



IMF, FG admit reform pains as Nigerians battle high living costs

PAGE 6



Tinubu rallies judiciary to hasten corruption trials

NEWS PAGE 5



2027: INEC, security agencies, party leaders, others meet in Lagos

NEWS PAGE 3

NASS, NAF, NSIB probe Ondo plane crash, search for bodies

NEWS PAGE 3



NAFDAC uncovers 'fake drinks factory' in Lagos, arrests two suspects

NEWS PAGE 7



NUC sanctions two universities over honorary degrees, introduces AI policy framework

NEWS PAGE 5

Debt office plans N5.75 trillion bond offer as FG's borrowing surges 106%

BUSINESS PAGE 15

Tinubu's re-election bid draws opposition figures into APC coalition

NEWS PAGE 6



Governor, Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), Mr Olayemi Cardoso (left); Minister of Finance and Coordinating Minister of the Economy, Mr Taiwo Oyelede; and Director, G-24 Secretariat, Iyabo Masha, at the G-24 press briefing yesterday, during the Annual Meetings of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank in Bangkok, Thailand.



Founder, Aruwa Capital Management, Adesuwa Okunbo-Rhodes (3rd left); Group Managing Director/CEO, Zenith Bank Plc, Dame Dr Adaora Umeoji (5th left); The Queen Consort of Warri Kingdom, Her Majesty, Olori Atuwatse III (4th right); and Executive Director, Zenith Bank Plc, Mrs Adobi Nwapa, with girls from selected schools in Lagos during the maiden edition of the Zenith Bank Girl-Child Empowerment Programme held at the Civic Centre, Victoria Island, Lagos, on Monday.



Mr Moyosore Bamigbade (left); former Senior Special Advisor on industrialisation to the President of the African Development Bank (AfDB), Prof. Oyeyinka Oyeboji-Oyelaran; former President, AfDB, Dr Akinwumi A. Adesina; Chairman, City Boy Movement, Mr Seyi Tinubu; GMD, Sahara Power Group, Mr Kola Adesina and Hon. Moyosore Adebajo, during the inaugural edition of the Seyi Tinubu Colloquium, held in Lagos under the theme, 'Shaping the Future Together'.

Panorama

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SPOTLIGHT

NAFDAC uncovers 20 illegal stores, seizes products worth N2b in Lagos

By Ijeoma Nwanosike

THE National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control (NAFDAC) has uncovered more than 20 illegal stores allegedly involved in counterfeit alcoholic beverage operations at the International Trade Fair Complex, Lagos State, with products seized and evacuated from the premises valued at over N2 billion. The operation by the agency's Investigation and Enforcement Directorate also led to the arrest of two suspects allegedly involved in

counterfeiting popular alcoholic beverage brands, revalidating expired and unsafe drinks for resale, and stockpiling banned imported products.

According to NAFDAC, the illegal operations were concealed within makeshift parking stores on the premises, where its operatives discovered activities involving the production and revalidation of counterfeit beverages.

The agency had earlier disclosed in a video posted on its official X account that it uncovered a suspected facility at

Zamfara Plaza, BBA Trade Fair Complex, where expired energy drinks and popular wine and whisky brands were allegedly being revalidated for sale.

In the video, an agency official showed operatives inspecting drinks awaiting the removal of their expiry labels, alongside chemicals and equipment suspected to have been used in the process.

The official also displayed packaging materials, new bottle corks and what was described as a filtration system comprising a large bowl con-

taining liquid.

According to the official, the suspects allegedly supplied the revalidated drinks to bars and nightclubs through arrangements with some bar managers, raising concerns about the possible circulation of expired or falsified alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages.

NAFDAC urged members of the public to remain vigilant and report suspicious manufacturing, revalidation or sales activities through the agency's official complaints line.

Nigeria secures UN Human Rights Council seat

NIGERIA has been elected to the United Nations Human Rights Council, securing 172 votes out of 181. The election marks a significant step in the country's engagement with the UN body responsible for promoting and protecting human rights globally.

Alongside Nigeria, the General Assembly also elected 14 other countries across Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean to the Geneva-based United Nations Human Rights Council.

The 15 members elected are to serve a three-year term from 2027 to 2029 starting from January 1, 2027 and end on 31 December 2029.

The 14 other countries elected alongside Nigeria through a secret ballot were: Brazil, Burundi, Dominican Republic, Germany, Ghana, Ireland, Japan, Jordan, Kuwait, Moldova, Nepal, Ukraine, Uruguay and Zambia.

The United Nations Human Rights Council comprising 47 member states is charged with the promotion and protection of human rights around the world.

However, Burundi, Ghana, Japan, Kuwait, Brazil and the Dominican Republic were re-elected into the Council.

Bassey, five others win €36,000 for global actions against ecological collapse

By Chinedum Uwaegbulam

NIGERIAN environmentalist and Right Livelihood Award laureate Dr Nnimmo Bassey and five other extraordinary individuals from around the world including Berta Cáceres from Honduras, who was assassinated in 2016 due to her resistance have been named the winners of the Courageous Scientists Award for fighting for justice in the face of ecological and climate collapse.

Initiated by the Austrian architectural historian Dr Norbert Mayr, the award endowed with €5,000 per laureate, honours exceptionally courageous scientists and activists from around the globe. It will be presented for the second time

today (October 13) during a celebratory gala at Vienna's Porgy & Bess Jazz Club.

The Courageous Scientists Award for Environmental and Climate Justice has been awarded annually since 2025 and is funded by the Forum for Eco-Social Transformations (Vienna) under the leadership of Mayr. The award honors scientists and socially engaged individuals who, aware of ecological collapse, stand up for the protection of the climate and our shared environment, despