and competency criteria.

The BPP said the move aimed to address weaknesses in open participation without structured categorisation, which often results in large numbers of bids from firms with widely varying capacities and experience.

According to the bureau, the previous system made procurement evaluations more time-consuming because procuring entities had to expend significant resources determining which firms were appropriately qualified for specific contracts.

The absence of an integrated contractor-management database also made credential verification, compliance checks and procure-

ment planning more difficult.

The proposed database is expected to provide a pre-validated pool of information that will enable procuring entities to identify companies with relevant experience and demonstrated capacity.

The system will also support digital tender publication and submission, digital contract management and dashboards for relevant stakeholders.

The BPP said the digital transformation would enhance transparency, efficiency and value for money by reducing paperwork, automating procurement workflows and providing real-time access to tender information and

audit trails.

Rather than relying mainly on documents submitted for individual tenders, the central database is expected to give the government a more comprehensive picture of a contractor's capacity, compliance record and performance history.

The BPP said the digital initiatives align with the Public Procurement Act 2007, particularly Section 6(1), which empowers the bureau to maintain a national database of federal contractors and service providers and prescribe classifications and categorisations for companies on the register.

FCMB upgrades digital banking, rewards customers

FIRST City Monument Bank (FCMB) has expanded its digital banking features and introduced customer rewards to improve service delivery and make transactions more convenient.

The bank's initiatives include expanded authentication options through its Temi chatbot and the integration of electronic transaction verification tokens into customer receipts, giving customers another way to access transaction details without relying solely on SMS notifications.

The improvements formed part of the bank's customer engagement efforts around the 2026 Customer Service Week, held from October 5 to 9 under the theme, "The Extra Mile."

FCMB said the digital enhancements were designed to make

banking more accessible, responsive and convenient, while improving how customers interact with its services.

FCMB Managing Director, Yemisi Edun, who said customer service remained central to the bank's approach to product development, technology deployment and customer relations, added: "At FCMB, customer service is a continuous commitment that shapes how we design our products, deploy technology and engage with our customers."

Executive Director, Corporate Services and Service Management, Felicia Obozuwa, said the bank was working to build a culture in which employees consistently identify ways to improve customer experiences.



Head, Custody Services, Rand Merchant Bank; Mrs Regina Asala (left); Managing Director, Berkshire Asset Management Limited; Adetola Odusote; Managing Director, CFG Africa Trustees Limited; Akindele Ogundepo and Managing Director, Cordros Registrars, Bridget Bayo-Ajayi at the signing ceremony of the Berkshire Money Market Fund held at Blue Rock, Victoria Island, Lagos....recently.

Fidelity urges businesses to adopt technology, control costs

By Adaku Onyenuchey

FIDELITY Bank has urged Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) in Lagos to adopt reliable digital solutions, strengthen their business structures, improve financial record management, manage operating costs, and explore new markets to remain profitable and achieve sustainable growth amid rising costs, intense competition, and changing consumer

demands.

The Bank stated this during its SME Business Forum Lagos edition, with the theme: "Build to Compete: Positioning Lagos Businesses for Sustainable Growth," which brought together entrepreneurs, large business owners and specialists as well as government representatives to discuss digital transformation, trade, financing and strategies for strengthening SMEs in the state.

Berkshire opens money market fund with N10,000 minimum investments

By Isaac Chibuike

BERKSHIRE Asset Management Limited will open subscriptions for its money market fund today, October 12, allowing investors to participate with a minimum of N10,000.

The Berkshire Money Market Fund is an open-ended unit trust offering two billion units at N1 each. The company unveiled the fund and signed its prospectus at a ceremony in Lagos on Friday.

Investors can subscribe for a minimum of 10,000 units,

while additional investments must be in multiples of 5,000 units. The fund is open to retail investors, high net worth individuals, and domestic and foreign institutional investors.

Registered with the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC), the fund will invest mainly in short-term, investment-grade money market instruments. Its performance will be benchmarked against the average yield on 91-day Nigerian Treasury Bills, with capital preservation, liquidity and income generation as its pri-

mary objectives.

The fund has CFG Africa Trustees Limited as trustee, Rand Merchant Bank Nigeria Limited as custodian, and Cordros Registrars Limited as registrar. The fund is also rated by DataPro Limited and audited by Ijewere & Co.

Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer, Adetola Odusote, said the fund would use technology to pool investments from individuals and channel them into short-term debt instruments.

"Investors should not necessar-

ily need to be an expert in the financial markets to begin the journey towards better financial outcomes," he said.

Odusote said the company's investment approach focused on long-term wealth creation, execution and capital preservation. He identified technology, partnerships, advocacy and sustainability as the four pillars of its strategy.

He also cited the growth of the middle class, pension assets and digital investment platforms as factors shaping Nigeria's investment market.

New Customs-Licensed Bonded Warehouse in Abuja Brings Cargo Processing Inland

TRINU Bonded Warehouse, a subsidiary of Sirlyon Limited, has commissioned a customs-licensed bonded warehouse in Kuje, Abuja, adding inland storage, processing, and clearance capacity for imported cargo destined for the Federal Capital Territory and Northern Nigeria.

Today, cargo destined for Abuja and the North is largely handled at the seaports in Lagos and Port Harcourt before it travels inland. TRINU offers importers, freight forwarders and clearing agents a different route: cargo transferred under Customs bond to Abuja, held in a secure facility, and cleared closer to the market where it will be sold.

"TRINU was built around a simple observation: businesses shouldn't have to keep moving back and forth to where their cargo isn't ultimately going," said Bilal Ajijola, CEO of TRINU Bonded Warehouse. "By creating a secure, customs-licensed facility in Abuja, we're bringing more of that

process closer to where the goods are actually needed. You store, process and clear your cargo closer to its destination."

The facility, with capacity for about 700 containers in Kuje, provides container and general cargo storage, customs documentation, clearance support, cargo handling, consolidation, and on-site office accommodation for Customs and other regulatory agencies.

The launch comes as the Nigeria Customs Service modernises clearance through its B'Odogwu digital platform, and as importers look for ways to move more cargo processing away from the seaports and closer to inland markets.

"Our ambition is to build more than a warehouse," Ajijola added. "We want TRINU to become an important inland gateway for trade into Abuja and Northern Nigeria, connecting businesses to global markets while making the movement of goods more efficient, secure and accessible."

Insurance reforms shift to operators' performance appraisal

By Bankole Orimisan

AFTER the successful completion of the sector's recapitalisation exercise, attention is fast shifting to whether stronger balance sheets will improve insurers' capacity to absorb major risks, protect policyholders, and deepen insurance penetration in the country.

As the National Insurance Commission (NAICOM) begins issuing new licences to compliant operators, attention is shifting from capital mobilisation to performance, as the industry faces the tougher challenge of restoring public confidence, expanding insurance penetration, and demonstrating that recapitalisation can deliver tangible benefits to policyholders and the wider economy.

The exercise, which formally closed on July 31, 2026, has also significantly altered the indus-

try's competitive structure. According to NAICOM, the recapitalisation exercise mobilised about N1.079 trillion, comprising fresh capital and existing funds that strengthened operators' financial positions.

But as the industry enters the post-recapitalisation era, questions are increasingly being raised about whether the new capital will translate into better underwriting capacity, faster claims settlement, greater domestic retention of risks and, ultimately, wider insurance coverage.

For an industry whose penetration remained below one per cent, the reform's significance therefore extends beyond balance sheets.

The Commissioner for Insurance, Olusegun Omoshin, said additional capital must create the capacity to

underwrite larger and more complex risks, pay claims, innovate, improve customer experience, and retain more risks in Nigeria.

He also identified claims payment as one of the most visible measures of insurance value to policyholders.

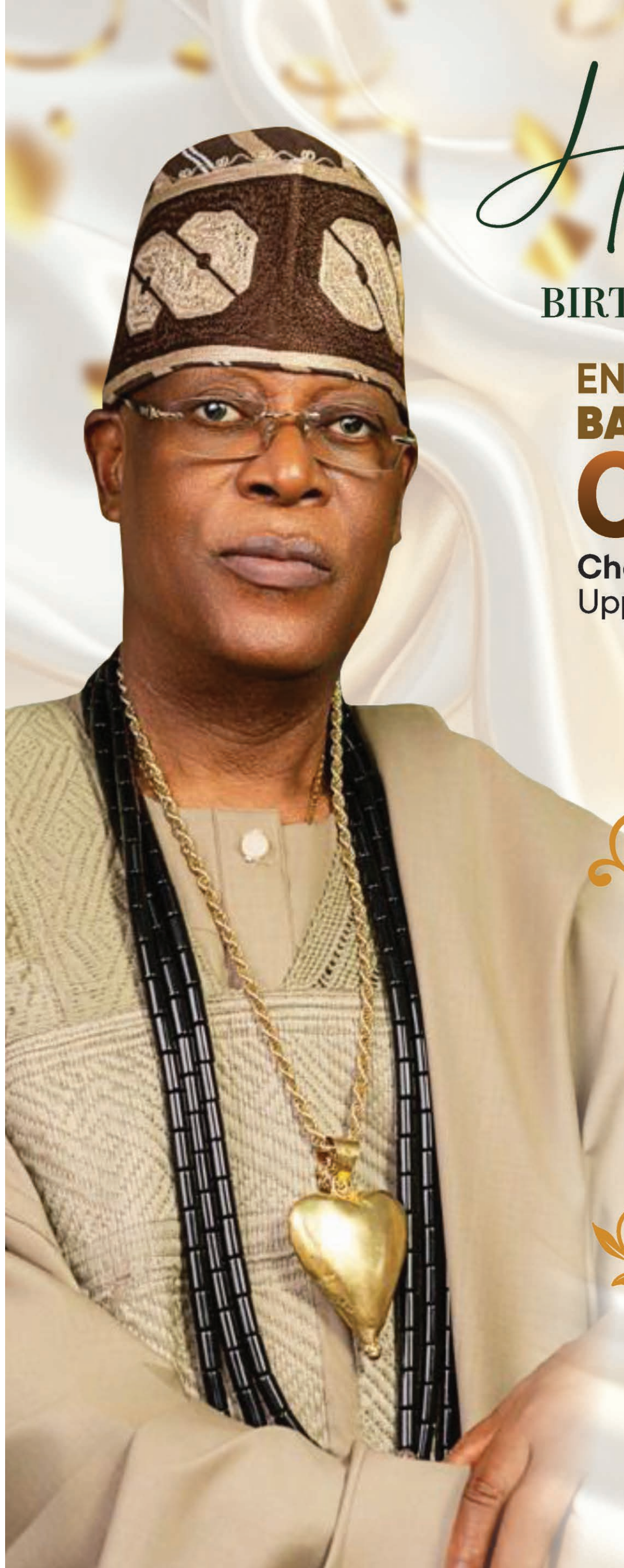
For years, the debate around insurance capacity has centred on inadequate capital, weak balance sheets, and local operators' inability to retain substantial portions of major oil and gas, aviation, marine, infrastructure, and other specialised risks.

The new capital base should give insurers greater financial capacity to compete for such risks. It could also reduce excessive dependence on foreign markets and keep more insurance premiums and risk-management expertise within the domestic economy.

The industry still faces a trust deficit, limited consumer awareness, affordability constraints, weak distribution networks, and concerns around the speed and experience of claims settlement. These challenges matter because, for most customers, the ultimate measure of an insurance policy is what happens when a loss occurs.

The NIA Chairman, Ebelechukwu Nwachukwu, acknowledged this broader challenge, saying the reform should strengthen market conduct, consumer confidence, innovation, and the industry's contribution to the economy.

Nwachukwu described the recapitalisation as a foundation for stronger players with the capacity to underwrite large and complex risks, mobilise long-term capital and invest in digital transformation.

A portrait of Engr. Babatunde Adewale Odufuwa, a man with glasses, wearing a traditional brown and gold patterned cap and a light-colored traditional garment with a large gold heart pendant. The background is a soft-focus image of white plates with gold confetti.

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ODUFUWA

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A BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION OF AN EXCEPTIONAL LEADER

Dr. Okonkwo
Founder, Nedcomoarks

On behalf of the Board, Management, and entire Staff of Nedcomoarks, we join the world to celebrate an icon, a visionary, and a leader par excellence on the occasion of your birthday.

Working with you has taught us that leadership is not just about giving instructions, it is about inspiring conviction. You do not merely build houses, you build people. You do not just set targets, you raise standards. Your pursuit of excellence, your uncompromising integrity, your eye for detail, and your relentless drive have transformed Nedcomoarks from a name into a benchmark for quality in the real estate sector. You are demanding because you believe in us. You are firm because you see the best in us. And you are kind because you lead from the heart.

Many of us came as staff, but under your mentorship, we have become professionals, leaders, and better versions of ourselves.

Today, we do not just celebrate your new age, we celebrate your ideas that have become estates, your values that have become our culture, and your vision that has become our collective mission.

May this new year bring you robust health, renewed vigour, greater wisdom, and the fulfilment of every noble desire you hold for Nedcomoarks and for humanity. Thank you for the privilege of serving this dream with you.

Happy Birthday, Sir!

With profound respect and warmest wishes.

All Staff & Management
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2026
ANNUAL REUNION
PUBLIC LECTURE

THEME:
"FROM NOBEL TO THE THALIA:
THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF GCI TO THE
DEVELOPMENT OF NATIONAL THEATER"

Chairman
BANWO SMITH
(1959 Set, School No. 1104, Field House)

Guest Of Honour
WOLE SOYINKA
(1946 Set, School No. 482, Grier House)

Keynote Speaker
FEMI OSOFISAN
(1959 Set, School No. 1100, Field House)

Date: 14th October, 2026. **Time:** 11:00am
Venue: Shell Hall, MUSON Center, Onikan, Lagos

**SPECIAL RECOGNITION OF PROMINENT CONTRIBUTORS
TO THE ARTS FROM GOVERNMENT COLLEGE IBADAN**

TIMOTHY MOFOLORUNSO ALUKO 1933 Set, Sch. No. 165, Grier House.	DAPO ADELUGBA 1951 Set, Sch. No. 675 Swanston House.
BENEDICT CHUKWUKADIBIA ENWONU 1934 Set, Sch. No. 187, Swanston House	ROWLAND ABIODUN 1955 Set, Sch. No. 922, Swanston House.
CYPRIAN EKWENSI 1936 Set, Sch. No. 224, Swanston House.	FEMI OSOFISAN 1959 Set, Sch. No. 1100, Field House.
CHRISTOPHER KOLADE 1946 Set, Sch. No. 473, Swanston House.	BODE SOWANDE 1962 Set, Sch. No. 1304, Field House.
WOLE SOYINKA 1946 Set, Sch. No. 482, Grier House.	BISADE OLOGUNDE (LAGBAJA) 1972 Set School No. 2480 Field House.

OLAWALE BABALAKIN
1971 Set, Sch. No. 2273, Grier House.
GCIoba President



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Chief Onome Okodiya, SAN

on your well-deserved elevation to the
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excellence continue to inspire us all and we
are immensely proud to be associated with you.

Our prayer today is that this new rank brings
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achievements at the Inner Bar and beyond.

***Congratulations
Learned Silk!***



Specific Procurement Notice Request for Bids- Goods (One-Envelope Bidding Process)

Country: Nigeria
Issued on: 12th October, 2026
Name of Project: Accelerating Nutrition Results in Nigeria. 2.0.-
 Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security.

Contract Title: Establishment Of Homestead Gardens
 Livestock: - **Layer Birds and Broilers**

Lot1: Benue, Ebonyi, Kogi, Kwara, Nasarawa,
 Niger, Osun.
 Lot2: Kaduna, Kano, Katsina Kebbi, Jigawa,
 Sokoto, Zamfara.
 Lot3: Adamawa, Bauchi, Borno, Gombe, Plateau,
 Taraba, Yobe.

Credit No.: CR-IDA-77440
RFB Reference No.: RFB NO: NG-PMU-2.0-571496-GO-RFB

1. The Federal Government of Nigeria has received financing from the World Bank toward the cost of the Accelerating Nutrition Results in Nigeria (ANRIN) Project 2.0 and intends to apply part of the proceeds toward payments under the contract for Establishment of Homestead Gardens Livestock:- **Layer Birds and Broilers** For this contract, the Borrower shall process the payments using the Direct Payment disbursement method, as defined in the World Bank's Disbursement Guidelines for Investment Project Financing, except for those payments which the contract provides to be made through letter of credit.
2. The Federal Ministry of Agriculture & Food Security - Accelerating Nutrition Results in Nigeria (ANRIN 2.0) Project now invites sealed Bids from eligible Bidders for the Procurement of Homestead Gardens Livestock: - **Layer birds and Broilers**. The descriptions of goods are provided in Section II –Bid data sheet (BDS) ITB1.1 and the distribution to end lines is on Annex1 attached to the bidding document.
3. Bidding will be conducted through **Open National Competitive Bidding** procurement using a Request for Bids (RFB) as specified in the World Bank's "Procurement Regulations for IPF Borrowers" February, 2025 ("Procurement Regulations") and is open to all eligible Bidders as defined in the Procurement Regulations.
4. Interested eligible Bidders may obtain further information from Federal Ministry of Agriculture & Food Security - Accelerating Nutrition Results in Nigeria (ANRIN 2.0) Project: Dr. Dogara Okara - National Project Manager. **e-mail:** okaradb@gmail.com and inspect the bidding document during office hours 0900 to 1700 hours at the address given below.

5. The bidding document in English may be purchased by interested Bidders upon the submission of a written application to the address below and upon payment of a nonrefundable fee of **N75,000.00** The method of payment will be Direct Bank transfer/deposit to:

Account Name: Federal Ministry of Health
 Accelerating Nutrition Results in
 Nigeria Project (ANRiN) Project Draw
 Down Account

Account Number: 0020096761199

NUBAN Number: 3000099736

Bank Name: Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN)

NOTE

Please use your Company Account details to make the transfer. All bidders are mandated to purchase the bidding document as described in paragraph 6 above. The evidence of payment for the bidding document must be attached to the bid submission. **Bid(s) submitted without evidence of payment for bidding document and without bid security shall be rejected.** The bidding document can be accessed at: www.anrinproject.com.ng. Any prospective Bidder that encounters difficulty in making payment should reach out to the Project immediately.

6. Bids must be delivered to the address below on or before **9th November 2026**. Electronic Bidding will not be permitted. Late Bids will be rejected. Bids will be publicly opened in the presence of the Bidders' designated representatives and anyone who chooses to attend at the address below on **9th November 2026. at 12:00pm.**
7. All Bids must be accompanied by a **Bid Security Lot 1: USD 32,000 Lot 2: USD 32,000 Lot 3: USD 32,000 (or equivalent in any convertible currency) from a Commercial Bank.**
8. Attention is drawn to the Procurement Regulations requiring the Borrower to disclose information on the successful bidder's beneficial ownership, as part of the Contract Award Notice, using the Beneficial Ownership Disclosure Form as included in the bidding document.
9. The address referred to above is:
Accelerating Nutrition Results in Nigeria (ANRiN 2.0) Project,
Attn: - Dr. Dogara Okara– National Project Manager,
Project Management Unit,
No. 21B Agadez Crescent Wuse 2, Abuja FCT, Nigeria.
Tel: +234-8034504889 & +2348034502133
E-mail: okaradb@gmail.com & alikalikom@yahoo.com
anrinpmu@anrinproject.com.ng



Specific Procurement Notice Request for Bids- Goods (One-Envelope Bidding Process)

Country: Nigeria
Issued on: 12th October 2026
Name of Project: Accelerating Nutrition Results in Nigeria. 2.0.-
 Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security.

Contract Title: Establishment of Homestead Gardens: Crop Seeds & Seedlings:

Lot 1: Benue, Ebonyi, Kogi, Kwara, Nasarawa, Niger, Osun.
 Lot 2: Kaduna, Kano, Katsina, Kebbi, Jigawa, Sokoto, Zamfara.
 Lot 3: Adamawa, Bauchi, Borno, Gombe, Plateau, Taraba, Yobe.

Credit No.: CR-IDA-77440

RFB Reference No.: RFB NO: NG-PMU-2.0.571504-GO-RFB

1. The Federal Government of Nigeria has received financing from the World Bank toward the cost of the Accelerating Nutrition Results in Nigeria (ANRIN) Project 2.0 and intends to apply part of the proceeds toward payments under the contract for the Establishment of Homestead Gardens (**Crop Seeds & Seedlings**). For this contract, the Borrower shall process the payments using the Direct Payment disbursement method, as defined in the World Bank's Disbursement Guidelines for Investment Project Financing, except for those payments, which the contract provides to be made through letter of credit.

2. The Federal Ministry of Agriculture & Food Security - Accelerating Nutrition Results in Nigeria (ANRIN 2.0) Project now invites sealed Bids from eligible Bidders for the Procurement of **Crop Seed & Seedlings**. The descriptions of goods are provided in Section II – Bid data sheet (BDS) ITB1.1 and the distribution to end lines is on Annex1 attached to the bidding document.

3. Bidding will be conducted through **Open National Competitive bidding** procurement using a Request for Bids (RFB) as specified in the World Bank's "Procurement Regulations for IPF Borrowers," February 2025 ("Procurement Regulations") and is open to all eligible Bidders as defined in the Procurement Regulations.

4. Interested eligible Bidders may obtain further information from Federal Ministry of Agriculture & Food Security - Accelerating Nutrition Results in Nigeria (ANRIN 2.0) Project: Dr. Dogara Okara - National Project Manager. **e-mail:** okaradb@gmail.com and inspect the bidding document during office hours 0900 to 1700 hours at the address given below.

5. The bidding document in English may be purchased by interested Bidders upon the submission of a written application to the address below and upon payment of a nonrefundable fee of **N75,000.00**. The method of payment will be Direct Bank transfer/deposit to:

Account Name: Federal Ministry of Health Accelerating Nutrition Results in Nigeria Project (ANRiN)
 Project Draw Down Account

Account Number: 0020096761199

NUBAN Number: 3000099736

Bank Name: Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN)

NOTE

Please use your Company Account details to make the transfer.

All bidders are mandated to purchase the bidding document as described in paragraph 6 above.

The evidence of payment for the bidding document must be attached to the bid submission.

Bid(s) submitted without evidence of payment for the bidding document and without bid security shall be rejected.

The bidding document can be accessed at:
www.anrinproject.com.ng.

Any prospective Bidder that encounters difficulty in making payment should reach out to the Project immediately.

6. Bids must be delivered to the address below on or before **9th November 2026**. Electronic Bidding will not be permitted.

Late Bids will be rejected. Bids will be publicly opened in the presence of the Bidders' designated representatives and anyone who chooses to attend at the address below on **9th November 2026 at 12:00 pm**.

7. All Bids must be accompanied by **Bid Security Lot 1: USD 13,719. Lot 2: USD 13,719. Lot 3: USD 13,719 (or equivalent in any convertible currency) from a Commercial Bank.**

8. Attention is drawn to the Procurement Regulations requiring the Borrower to disclose information on the successful bidder's beneficial ownership, as part of the Contract Award Notice, using the Beneficial Ownership Disclosure Form as included in the bidding document.

9. The address referred to above is:

Accelerating Nutrition Results in Nigeria (ANRiN 2.0) Project,
Attn: - Dr. Dogara Okara – National Project Manager,
Project Management Unit,

No. 21B Agadez Crescent Wuse 2, Abuja FCT, Nigeria.

Tel: +234-8034504889 & +2348034502133

E-mail: okaradb@gmail.com, alikaliom@yahoo.com,
anrinpmu@anrinproject.com.ng

Will states' tenancy laws rein in rent hikes, abuses?

With rising rents pushing affordable housing out of reach for many Nigerians, many states are enacting tenancy laws to regulate rents, define landlord-tenant relationships, and curb abuses by property agents. Experts welcome the move to curb fraud and protect tenants, but caution against regulations that could discourage investment, urging governments to balance renters' protection with landlords' legitimate interests, VICTOR GBONEGUN reports.



Aba...one of the cities affected by housing shortage.

AS rising rents, arbitrary increases and disputes between landlords and tenants deepen Nigeria's housing crisis, state governments are turning to tenancy laws to regulate rental transactions, protect occupants and curb unprofessional practices in the property market.

The measures seek to address longstanding complaints about excessive rent advances, arbitrary eviction, exploitative agency charges and the absence of clear agreements governing landlord-tenant relationships.

In major cities, rising accommodation costs are forcing low- and middle-income earners to relocate to distant suburbs or live in overcrowded conditions. Tenancy laws are increasingly seen as instruments for promoting transparency, defining the rights and obligations of both parties, and providing legal channels for resolving disputes.

However, weak enforcement, limited public awareness, lengthy dispute-resolution processes and unregistered estate agents continue to undermine efforts to sanitise the rental market. In major city centres, a self-contained apartment costs between N800,000 and N2 million, while a one-bedroom flat ranges from N2.5 million to N3 million and two- or three-bedroom apartments cost between N3 million and N5 million yearly, depending on location.

In some cases, landlords demand two to three years' rent upfront or evict tenants without following due process. Agents also impose excessive agency, legal and caution fees, sometimes without receipts, while some pressure landlords to increase rents to boost their commissions.

Over the past two to three years, states including Abia, Ebonyi, Kogi, Lagos, Ogun, Anambra and Enugu have either passed tenancy laws or initiated legislation to regulate the rental market. Efforts to introduce rent-control measures in the Federal Capital Territory have yet to produce a law, despite a previous call by the House of Representatives for the administration to regulate the system.

The Guardian learnt that some states are considering provisions to cap agency fees at 10 per cent and limit advance rent payments to one year. Other proposals include legal fees capped at five per cent, prescribed notice periods and special rent tribunals to resolve disputes expeditiously.

Common provisions in the laws and bills include restrictions on advance rent payments, safeguards against arbitrary increases and prohibitions on forceful eviction. Some proposals also prescribe notice periods for terminating tenancies, criminalise harassment and the disconnection of utilities as a means of forcing tenants out, and

require written rent receipts.

Other measures seek to cap agency and legal fees and require property practitioners to register with state regulatory authorities. The legislation also outlines landlords' responsibilities for property maintenance and establishes procedures for recovering possession.

In Kogi State, the proposed Tenancy Law 2025 is expected to regulate rent increases, agency charges and tenancy arrangements while protecting landlords and tenants. The bill also seeks to regulate estate agents and introduce safeguards for parties to tenancy agreements.

In Ebonyi State, the House of Assembly recently passed the Bill Regulating House Rent, Agent Fees and Scrap Trade. The legislation caps agency fees for real estate transactions at two per cent of the gross transaction value for both professional and non-professional agents.

Similarly, the Abia State House of Assembly recently passed the Abia Property and Tenancy Bill, which seeks to regulate property transactions, protect landlords and tenants, and sanitise estate agency practice. It provides for the establishment of the Abia State Property and Tenancy Regulatory Authority, subject to the governor's assent.

The bill requires property agents to register with the authority and caps agency fees at five per cent of the total rent payable. Unlicensed agents could face fines ranging from N1 million to N10 million, while agents found guilty of defrauding clients could face six to seven years' imprisonment.

Some professionals have, however, raised concerns that certain proposed provisions could undermine the regulatory authority of the Estate Surveyors and Valuers Registration Board of Nigeria (ESVARBON) by failing to exempt estate surveyors and valuers from their requirements.

The Chairman of the Faculty of Estate Agency and Marketing of the Nigerian Institution of Estate Surveyors and Valuers (NIESV), Mr Yemi Stephens, said state governments were responding to sharp rent increases, excessive tenant charges and unilateral hikes with little room for negotiation.

"What the states are doing is establishing clearer rules on rent increases, payment arrangements, notice periods and tenancy renewals. Inflation and rising rents have made decent accommodation increasingly unaffordable for the average citizen, leaving access largely to the wealthy.

"Government has a responsibility to ensure that basic needs, including housing, food and clothing, are accessible and affordable. The rapid increase in rents is the biggest driver of states enacting tenancy laws," he said.

Beyond protecting tenants from arbitrary eviction, Stephens said the laws should regulate how landlords recover possession, including the notice periods and procedures required before legal proceedings can begin. He stressed, however, that governments must address the shortage of affordable housing to achieve lasting relief.

He warned that implementing rent regulations could prove difficult amid the nationwide housing deficit and the high cost of construction. Developers often rely on loans with double-digit interest rates and incur substantial expenses obtaining building plans and statutory approvals.

"Controlling rents in major city centres, especially in properties built by private developers, will be difficult. As long as housing supply remains inadequate, landlords will seek to recoup their investments, and rents will continue to rise.

"Although the law may not significantly discourage investment in rental housing, it could deter developers from undertaking large-scale residential projects," Stephens said.

He urged the government to expand access to affordable, long-term mortgages and strengthen financing mechanisms to support homeownership and housing delivery.

"The advocacy for affordable mortgages should be intensified, and something better than the Ministry of Finance Incorporated (MOFI) and the Ministry of Finance Incorporated Real Estate Investment Fund (MREIF) should be developed. Housing development cannot be left entirely to private individuals, who expect returns on their investments.

"Government must demonstrate genuine commitment to intervention in the prop-

erty market and ensure that tenancy laws are effectively implemented," he said.

Stephens argued that greater public investment in housing could ease the crisis, adding that funds allocated to major infrastructure projects, such as the Lagos-Calabar coastal highway, could otherwise deliver substantial numbers of affordable homes across the states.

The immediate past Chairman of NIESV, Kogi State branch, Mr Apeh Philips, said the private sector's dominance of housing supply made rent increases likely, even in old properties. He noted that landlords often raise rents simply because others in the area have done so, worsening tenants' financial burdens. He expressed optimism that the new laws could restore order to the rental market.

Philips said the legislation should protect both landlords and tenants by providing remedies for maltreatment, rent defaults and other breaches of tenancy agreements.

"It is hoped that the law will address issues such as when a landlord is maltreating a tenant. And when a tenant is misbehaving with the landlord's property by failing to pay rent as and when due or absconding without paying, the law should help minimise the problem. There should be a place where you can go and receive prompt judgment," he said.

He disclosed that the Kogi State House of Assembly was working on a new tenancy law and consulting professionals, including the state branch of NIESV. The proposed legislation is expected to address rent demands, regulatory oversight and the establishment of a board or agency to oversee registration and compliance.

"Our members have been attending meetings at the House of Assembly to ensure that whatever should be included is put in place," he added.

A Professor of Estate Management and Valuation, Olurotimi Kemiki, recalled that previous state governments had introduced rent-control edicts, but many failed because of poor implementation.

"Some of those laws still exist, but they became practically impossible to implement because these houses you are regulating, you're not the owner of those commodities. If you are regulating the housing market and prices, or how landlords should treat tenants and how tenants relate with landlords, then you have to do the same to other commodities," he said.

Kemiki said government intervention was necessary to curb fraud by unregulated roadside agents who exploit prospective tenants by collecting rent without securing accommodation or imposing excessive charges.

"Some of them will collect rent; they will never deliver the house. Some collect a fee from a prospective tenant. For instance, a one-bedroom flat rents for N1 million, but they can tell you the total package is N2.2 million. How do you explain paying N2.2 million for a house that costs N1 million when it is not a serviced apartment?" he asked.

The former NIESV national secretary said government should protect tenants from fraudulent agents while recognising that registered professional estate surveyors and valuers are already regulated by law.

He cautioned against regulations that could discourage property investment, arguing that restrictions on rents would have limited impact if housing shortages remained unresolved.

Read the remaining story on
www.guardian.ng

“Some of those laws still exist, but they became practically impossible to implement because these houses you are regulating, you're not the owner of those commodities. If you are regulating the housing market and prices, or how landlords should treat tenants and how tenants relate with landlords, then you have to do the same to other commodities.”

Society commits to technology transfer in HVAC&R sector

By Victor Gbonegun

THE American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air-Conditioning Engineers (ASHRAE), Nigeria Chapter, has reiterated its commitment to expanding investment, technology transfer and professional collaboration in the heating, ventilation, air-conditioning and refrigeration (HVAC&R) sector.

President of the chapter, Lookman Olatinwo, an engineer, made this known at the ongoing 2026 ASHRAE Region-at-Large (RAL) Chapters Regional Conference in Cairo, Egypt.

The conference brings together technical professionals, industry leaders and stakeholders from across the region to exchange knowledge, develop leadership and discuss sustainable cooling and the future of the built environment.

Olatinwo said Nigeria's participation would help showcase its growing HVAC&R market and strengthen relationships with international manufacturers, technology

providers, engineering firms, investors and professional organisations.

He said the growing demand for energy-efficient cooling, refrigeration, cold-chain infrastructure, indoor air quality solutions and sustainable buildings presented significant opportunities for investment and technology deployment.

"We want to strengthen technical collaboration, expose our professionals to international best practices and encourage global HVAC&R companies to look more closely at Nigeria as an important market for investment, partnerships and technology deployment," he said.

Olatinwo said ASHRAE's international network could strengthen links between Nigeria's expanding market and the global HVAC&R industry, creating opportunities for international companies seeking local partners, distributors and investment prospects.

He added that Nigerian engineers, contractors and businesses would also benefit

from greater exposure to international technologies and expertise.

"Nigeria's large population, expanding cities, increasing demand for cooling and refrigeration, growing real

estate and infrastructure sectors, and the need for more energy-efficient buildings create significant opportunities across the HVAC&R value chain," he said.

Lagos hospitality market finds new growth in experience-driven retreats

By Chinedum Uwaegbulam

THE hospitality landscape in Lagos is changing as rising hotel rates, constrained new supply and growing demand for short-term accommodation create room for a new generation of hospitality developments built around experience, privacy, wellness and corporate engagement.

For decades, the conventional model of hospitality in Lagos revolved largely around hotels, conference rooms, restaurants and accommodation. But developers and operators are increasingly exploring smaller, more specialised facilities that combine several of these functions in a single environment.

The trend is being reinforced by the performance of the formal hotel market. Data from Estate

Intel's Lagos Real Estate Development Pipeline Report 2025/2026 showed that average daily hotel rates in Lagos rose from N83,105 in 2023 to N205,534 by October 2025. Hotel occupancy stood at 66.7 per cent during the same period.

The figures point to a market where demand has been recovering faster than new high-quality accommodation is being delivered. According to the Estate Intel report, more than a third of the hotel development pipeline had been put on hold, with rising construction costs and broader macroeconomic pressures affecting the delivery of new projects.

Planners urge shift to people-centred urban development

By Victor Gbonegun

TOWN planners have urged professionals to move beyond punitive, approval-focused development control to a proactive, people-centred system that guides sustainable urban development.

A former President of the Nigerian Institute of Town Planners (NITP), Waheed Kadiri, made the call at the 2026 Young Planners Forum (YPF) Week and yearly general meeting in Lagos, themed "Beyond Control: Repositioning Town Planning for Sustainable Physical Development".

Kadiri, a former Rector of Moshood Abiola Polytechnic (MAPOLY), urged practitioners to prioritise guidance and compliance before enforcement, stressing that planning must go beyond marking buildings for violations.

"Planning must be an all-time issue, and control should not dictate our activities but serve as a tool. We must move from cooperation to collaboration and uphold integrity and professional ethics," he said.

He advised young planners to master the profession, embrace data-driven planning, strengthen their financial capacity and understand its business dimension. While technology was essential, he said, it could not

replace leadership and good governance.

The outgoing YPF Coordinator, Bashiru Idris, said development control alone could not build good cities, urging planners to shape development through proactive plans, reliable data and public-interest-driven practice.

He highlighted the forum's achievements, including nine editions of the Young Planners' Series featuring local and international academics and professionals.

Idris urged the incoming executives to complete the review of the forum's operational guidelines, launch its website, digitise its membership database, secure sustainable funding and establish a permanent office.

A representative of the Town Planners Registration Council of Nigeria (TOPREC), Adebisi Ogunlewe, decried poor coordination across planning, housing, transportation, water and power sectors, saying fragmented governance delayed plan implementation, wasted resources and undermined environmental sustainability.

He urged planners to expand their focus beyond development control, strengthen collaboration with government, investors and other built-environment professionals, and promote inclusive planning through wider consultation.

Engineers pledge stronger partnerships, professional excellence

From Lawrence Njoku, Enugu

THE Nigeria Society of Engineers (NSE), Enugu State branch, has pledged to promote professional excellence and strengthen partnerships with government, industry and other stakeholders to improve infrastructure development.

The branch Chairman, Loveday Osondu, stated this when members met the state Commissioner for Works and Infrastructure, Ben Okoh. Osondu said his administration was committed to repositioning the profession through technical expertise, high standards, capacity development and constructive engagement.

"We are not merely a professional body but partners sharing responsibility for Enugu State's development. Our expertise can contribute meaningfully to the state government's vision and programmes," he said.

He called for stronger collaboration with the ministry to improve the planning, design, execution, supervision and maintenance of public infrastructure, stressing the need for accountability, quality

workmanship and innovation.

Osondu also pledged to create opportunities for young engineers to develop professionally and contribute to society.

Responding, Okoh congratulated the new executive and urged members to uphold the profession's reputation, noting that engineers were expected to provide solutions to the country's infrastructure challenges.

He said the state government recognised engineers' contributions, reflected in the appointment of qualified professionals to the Peter Mbah administration and their employment in the Ministry of Works and Infrastructure.

Okoh urged engineers to work together to ensure the success of next year's engineering conference scheduled to be held in Enugu, saying it could open opportunities for the South-East to host more professional gatherings.

He challenged the NSE to make the conference exceptional, adding that the state had adequate facilities to host a landmark event.



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PUBLIC NOTICE

GENERAL INVITATION TO ROUND-TABLE DISCUSSIONS AND AMICABLE SETTLEMENT ISSUED WITH THE AUTHORISATION OF PWAN GROUP

PWAN Group sincerely regrets the hardship and disappointment experienced by customers, investors and business partners whose transactions remain unresolved. We offer our sincere apologies and reaffirm our commitment to addressing outstanding matters.

IN THE SPIRIT OF PEACE, GOOD FAITH AND RECONCILIATION, PWAN Group hereby invites all affected persons—including those who have approached or are considering approaching the courts, the Police, law-enforcement agencies or other relevant authorities, and those with pending cases—to a round-table discussion aimed at exploring practical and mutually acceptable settlements. This invitation is made pursuant to Section 70(3) and (4) of the Arbitration and Mediation Act, 2023, which recognise the proposal of mediation during pending judicial proceedings and the recommendation of mediation by a body conducting such proceedings where appropriate. We respectfully encourage dialogue before further adversarial steps are taken, where appropriate. This invitation does not require anyone to abandon a lawful complaint, withdraw proceedings or surrender any legal right. Any settlement will be subject to mutual agreement and applicable law.

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Please submit your full name, contact details, relevant agreements, proof of payment and particulars of your outstanding matter for proper documentation and review. We earnestly appeal to all affected stakeholders to give peaceful dialogue an opportunity. We remain committed to constructive engagement, accountability and the pursuit of lawful resolutions.

LET US COME TO THE TABLE AND WORK TOWARDS RESOLUTION. ISSUED FOR AND ON BEHALF OF PWAN GROUP BY THE AUTHORITY OF

DR. AUGUSTINE OZIOMA ONWUMERE
Founder & Founding Chairman, PWAN Group

9 OCTOBER 2026



Experts seek reforestation to strengthen conservation in protected areas

By Favour Udezue

ENVIRONMENTALISTS have called for reforestation, technology integration and community participation to strengthen conservation efforts in protected areas across the country.

They made the call at a webinar themed “Scaling Conservation Impact: Lessons from the Field”, organised by the Nigerian Environmental Study Action Team (NEST) to explore ways to improve biodiversity conservation, present recent research findings on the status of Hooded Vultures and promote national and community action.

The call follows growing threats to vulture species and the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List released in July 2026, which highlighted more than 500 threatened, endangered and vulnerable Nigerian species.

The experts identified forest loss as a major challenge, stressing the need for a national conservation committee, the integration of science and technology, sustainable management of protected areas and effective fundraising mechanisms.

They also advocated greater community involvement through public enlightenment on the value of trees and financial incentives

linked to the benefits derived from protected areas.

Speaking on “Emerging Technologies and Impact on Community Conservation Action”, the President of Conservation Allies, Dr Paul Salaman, said Nigeria had recorded significant conservation gains, with seven national parks and 13.96 per cent of its land and inland water areas under formal protection providing a foundation for national conservation efforts.

The Chair of the IUCN United States Fund noted that Nigeria had the biodiversity, scientists, protected

areas and conservation leaders needed to advance conservation, but required clear priorities for protecting key species, adequate funding and wider implementation of successful initiatives.

“Reforestation and protected areas are some of the best tools we have. Justifying these interventions through species conservation and science is important. Planting trees is also a good way to create employment and restore degraded areas within or outside protected areas,” he said.

Salaman, however, stressed that conservation efforts must account for the long-

term costs of managing protected areas. “Sustainability of a protected area is extremely important because, when you are managing an area, whether you buy it or get it registered as a protected area, there are long-term costs,” he said.

He urged more conservation organisations to seek IUCN membership and called for the inclusion of host communities in conservation planning, describing them as critical stakeholders.

“It is important to have the community working with you because, ultimately, if

they are not, they could present the biggest challenges to protecting that area,” he added.

Similarly, a former post-doctoral scholar at Queen Mary University of London, Dr Emmanuel Nwankwo, said encouraging farmers to plant trees could help expand conservation efforts, particularly if they understood the potential long-term financial benefits of trees compared with annual crops.

“One way to approach this is to shift the farmer’s priority from the annual crops he or she plants to the benefits derived from trees in the for-

est,” he said.

Speaking on “Hooded Vultures in Nigeria: Demand for Action”, Nwankwo also advocated the use of technology in conservation, provided communities gave their consent and their rights were respected.

He said technologies could improve visibility, speed and coordination in conservation activities.

According to him, satellites, artificial intelligence (AI), drones, the Internet of Things and blockchain could help detect early environmental changes, screen recordings, sort images and identify anomalies.

Firm seeks construction finance framework to boost housing reforms

By Victor Gbonegun

LAGOS-based developer, Mixta Africa, has called for a construction finance framework to complement proposed housing reforms and strengthen the sector’s regulation.

The firm’s Group Chief Commercial Officer, Adetola Akinsulire, told journalists in Lagos that regulation and improved access to buyer finance alone would not address Nigeria’s housing deficit, as construction finance remained a critical missing link.

He said the proposed National Housing and Built Environment Regulation Policy and national mort-

gage industry policy addressed two of the sector’s three key challenges: trust deficit and buyer financing, while construction financing remained unresolved.

The Federal Ministry of Housing and Urban Development recently disclosed that real estate and construction contributed more than N77 trillion to Nigeria’s economy in 2025, despite the absence of a unified regulatory framework.

The proposed reforms include developer registration, escrow protection, land value management, construction quality standards, urban renewal and a National Housing Data

Observatory. They also propose a housing finance authority and a structured diaspora investment window.

Akinsulire said the reforms should be measured by their ability to build trust, improve access to buyer finance and expand construction funding.

He welcomed the proposed data observatory as a means of improving transparency and market intelligence but cautioned that better data alone would not increase housing supply.

He also urged policymakers to broaden the affordability debate beyond property prices to include repayment

periods.

“Affordability is not just the price of the home. It’s the duration it takes for people to pay for it. A N60 million home is unaffordable if you have to pay for it in two years. But give someone the option to pay for that same property over 30 years, and it becomes affordable,” he said.

Nigeria’s mortgage-to-GDP ratio remains between 0.02 and 0.07 per cent, compared with about 30 per cent in South Africa and 70 per cent in the United Kingdom, underscoring the country’s limited mortgage market.

Akinsulire said Mixta Africa was developing starter

homes for the mass market, adding that developer-led innovation could help improve affordability. He identified the proposed diaspora investment window as a potential early gain, given demand from Nigerians abroad and their familiarity with structured mortgage and property-financing products.

The firm also advocated linking escrow fund releases to independently verified construction milestones, stressing that buyer protection must go hand in hand with sustainable construction finance to enable credible developers to deliver homes at scale.

‘GCF support to Nigeria will aid investment-ready project pipelines’

Catherine Koffman, Regional Director for Africa at the Green Climate Fund (GCF), spoke to CHINEDUM UWAEGBULAM on the Regional Dialogue with West and Central Africa held in Ghana about GCF’s finance reforms, challenges facing Nigeria in developing bankable projects and accessing international climate finance, as well as how climate funding can better support national priorities and accelerate climate action.

With the Green Climate Fund’s programming capacity increasing by more than \$4 billion, what concrete changes should countries such as Nigeria expect in terms of access to climate finance, and how quickly can this additional financing translate into projects on the ground?

FOR countries like Nigeria, the practical change is twofold: more resources are available for climate investments, and GCF is also investing in the enabling conditions that help countries turn national climate priorities into strong proposals.

The speed at which financing translates into projects on the ground will depend on the maturity of project pipelines, the role of accredited entities, and the approval process, but the aim of GCF’s reforms and readiness support is to make that pathway clearer, more predictable and more responsive to countries’ needs.

Nigeria has significant climate-finance needs but continues to face challenges in developing bankable projects and accessing international climate funds. What are the biggest gaps you see in Nigeria’s climate-finance architecture, and what should the government and its financial institutions do differently to address them?

Like many developing countries, Nigeria faces difficulties in preparing bankable projects and accessing international climate funds. As international public climate finance declines,

Nigeria will need to mobilise more domestic and private capital as well as to make greater use of catalytic funding, including from the Green Climate Fund.

To address the challenges faced by developing countries like Nigeria, GCF has introduced major reforms to improve access to climate finance. These include a more transparent, fit-for-purpose accreditation framework; simpler and faster project review and approval; programmatic readiness support aligned with countries’ Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and adaptation plans; and dedicated support for direct access entities such as the Development Bank of Nigeria.

Through the GCF Readiness and Project Preparation programme, support is available to national designated authorities of developing countries, including Nigeria. This support can strengthen institutional coordination, identify priority projects, prepare them for financing and build the capacity of national institutions seeking GCF accreditation. When used strategically, these programmes can strengthen the link between national climate goals and the institutional and financial systems needed to deliver them.

The GCF is supporting the Development Bank of Nigeria through readiness funding to strengthen its climate programming, pipeline development and project appraisal. What specific outcomes does the fund expect from this support, and how could it change Nigeria’s ability to attract and deploy climate finance?

GCF Readiness support will help the Development Bank of Nigeria translate its accreditation into effective

climate-finance delivery by strengthening governance, safeguards, fiduciary and project-appraisal systems, staff capacity, climate-risk management, monitoring and reporting.

It will also help build investment-ready project pipelines and tailored financial products, finance analytical and feasibility studies, and develop GCF concept notes and funding proposals. Together, these measures are intended to help both institutions mobilise domestic and international capital, deploy climate finance at scale, and deliver high-impact, low-carbon and climate-resilient investments for Nigerian businesses and communities. This is exactly what GCF reforms aim to deliver: reducing the distance between climate ambition and access to climate finance.

During the regional dialogue for West and Central Africa, GCF signed another readiness grant with the Nigeria Sovereign Investment Authority a newly accredited entity.

The GCF is undertaking reforms to simplify access to finance. For smaller institutions, local financial institutions and private-sector developers that often struggle with the complexity of accessing international climate funds, what will these reforms change in practical terms?

Since the reforms began, GCF has expanded support to vulnerable and underserved countries, accelerated project processing, introduced a revised accreditation framework prioritising Direct Access Entities, and enhanced its ability to mobilise private capital at scale.

The new framework, which became effective on October 31, 2025, repositions accreditation as an institutional due diligence function, streamlines requirements, removes re-accreditation, replaces Accreditation Master Agreements with Funded Activity Agreements, introduces self-nomination, and establishes a nine-month service standard for processing accreditation applications.

The reform also shifts some fiduciary and safeguard reviews closer to the project approval stage, with the aim of making accreditation more transparent, predictable, efficient and accessible, particularly for national and regional institutions in developing countries.

Read the remaining interview on www.guardian.ng



Poor earnings test relevance of minimum wage setting

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

Similarly, Executive Director, OJA Development Consult, Jide Ojo, challenged the Federal Government to give Nigerians a verifiable account of the reported N15.8 trillion saved from fuel subsidy removal, saying citizens are yet to see commensurate impact of the savings on their lives.

Ojo, who spoke on the impact of fuel subsidy removal, the worsening hardship and the way forward for the administration, said government could not continue to cite the savings as an economic achievement without showing Nigerians what the funds had been used to accomplish.

He argued that the demand for accountability should not be interpreted as a call for the return of fuel subsidy, warning that reversing the policy would worsen the country's fiscal challenges.

Ojo also demanded evidence of the government's reported N600 billion expenditure on

social investment, asking the government to demonstrate the impact of the spending and provide data showing how many Nigerians benefited.

He faulted the CNG project, saying the initiative would not achieve its intended purpose without adequate infrastructure and lower conversion costs. He questioned how motorists were expected to embrace CNG when access to refuelling stations remained limited.

According to him, the situation was particularly problematic in Abuja, where only a handful of filling stations dispense CNG despite the city's size. He also questioned the economic viability of spending about N1.5 million to convert a private vehicle to CNG, particularly where the vehicle itself had significantly depreciated.

Ojo said government needed to make CNG more accessible by ensuring that more filling

stations dispense the product and by addressing the cost of conversion.

Founder, PaxEm Global Institute for Policy, Leadership and Governance, Isaac Botti, punctured the Federal Government's renewed push to reduce transportation costs, describing the intervention as a politically-motivated attempt to win citizens' support ahead of the 2027 general elections rather than a sustainable response to the economic hardship caused by fuel subsidy removal.

Botti argued that the government's decision to remove fuel subsidy amid existing economic turbulence worsened the cost of living, with higher fuel prices feeding directly into transportation, food prices and other areas of household expenditure. He said Nigerians had endured significant hardship over the past three years and would not easily be persuaded by what he described as late interven-

tions designed to influence their political choices.

According to him, the absence of adequate social infrastructure, particularly an efficient public transportation system, has compounded the impact of subsidy removal.

The economist also questioned the effectiveness of the government's CNG initiative, arguing that its impact remains limited because very few vehicles have converted to CNG, while the cost of conversion remains unaffordable for many Nigerians. He said the government should focus on permanent social infrastructure and policies that directly reduce the cost burden on households rather than temporary interventions. Botti also criticised other economic policies, including the naira's flotation, which he said was implemented at a period when the economy was already experiencing severe inflationary pressure.

He further questioned the transparency and accountability surrounding government spending on social intervention programmes, alleging that benefits often fail to reach ordinary Nigerians.

The Chief Executive Officer of the Centre for the Promotion of Private Enterprise (CPPE), Dr Muda Yusuf, urged state and local governments to deploy the increased revenues accruing to them to ease the burden of the cost-of-living

crisis on Nigerians.

Yusuf said while the Federal Government should be credited with achieving greater macroeconomic stability, particularly in the foreign exchange market, the responsibility for translating the increased public revenues into tangible relief for citizens now rests with the sub-national governments.

Speaking on the impact of the fuel subsidy removal and other economic reforms, he said the reforms had imposed high costs on citizens through higher prices arising from the foreign exchange reforms and subsidy removal.

However, he noted, the revenue benefits of the reforms had increasingly accrued to the states and local governments through higher FAAC allocations. According to him, the sub-nationals are now "the biggest beneficiaries" in terms of revenue, receiving significantly more than the Federal Government from the enlarged fiscal pool.

Yusuf called for greater scrutiny of how the additional revenues are being spent, arguing that state governments should prioritise measures capable of directly reducing the burden on households and businesses. He acknowledged that the Federal Government also had a critical role to play, particularly in maintaining macroeconomic stability.

On the numerous social intervention programmes being implemented by the Federal Government, he said the centre alone could not effectively solve the hardship confronting citizens, arguing that states and local governments were better positioned to transmit interventions to the grassroots, particularly given the substantial resources now available to them through FAAC allocations.

A welfare and policy analyst, Lekan Olayiwola, said the government's latest push to reduce transportation costs from October 1 was significant because transport remained one of the areas where the impact of subsidy removal was most directly felt by households.

Olayiwola described the initiative as arguably the government's strongest attempt yet to make one of the supposed efficiency gains from the reform visible to citizens.

He said the reform should not be described as an outright failure because it substantially altered the government's fiscal position, strengthened foreign reserves and contributed to a more stable economic framework.

However, he cautioned that cheaper CNG would not automatically translate into cheaper transport fares, noting that fuel was only one component of vehicle operating costs.

Obi questions policy impact, demands comprehensive economic strategy

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

prices to the cost of importing the product.

Instead, he advocated Production Cost Pricing, which would take into account the costs of crude oil production, refining, transportation and distribution within Nigeria.

According to him, the approach would reflect the actual costs of producing and refining crude oil locally rather than treating petrol as an imported commodity.

The Senior Advocate of Nigeria also cautioned the government against dismissing alternative economic policies, recalling arguments associated with the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) that there was no alternative to the policy.

He maintained that other options were available to address Nigeria's economic challenges and urged the government to consider alternative economic perspectives in determining petrol prices.

"The alternative to the Import Parity Price method should be adopted by the Federal Government in the public interest," he said.

Falana further argued that there was no economic or political justification for selling imported petrol to Nigerians at international prices.

He urged the government to reject what he described as the World Bank's demand that Nigeria should continue importing Premium Motor Spirit (PMS), insisting that domestic production and refining costs should guide pricing decisions.

He said the proposed pricing model should form part of efforts to address public concerns over petrol prices and the rising cost of living. **HEDA urges FG to complement petrol discount with social protection measures**

THE Human and Environmental Development Agenda (HEDA Resource Centre) urged the Federal Government to complement its 30-day petrol discount with comprehensive measures to ease the economic hardship facing Nigerians.

HEDA Chairman, Olanrewaju Suraju, said the effectiveness of the intervention would depend on transparent implementation, accessibility and tangible benefits for citizens.

He noted that although the government had clarified that the initiative was a temporary margin discount rather than a return to blanket fuel subsidy, it must deliver meaningful reductions in transportation costs and provide relief to households and businesses.

The organisation called for stronger social protection programmes, including timely and transparent cash transfers to vulnerable house-

holds. It said the programmes should be supported by credible beneficiary data, clear eligibility criteria and effective accountability mechanisms to prevent diversion of funds and the exclusion of deserving beneficiaries.

HEDA also urged the government to tackle rising food and transportation costs through targeted support for commercial transport operators, improved access to affordable public transport and increased investment in local food production and distribution.

It further called for measures to reduce the cost of transporting agricultural produce to markets.

On the implementation of the petrol discount, Suraju urged the government to publish clear guidelines identifying participating Nigerian National Petroleum Company Limited (NNPCL) filling stations, the applicable discount per litre and eligibility criteria for public transport operators.

He also called for effective mechanisms to monitor compliance and transparent reporting on the proposed petrol price ceiling and its monthly reviews.

HEDA further advocated accelerated investment in sustainable alternatives to petrol, including reliable public transportation, affordable compressed natural gas (CNG) options and renewable energy, supported by adequate infrastructure and appropriate safety standards. **Motorists lament restricted access to petrol discount**

MANY motorists have expressed frustration over difficulties accessing the Federal Government's 30-day petrol discount at Nigerian National Petroleum Company Limited (NNPCL) filling stations, saying the offer is available only to customers using the company's mobile application.

The motorists said they were unable to benefit from the discount when purchasing petrol directly at the pumps, while some raised concerns about digital access, network challenges and the affordability of the product.

The Minister of Finance and Coordinating Minister of the Economy, Taiwo Oyedele, had announced the temporary discount as a measure to provide relief to Nigerians.

According to the announcement, the intervention was expected to reduce the petrol price to N1,350 per litre, with the discount applicable at NNPCL filling stations nationwide.

However, checks yesterday in Abuja showed that petrol was selling for N1,405 per litre to customers paying directly at the pumps, while those using the company's mobile application paid N1,339 per litre.

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



PUBLIC NOTICE FEDERAL MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT

PUBLIC DISPLAY FOR THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT (EIA) OF THE PROPOSED CONSTRUCTION AND REHABILITATION OF LIVESTOCK FACILITIES AT FASHOLA, OYO WEST L.G.A, OYO STATE BY OYO STATE LIVESTOCK PRODUCTIVITY AND RESILIENCE SUPPORT (L-PRES) PROJECT.

In accordance with the provisions of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Act Cap E12 LFN 2004, which makes it mandatory for proponents of all new major developmental activities to carry out Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) for their proposed projects, the Federal Ministry of Environment hereby announces a twenty-one (21) working days public display for information and comments on the draft Environmental and Social Management Plan (ESMP) submitted by the Oyo State Livestock Productivity and Resilience Support (L-PRES) Project.

Project Description:

The proposed project is a livestock and agribusiness development intervention on approximately 1,200 hectares located within the Fashola Farm Settlement at Fashola Community, Oyo West Local Government Area, Oyo State. The project activities shall entail civil works for the rehabilitation of the existing veterinary clinics, youth incubation centres, and livestock-related vocational training facilities; establishment of a model sheep and goat market, egg-powder processing and feed-processing facilities, pasture fields and grazing-improvement areas; installation of solar-powered facilities and boreholes/water-supply systems; development of supporting infrastructure such as cold-chain facilities for vaccine and livestock-product storage, and the operation of livestock facilities, including veterinary services, livestock production, and processing. The project aims to improve livestock productivity and resilience, strengthen animal-health and livestock value chains, enhance market access and livelihoods, and promote sustainable agribusiness development and economic growth in Oyo State and is funded by the World Bank.

The Display Centers are:

- * Oyo West Local Government Area Headquarters, Ojongbodu, Oyo State;
- * Oyo State Ministry of Environment & Natural Resources, State Secretariat, Ibadan;
- * Federal Ministry of Environment Field office, Ibadan, Oyo State;
- * Federal Ministry of Environment, Environmental Assessment Dept. (Environment House), Independence Way South, Central Business District, Abuja - FCT; and
- * www.ead.gov.ng.

Duration of Display:

Date: 12th October - 9th November, 2026

Time: 8:00am - 4:00pm Daily.

ALL COMMENTS SHALL BE FORWARDED TO THE HONOURABLE MINISTER, FEDERAL MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT MABUSHI, ABUJA AND VIA eia@ead.gov.ng ON OR BEFORE 16th NOVEMBER, 2026.

Signed
PERMANENT SECRETARY
For: Honourable Minister.



PUBLIC NOTICE FEDERAL MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT

PUBLIC DISPLAY EXERCISE ON THE ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT (ESIA) FOR THE PROPOSED 10,000 TONNES PER ANNUM MODULAR AMMONIUM NITRATE AND HIGH EXPLOSIVES MANUFACTURING FACILITY AT MARIA VILLAGE, IMASAYI YEWA TOWN, YEWA NORTH LGA, OGUN STATE BY COMMERCIO OIL INDUSTRIES LIMITED.

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

Brief Project Description:

The proposed project involves the construction and operation of a 10,000 tonnes per annum Modular Ammonium Nitrate and High Explosives Factory on a 30-hectare land parcel at Maria Village, Imasayi Yewa Town, Yewa North LGA, Ogun State. The facility will produce ammonium nitrate for the mining and blasting industry, particularly for ANFO-type explosives, using natural gas as primary feedstock. Key components include a natural gas-based hydrogen production unit, ammonia synthesis unit, nitric acid unit, ammonium nitrate unit, as well as packaging and storage facilities, among others.

The Display Centers Are:

- Yewa North Local Government Area Headquarters, Ogun State;
- Ogun State Ministry of Environment, new Secretariat, Oke Mosan, Abeokuta;
- Federal Ministry of Environment, Ogun State Office, Abeokuta;
- Federal Ministry of Environment, Environmental Assessment Department (Environment House), Independence Way South, Central Business District, Abuja – FCT and
- www.ead.gov.ng.

Duration of Display:

Date: 12th October – 9th November, 2026,
Time: 8:00am – 4:00pm Daily.

COMMENTS SHOULD BE FORWARDED TO THE HON. MINISTER, FEDERAL MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT HEADQUARTERS, MABUSHI, ABUJA-F.C.T AND VIA info@ead.gov.ng ON OR BEFORE 16TH NOVEMBER, 2026.

SIGNED
PERMANENT SECRETARY
FOR: HONOURABLE MINISTER.

PUBLIC NOTICE LOSS OF TITLE DOCUMENT

THIS IS TO INFORM THE GENERAL PUBLIC OF THE LOSS OF ORIGINAL TITLE DOCUMENT BEING DEED OF ASSIGNMENT, BELONGING TO ALHAJI KAZEEM A. OWOLABI, IN RESPECT OF ALL THAT PIECE OR PARCEL OF LAND MEASURING APPROXIMATELY (A)3924.571 SQUARE METRES & (B) 2135.101 SQUARE METRES, SITUATE, LYING AND BEING ALONG LAGOS/EPE EXPRESSWAY, ETI-OSA LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA, LAGOS STATE, DATED 20TH JANUARY 2023, REGISTERED AS NO. 26 ON PAGE 26 IN VOLUME 2783 AT THE LAGOS STATE LAND REGISTRY, ALAUSA, IKEJA, LAGOS, NIGERIA.

THAT THE DEED OF ASSIGNMENT HAS BEEN IN MY POSSESSION AND CUSTODY UNTIL I DISCOVERED IT TO BE MISSING/LOST AND ALL EFFORTS TO TRACE THE MISSING TITLE DOCUMENT HAVE PROVED ABORTIVE.

THAT THE PROPERTY IS NOT SOLD, MORTGAGED OR DEPOSITED IN ANY BANK FOR FINANCIAL TRANSACTIONS.

THE GENERAL PUBLIC, ALL AUTHORITIES CONCERNED AND THE LAGOS STATE LAND REGISTRY, LAND BUREAU OFFICE, ALAUSA IKEJA, LAGOS SHOULD TAKE NOTE.

SIGNED:
ALHAJI KAZEEM A. OWOLABI

COURT ORDERED SERVICE ON 1ST DEFENDANT NET EXPLORER LIMITED

Justice Ogunsanja
28th September, 2026.
12th November, 2026.



**IN THE HIGH COURT OF LAGOS STATE
IN THE IKEJA JUDICIAL DIVISION
HOLDEN AT IKEJA**

SUIT NO: ID/6782GCM/2023

BETWEEN
FIDELITY BANK PLC..... CLAIMANT

AND

- NET EXPLORERS LIMITED
- OLUWOLE ATANDA AINA DEFENDANTS

MOTION ON NOTICE

BROUGHT PURSUANT TO ORDER 26 RULES (1) & (2) OF THE HIGH COURT OF LAGOS STATE (CIVIL PROCEDURE) RULES 2019 AND UNDER THE INHERENT JURISDICTION OF THIS COURT

TAKE NOTICE that this Honourable Court will be moved on _____ day of _____, 2026 at the hour of 9 o'clock in the forenoon or so soon thereafter as Counsel may be heard on behalf of the Claimant praying for the following orders:

- AN ORDER** of this Honourable Court granting the Claimant leave to amend its Statement of Claim and Witness Statement on Oath and all other accompanying processes in the way and manner highlighted in the proposed amended Statement of Claim and Witness Statement on Oath.
- AN ORDER** of this Honourable Court deeming the already filed and served Statement of Claim and Witness Statement on Oath and all other accompanying processes as properly filed and served.
- AND FOR SUCH FURTHER ORDERS** as this Honourable court may deem fit to make in the circumstance.

LITIGATION DEPARTMENT IKEJA
HIGH COURT OF LAGOS STATE
RECEIVED
NAME: [Signature] TIME: 11:40am
SIGN: [Signature] DATE: 12/11/2026



**IN THE HIGH COURT OF LAGOS STATE
IN THE IKEJA JUDICIAL DIVISION
HOLDEN AT IKEJA**

SUIT NO: ID/6782GCM/2023

BETWEEN
FIDELITY BANK PLC CLAIMANT/APPLICANT

AND

- NET EXPLORERS LIMITED
- OLUWOLE ATANDA AINA DEFENDANTS/RESPONDENTS

MOTION ON NOTICE

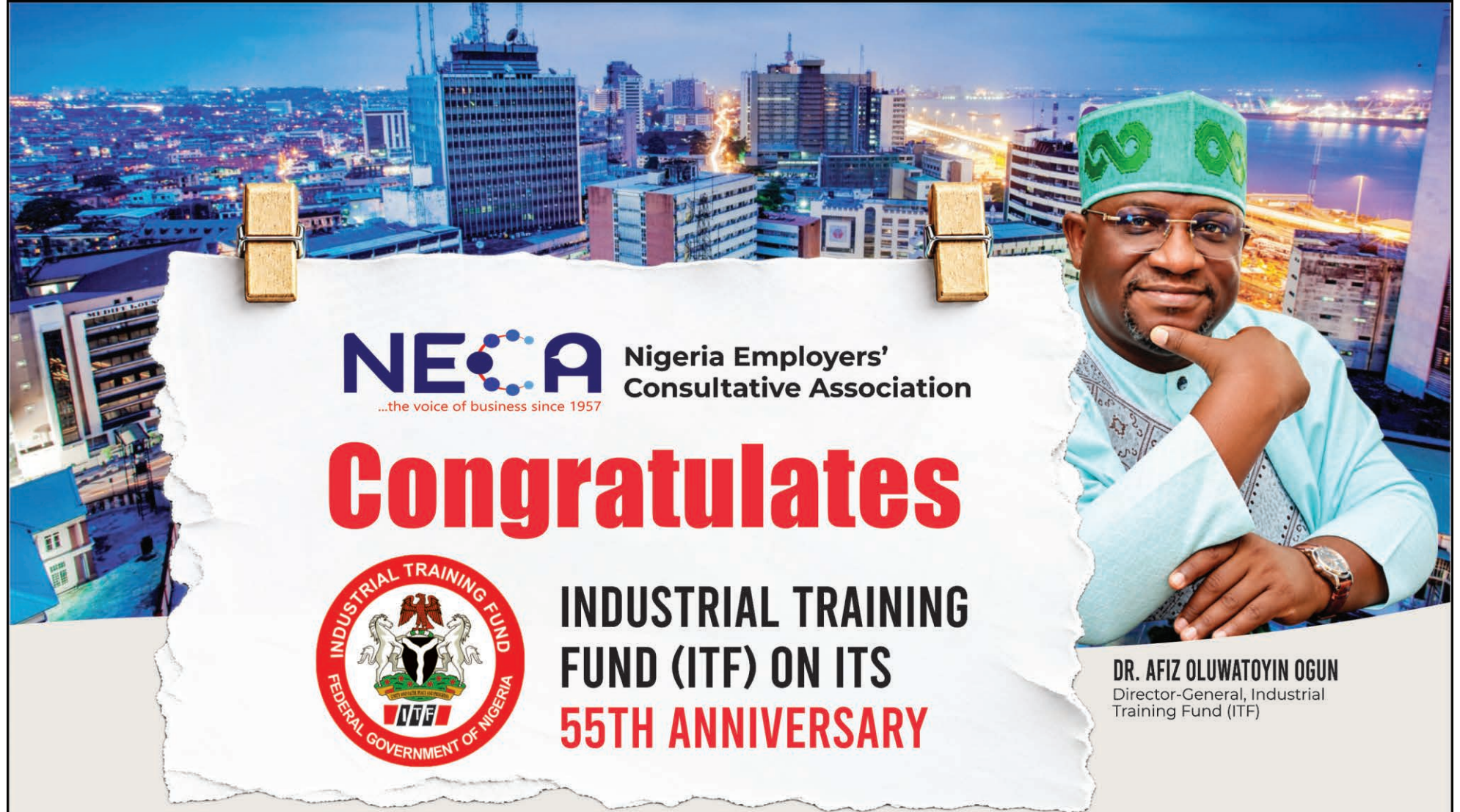
BROUGHT PURSUANT TO ORDER 43 RULE (1) OF THE HIGH COURT OF LAGOS STATE (CIVIL PROCEDURE) RULES 2019 AND UNDER THE INHERENT JURISDICTION OF THIS HONOURABLE COURT

TAKE NOTICE that this Honourable Court will be moved on the _____ day of _____, 2026 at the hour of 9 o'clock in the forenoon or so soon thereafter as Counsel for the Claimant/Applicant can be heard praying for the following;

- AN ORDER** of this Honourable court granting leave to the Claimant to reopen its case.
- AN ORDER** of this Honourable court granting leave to the Claimant to recall its witness in this suit.
- AND FOR SUCH FURTHER ORDERS OR OTHER ORDERS** as this Honourable Court may deem fit to make in the circumstances.

TAKE FURTHER NOTICE that the grounds upon which this Application is brought are:

- That the additional evidence sought to be tendered relates directly to the amended pleadings and is necessary for the just determination of this suit.
- That the said additional evidence are material to the case of the Claimant.



NECA Nigeria Employers' Consultative Association
...the voice of business since 1957

Congratulates



**INDUSTRIAL TRAINING
FUND (ITF) ON ITS
55TH ANNIVERSARY**

DR. AFIZ OLUWATOYIN OGUN
Director-General, Industrial
Training Fund (ITF)

The Nigeria Employers' Consultative Association (NECA) heartily congratulates the Director-General of the Industrial Training Fund (ITF), Dr. Afiz Oluwatoyin Ogun, and the Governing Board on the momentous occasion of the Fund's 55th Anniversary.

This milestone marks five and a half decades of dedicated service to Nigeria through technical and vocational training, skills acquisition and human capital development. The ITF has remained a critical institution in strengthening the nation's skills base and advancing the development of a productive, competent and competitive workforce.

NECA particularly celebrates the enduring partnership between the ITF and NECA, especially through the Technical Skills Development Project (TSDP), which has continued to bridge industry skills gaps and equip Nigerians with competencies relevant to the needs of employers. The growth of this initiative from six participating organisations in 2008 to over 80 collaborating organisations underscores the value of sustained public-private sector collaboration in advancing skills development and enterprise competitiveness. As the ITF celebrates this significant anniversary, NECA commends the Director-General, the Governing Board, Management and Staff for their commitment to the ITF's mandate. We look forward to further strengthening our strategic partnership to expand access to quality technical and vocational training, enhance employability, improve enterprise productivity and support Nigeria's industrial development.

Congratulations to Dr. Afiz Oluwatoyin Ogun on 55 years of impactful service to our nation. May this milestone usher in greater accomplishments, deeper collaboration and renewed progress towards building a skilled workforce and a more prosperous Nigeria.

Signed:

Mr. Adewale-Smatt Oyerinde
Director-General/Chief Executive
Nigeria Employers' Consultative Association (NECA)



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MD/CEO,
Development Bank
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KEYNOTE SPEAKERS



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CEO,
MTN Nigeria



SEGUN OGUNSANYA
CHAIRMAN,
Nigeria Sovereign
Investment Authority

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Imperative of improved cereal, legume varieties adoption

By **Gbenga Akinfenwa**

FOR two days, seed companies, breeders, researchers and agricultural stakeholders converged on Zaria, Kaduna State, for the second yearly workshop and field demonstration of the African Cereal and Legume Breeding Consortium (ACLBC), to accelerate the adoption of improved crop varieties.

The workshop, organised by the Technologies for African Agricultural Transformation (TAAT) and the African Seed Trade Association (AFSTA), came at a time when Africa is seeking to strengthen its food security, increase agricultural productivity and build resilience to climate change.

It was designed to bridge the gap between agricultural research and commercial seed markets by connecting technology developers directly with companies that can multiply and distribute improved seeds to farmers.

At the heart of the programme was a practical demonstration of promising TAAT-vetted cereal and legume varieties, offering participants an opportunity to assess crop performance under field conditions, engage with technical experts and explore potential partnerships for commercial adoption.

Established by TAAT and AFSTA, ACLBC seeks to attract more than 200 seed companies to adopt and scale improved varieties and hybrids developed by CGIAR Centres and Advanced Agricultural Research Institutions. The consortium promotes collaboration among breeders, technology owners and private enterprises, encouraging investment in crop improvement, seed multiplication and distribution.

Its approach recognises that developing an improved variety is only the beginning. For farmers to benefit, promising technologies must move beyond research plots into reliable seed production systems and accessible markets.

Through ACLBC, seed companies

can evaluate new varieties, engage directly with breeders, explore licensing opportunities and identify technologies suited to their markets. The consortium also encourages a demand-driven approach in which companies communicate their priorities and collaborate with research institutions to develop and commercialise varieties that respond to farmers' needs.

Nigeria offers an important platform for this engagement, with its substantial seed industry and potential to expand the commercial delivery of improved planting materials.

The Green Field Day provided a central feature of the workshop, allowing participants to observe selected varieties and engage with the specialists responsible for their development.

The demonstration plot, established through the TAAT Clearinghouse with contributions from TAAT Compacts, was intended to serve as a living catalogue of promising seed technologies. Selected crops include maize, rice, sorghum, millet, soybean, groundnut and cowpea.

Participants were able to examine comparative crop performance, yield potential, grain quality and relevant post-harvest characteristics. Field-level discussions also provided opportunities to explore agronomic practices, seed quality and the considerations involved in commercial multiplication.

The second day featured technical presentations, keynote addresses, panel discussions, question-and-answer sessions and networking under the theme "Scaling TAAT Seed

Technologies – Partnerships for Impact." These engagements connected field observations with practical decisions on technology adoption, seed production and commercial partnerships.

The workshop brings together partners with complementary roles in advancing Nigeria's seed sector and strengthening agricultural innovation across Africa. AFSTA provides consortium coordination and engagement with seed companies, while the TAAT Clearinghouse leads technical oversight and programme design. Premier Seeds serves as host and Champion Partner in Nigeria, supporting demonstration plot management and local coordination.

The Seed Entrepreneurs Association of Nigeria (SEEDAN) also mobilised seed companies and

align engagement with national industry priorities, while the National Agricultural Seeds Council (NASC) contributed its regulatory and seed-quality assurance perspective.

Participating TAAT Compacts supported a variety of presentations and technical engagement, with the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA) providing technical backstopping and breeding expertise.

The collaboration builds on ACLBC's earlier field demonstration in Kenya in August 2025, where seed companies, researchers, seed inspectors and other stakeholders evaluated improved cereal and legume varieties. That experience underscored the value of bringing technology developers and potential commercial adopters together to assess innovations and explore opportunities for scaling.

Organised by AFSTA in collaboration with TAAT under the theme "Catalysing Seed Technology Adoption through Partnership, Performance & Field Experience," the Kenyan event brought together seed companies, breeding institutions, seed inspectors, farmers and other public- and private-sector stakeholders who visited a two-acre demonstration plot featuring newly released, high-performing varieties of maize, soybean, rice, wheat, high-iron beans, sorghum and millet.

The programme demonstrated the value of evaluating improved varieties under field conditions while bringing technology developers and prospective adopters into direct conversation.

The ACLBC Lead, Geoffrey Nsofon, explained that the consortium seeks to stimulate interest among seed companies and accelerate the adoption, branding and scaling of elite varieties and hybrids developed by CGIAR Centres and Advanced Agricultural Research Institutions.

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Director, Lagos State Agric Services, Olufemi Ogunseye (left): General Manager, British American Tobacco Nigeria Foundation, Oludare Odusanya; Special Adviser to the Governor on Agriculture and Food Systems, Dr Oluwarotimi Fashola; Group Head, Corporate Communications and Strategy, Origin Tech Group Nigeria, Adebayo Adeosun, and Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture and Food Systems, Emmanuel Audu, at a press briefing in commemoration of the Year 2026 World Food Celebration, held in Lagos, recently.

PHOTO: AYODELE ADENIRAN

Don calls for home-grown smart storage technology for food preservation

By **Gbenga Akinfenwa**

THE Federal Government has been urged to demonstrate stronger political will in promoting home-grown technology as a strategic pathway to move the nation from a consumption-driven economy to one anchored on production, industrialisation and sustainable economic growth.

An expert in Electronic and Control Systems Engineering from the Department of Electrical and Electronics Engineering, College of Engineering (COLENG), Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta (FUNAAB), Ogun State, Prof. Olubunmi Akinola, made the call while delivering the University's 115th Inaugural Lecture, titled: "Beyond Solid-State Electronics: Driving Automation for Sustainable Development."

Prof. Akinola stressed the need for Nigeria to take

As FUNAAB holds 115th inaugural lecture

greater ownership of its technological development through an indigenous technology policy that would encourage local manufacturing, strengthen industrial capacity and create an enabling environment for Nigerian innovations to move from research laboratories to the marketplace.

According to him, locally developed technologies can address critical challenges confronting the country, while creating opportunities for economic diversification and industrial growth. He emphasised that the impact of engineering research should extend beyond academic publications to the development of practical, affordable and scalable solutions.

The 115th Inaugural Lecturer highlighted some of his research innovations, includ-

ing HarvestHarbor, a patented smart storage technology designed to preserve fresh fruits and vegetables and reduce post-harvest losses. He also showcased an electronic pest-repellent system developed to minimise losses caused by birds in rice and fish farming.

Beyond agriculture, Prof. Akinola highlighted the application of microcontroller-based technologies in home security and fingerprint access-control systems, as well as research in medical image processing and the analysis of Tuberculin Skin Test induration, demonstrating the potential of engineering to contribute to healthcare and other societal needs.

To accelerate the adoption of such innovations, Prof. Akinola advocated stronger collaboration among universities, research institutions

and industry, stressing the need for locally developed technologies to receive adequate support for commercialisation, mass production and deployment rather than remaining confined to university laboratories.

He also called for the training of farmers, Extension Officers and agro-processing stakeholders in the effective use and maintenance of smart agricultural technologies. He noted that greater integration of automation, sensors and microcontroller systems into agriculture would advance precision and digital farming, while multidisciplinary collaboration among Engineers, Agricultural Scientists and Information Technology experts would produce more impactful solutions.

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Experts seek investor-friendly policies in livestock sector

By **Victor Gbonegun**

THE Co-founder/Group Executive Director of ABIS Group, Mrs. Abigail Nelson, has urged the federal and state governments to put into place an enabling environment that would make the livestock agriculture business more attractive to investors, particularly budding entrepreneurs.

Nelson said although the challenges faced by investors in the agricultural value chain are not peculiar to the sector, but resonate with almost all businesses, hence the need for special attention on livestock with the role the sector plays in any economy.

Speaking to journalists on the sideline of the firm's facility tour in Lagos, she pointed out that funding has been quite difficult as the interest rates on bank loans for agriculture-related business remains outrageous. She said the group, which is a fully integrated agro-allied and livestock processing conglomerate, is revolutionising Nigeria's agricul-

tural value chain.

"It would be very helpful if the government can step in and provide maybe soft loans, or grants, this will encourage upcoming entrepreneurs and investors. And it will also be nice if we look into providing a very suitable ranch, where we can have these herdsmen in a beautiful location to feed their cattle. It is going to go a long way in curbing the insecurities that we're experiencing in the country at this moment," she said.

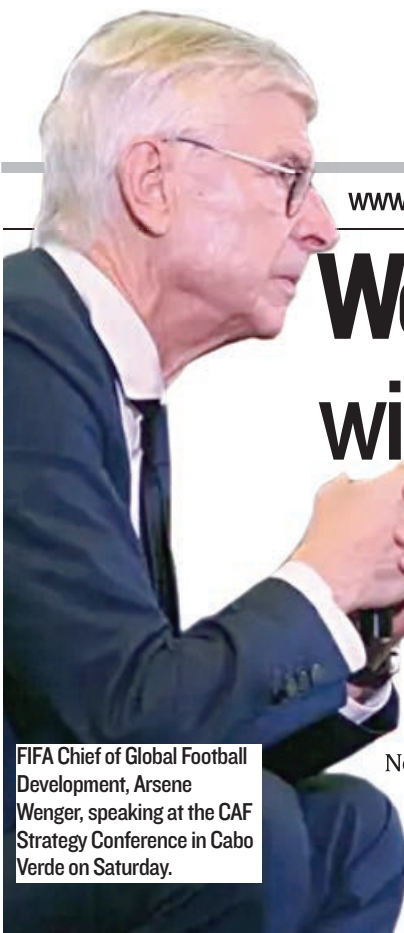
According to her, getting approval for livestock business should also be made easier. However, she noted that the Lagos State government has been supportive, adding that operators are still open to receiving more help from the government.

Nelson stressed that it is important that all Nigerians are entitled to healthy and hygienically processed protein.

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FIFA Chief of Global Football Development, Arsene Wenger, speaking at the CAF Strategy Conference in Cabo Verde on Saturday.

Wenger: 'Africa is close to winning the World Cup'

By Christian Okpara

FORMER Arsenal Manager, Arsene Wenger, believes that an African team would soon win the FIFA World Cup, citing African teams' performance at the last edition of the championship in North America to buttress his point.

At the last World Cup hosted by the United States, Canada and Mexico three months ago, nine of the 10 African teams made it out of the

group stage, Egypt got to the round of 16, while Morocco made the quarterfinals.

Wenger believes that the enhanced technical awareness, proper planning and exposure to modern techniques could take an African team to the top prize.

Wenger also pointed to attacking efficiency as the next major area for improvement. "Africa has made a fantastic step forward. There is still another step to make. We want to see an African team win the World Cup, and the numbers show that it is feasible."

He, however, warned that data should not become the only way football development is measured.

According to *cafonline.com*, Africa's record performance at the 2026 FIFA World Cup and what must change for the continent to challenge for the title in 2030 dominated the final day of the CAF Strategy Conference in Santa Maria, Sal Island, Cabo Verde.

At the conference, which was opened by CAF President Dr Patrice Motsepe and FIFA President Gianni Infantino, FIFA Technical Study Group member Otto Addo and FIFA Team Lead for Football Performance Analysis Aaron Ackerman presented a detailed technical review of Africa's campaign.

Speaking on the Day Three of the ongoing CAF Strategy Conference in Cabo Verde, Wenger, who is FIFA Chief of Global Football Development, Wenger identified improved tactical discipline and organisation as one of the biggest reasons that

Yesterday's Football Results Nigerian Premier Football League			
Abia Warriors	0	Rivers Utd	0
Barau	2	Enugu Rangers	2
Kun Khalifat	2	Shooting Stars	0
Nasarawa Utd	2	Doma Utd	0
Plateau Utd	4	Kano Pillars	0
Sporting Lagos	2	Bendel Ins	1
Warri Wolves	3	Inter Lagos	1
English Premier League			
Crystal Palace	3	Nottingham Forest	1
Hull City	2	Everton	2
Liverpool	0	Manchester City	3
Spanish La Liga			
Elche	0	Celta Vigo	0
Real Sociedad	3	Deportivo Coruña	2
German Bundesliga			
Köln	2	Borussia M'gladbach	1
Italian Serie A			
Como	0	Roma	0
Lazio	3	Monza	1
Lecce	1	Bologna	2

Nathaniel Idowu Junior 7s League

Schools battle for honours as tourney begins

By Eniola Daniel

EXCITING young footballers lit up the New Maracana Sports Complex in Tolu, Ajegunle, venue of the 2026 Nathaniel Idowu Junior 7s All Secondary Schools Football League, which began at the weekend.

From the first whistle, the competition delivered the kind of excitement organisers had hoped for, with goals, drama and impressive performances highlighting the opening round of matches. Young footballers from different schools seized the opportunity to make an early statement in a tournament designed to nurture talent and encourage sporting excellence among students. Sacred Heart emerged as the biggest winners of the day, producing a dominant display to defeat El Leonora 3-0. Their convincing victory not only earned them maximum points but also placed them at the summit of the early standings, underlining their ambition to contend strongly for the title.



The race for the African Beach Soccer Cup of Nations' ticket between Nigeria and Ghana will now be decided on October 18 in Ghana.

Beach Soccer AFCON qualifier

CAF referees' blunders galore continues

Officials admit Nigeria, Ghana match ended 3-3

By Christian Okpara

A few weeks after referees at the WAFU CAF Women's Champions League set the continent on fire with their misinterpretation of the rules, another set of referees had to reverse themselves in Kaduna at the weekend after erroneously leading Nigeria and Ghana's beach soccer teams to a penalty shoot out after the first leg of the their CAF Beach Soccer Africa Cup of Nations qualifying game.

On September 5, 2026, a WAFU B CAF Women's Champions League qualifying final in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, between Edo Queens of Nigeria and

Ampem Darkoa Ladies of Ghana, ended in a 2-2 draw after regulation time. But instead of ordering the teams to play an additional 30 minutes to decide the winner, the referees went straight to penalties, which Edo Queens won 4-1.

Irked by the outcome, the Ghana Football Association on behalf of Ampem Darkoa Ladies protested to CAF, which upheld their protest. Not satisfied by CAF's decision on a game that was officially ended by the referees, Edo Queens have since petitioned CAF to uphold their victory, saying that it was not their fault that the referees misinterpreted the rules.

Battle of British Finest Boxers

Lewis tips Fury to win mental game, praises Joshua's physicality

HEAVYWEIGHT legend Lennox Lewis gives Tyson Fury the mental edge over Anthony Joshua ahead of their all-British showdown in December, reports *skysports.com*.

Fury's rivalry with Joshua dates back almost a decade and the heavyweight stars will now fight on December 11 at the Principality Stadium in Cardiff.

"I think it's very important for British history and for the British fans as well," Lewis, the former undisputed heavyweight champion, told *Sky Sports*.

"This is a unique fight; It's a great fight and it's a fight that everybody's been waiting for. Styles make fights," Lewis said. "And I think this fight is going to make for a good fight because both of

them have two different styles.

"I think the fight may go the distance but both of them have knockout power. Anything can happen. I think that Tyson's winning on the mental, and on the physical I think it's Anthony Joshua."

Lewis understands better than anyone the significance of a major fight on UK soil; he was one half of history's first all-British heavyweight title fight when he fought Frank Bruno.

Flashback to October 1, 1993, as rain hammered down on Cardiff's now-demolished National Stadium, the predecessor of the Principality.

The stormy scene personified the bitter build-up and bad blood between the fighters, setting the stage for "The Battle of Britain."

Abdullahi vows to rebuild basketball, deepen Tinubu's sports reform agenda

By Daniel Akinola

ONE of the top aspirants for the Nigeria Basketball Federation's (NBBF) presidency at the forthcoming NBBF elections, Dr Mustapha Abdullahi, has promised to use his over 20-year experience in the game to lead the sport to better times.

The Energy Commission of Nigeria's director-general said that the game needs stronger institutions, better player welfare and a clearer route from grassroots participation to professional competition. Abdullahi said his experience as a player and grassroots investor has shown him the gap between the potentials of young Nigerian athletes and the structures available to support their development.

He believes the National Sports Commission's renewed

emphasis on the sports economy offers an opportunity to address some of those weaknesses, provided sporting federations translate policy direction into effective administration and sustained investment.

"My vision is to help build a professionally managed federation with stronger domestic leagues, better player welfare, sustainable commercial partnerships and clear development pathways for young athletes," he said.

Abdullahi, who is also Director of Youth of the Renewed Hope Ambassadors, said his interest in the NBBF presidency was rooted in a longstanding commitment to basketball and the belief that effective leadership could help the sport realise more of its potential.

Hull held by Everton, Crystal Palace down Nottingham Forest in EPL

HULL City retained their unbeaten home record since returning to the Premier League with an entertaining 2-2 draw against Everton at the MKM Stadium, reports *rte.ie*.

The Tigers have returned to the top flight with an unexpected bang, tasting defeat for the first time in their final fixture before the international break at the hands of Newcastle.

Brennan Johnson found the net in the 34th minute but was denied a first Premier League goal for the Toffees following a VAR check, leaving the sides to go in goalless at the break.

The hosts wasted little time

after the interval, however, as Joe Gelhardt opened the scoring in the 48th minute following an error by Ainsley Maitland-Niles.

Kiernan Dewsbury-Hall equalised seven minutes later, with Thierno Barry, who had squandered plenty of earlier chances, then putting the visitors ahead midway through the second period.

Hull responded swiftly, though, with substitute Mohamed Belloumi pulling the home team level in the 74th minute.

Republic of Ireland's John Egan played the full game for the home side, with Jake O'Brien getting a substitute cameo for David Moyes' men.

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Olubunmi Farayola Owolabi
(nee Ayodele)

April 3, 1960 to October 12, 2023

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Your memory is still as fresh as ever in our hearts.
We all miss you and love you.

Sleep on dearly beloved until we meet to part no more.



Fondly Remembered by:
A. Gbolahan Ayodele
For the family

Alabi Williams

SMS only: 08116759790;
email: williams.alabi@guardian.ng



Beach Soccer AFCON qualifier: CAF referees' blunders galore continues /38

2027: Tracking Lagos guber trail

THE 2023 elections in Lagos were a shocker for many, particularly the Lagos establishment and their clients. The electoral disruption created by then candidate of the Labour Party (LP) in the presidential election, Peter Obi, was monumental, and it left the strong impression that hard political nuts were still possible to crack.

Traditionally, from 1999, Lagos used to be a clean-sweep for the mainstream party, what used to be Action Congress of Nigeria (ACN), and now the All Progressives Congress (APC). But Obi came and captured Lagos with 582,454 votes, trailed by Bola Ahmed Tinubu, with 572,606 votes. The margin was not massive, but the implication was nightmarish to the old order. It was not in the calculations at the time that a little-known LP or any opposition for that matter, could create such electoral impact.

Even the governorship election that followed on March 18, 2023 was a hard-won for APC, despite the doubly redoubled strokes upon the foe, as Shakespear would say. The LP candidate, Gbadebo Rhodes-Vivour posted an impressive 312,329 votes while incumbent Governor Babajide Sanwo-Olu won by a good margin with 762,134 votes. Could that happen again in 2027?

It was inconceivable and is still is, that Bola Ahmed Tinubu (BAT) and his party could lose their stronghold of Lagos, the source of their political and economic strength. As 2027 is in focus, is Lagos prepared for another round of surprises? Has anything change in the last four years to suggest the likelihood of another resurgence in the opposition?

For a decade and a half until 2015, Lagos used to be the fortress of opposition politics. This is where BAT (the *Jagaban*) once held forth as the consummate leader and defender of opposition politics. Under him, Lagos was ensconced from the turbulence and dislodgements orchestrated by the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) across many states, including five states in the Southwest.

In 2015, BAT took Lagos to the centre as major stakeholder in the APC-led Federal government. Even in those precarious years, Lagos was jealously guarded from predatory federal might. How much more now!

Since 2023, Lagos has not just been the fulcrum of the Federal Government, it is the other consequential center away from Abuja. When President Tinubu is not holidaying in Europe, he comes to Lagos to hold court and ensure that his political investments are intact. Like the good husbandman, President Tinubu has not strayed far from his vineyard. Between May 2023 after he relocated to Abuja and now, a search showed PBAT has visited Lagos for nearly 25 times. No other state is that lucky. It shows how significant Lagos is in the President's calculations.

To ensure nothing goes awry, Tinubu had set up the Governor's Advisory Council (GAC), a conclave of elder statesmen to micromanage local politics on his behalf. Their assignment is to ensure that no overzealous disciple attempts to overthrow the supreme leadership established by the *Jagaban*. They monitor the arms of government and take notes for the Leader. The Leader has ensured that the establishment is well organised and there is peace and stability.

But on one occasion in January 2025, when President Tinubu was in faraway Abu Dhabi, in the UAE, to attend the Sustainability Week (ADSW) Summit, the GAC conspired with 32 of the 40 lawmakers in the Lagos State House of Assembly (LSHA), to remove the Speaker, Mudashiru Obasa.



Obafemi Hamzat

A new Speaker, Mojisola Meranda, was installed. Two weeks later, when President Tinubu returned, he overruled GAC and returned Obasa to office as Speaker. The Leader doesn't joke with Lagos. That is why 2027 is crucial, particularly now that he is the President of the Federal Republic.

Governors who have ruled the state since 2007 are cleared by Tinubu. Leadership in Lagos is not dictated by forces of demand and supply. Once a candidate is anointed, all other aspirants surrender their interests. The primary election to select the 2027 governorship candidate was just to fulfill the requirement of the law.

The institutions of state have been lined up to accept that order and work to deliver. That includes players in the informal sector. It is a value chain that works for the stakeholders, whose political and economic wellbeing is secured as long as the system survives.

For context, Lagos has a projected population exceeding 20 million, a large portion of which is documented and others floating; they come and go. Lagos holds about a quarter of the country's economy, pretty larger than many African countries. Lagos averages around N260 billion monthly in IGR, over N1 trillion per year. That is around 44 per cent of combined IGR generated by the 36 states.

No political party will let go of Lagos without a fight. That's why the stakes appear so high, particularly for those who are traditional custodians of Lagos' wealth. The political leadership and their supporters will leave no stone unturned to maintain their foothold. At the same time, the opposition dreams of the day when governance in Lagos would change hands.

That is why the candidates for the 2027 Lagos State governorship election are upbeat and pushing messages across media platforms. The social media is awash with jabs. In 2023 the ethnic card was played, which was unfortunate because Lagos is outstanding because it is diverse and the competition among groups and persons used to be robust and healthy. That resort to ethnic baiting is



Rhodes-Vivour

still noticeable, with some still bent on playing identity and language politics. But so far, there's a healthy debate out there.

Candidates have followed up with physical visits to sensitive and influential places. They are engaging spiritual leaders in worship centers to present themselves as civilised Lagosians who belong to all. Lagos has been outstanding in managing religious diversity. The business community is not left out in the consultations. Lagos has the largest agglomeration of corporate taxpayers. Banks and financial institutions, oil companies, telcos and others are headquartered in Lagos. The next government cannot afford to be far from them.

Outlook of the parties

Without a doubt, the APC has continued to hold fast to its dominant position in Lagos. Having governed the state since 1999, the ruling party is entrenched across the 245 federally recognised Wards and 376 political Wards, including the Local Council Development Areas (LCDAs). In terms of structure, the APC is formidable.

The party has control of the local governments and the markets. It has a firm control of the House of Assembly. It has more resources and more control of all levers of power and authority. To chal-

No political party will let go of Lagos without a fight. That's why the stakes appear so high, particularly for those who are traditional custodians of Lagos' wealth. The political leadership and their supporters will leave no stone unturned to maintain their foothold. At the same time, the opposition dreams of the day when governance in Lagos would change hands.

lenge the APC in Lagos is always like a fight between David and Goliath. 2023 was a departure from the norm.

The African Democratic Congress (ADC), is obviously the next most visible party in Lagos. Since 2023, Rhodes-Vivour has kept the opposition flame burning. The ADC has more weight across the country than other opposition parties. When push comes to shove, it can count on other heavyweights outside Lagos for support and mobilisation.

The Nigeria Democratic Congress (NDC), in Lagos is mildly visible. The idea is that Lagos NDC could utilise the popularity of its presidential candidate Peter Obi, to make inroads in certain constituencies of Lagos, the way it happened in 2023. But it appears voters may become doubtful of the fidelity of candidates who appropriate the Obi political aura to win elections only to surrender their victory to the ruling party.

The PDP in Lagos has receded from its position of number one opposition in the state. Over the years, the Jagaban took advantage of the party's weak arrowheads in the state to depopulate and neutralise it. The Jagaban has also just perfected the complete annihilation of the PDP at the centre, with the hiring of FCT Minister, Nyesom Wike.

The Allied Peoples Movement (APM), Social Democratic Party (SDP), Labour Party (LP), Zenith Labour Party (ZLP) and eight others have presented candidates for the Lagos governorship election.

Despite formidable strength or structural weaknesses of parties, there are other Nigerians whose votes are needed for parties to win elections. As it happened in 2023, there are non-party bystanders who are waiting for the elections to come. They have their preference and parameters.

For instance, some naturally yearn for change. The dominance of one party in the state for 27 years has created a political cult from which millions of Lagosians have no access. Access is therefore, one critical area campaigners must work on to broaden their reach. The flow of resources in the political value chain of Lagos has been consistent, from the state to ward levels.

The contractors and suppliers of materials have to be members of the same party to guarantee returns and electoral support. The skewedness has implication for political participation and inclusion. This has gone on in Lagos for too long and outsiders see the recycling of persons and groups, while others are denied opportunity to get involved. It is a patronage system that benefits a few.

The winner-takes-all system is blamed by the opposition and accountability groups for what they describe as the deeply entrenched opacity and lack of transparency in the application of resources in the state. They allege that it is difficult to pry into the books because the system is too closeknit to allow transparency to take place. They want a change.

There are others who want the rule of law to prevail in the state. They want their governor to be his own man and nobody's boy. They want their governor to be respected and allowed to exercise the powers granted him by the Constitution. In other words, they're tired of godfathers working behind the scene and dictating for the governor. They also want an independent legislature, where members are allowed to decide their leadership, one that is accountable to the people.

However, for the opposition to reenact that 2023 surprise in Lagos, perhaps, they need to work together. They're too fragmented.

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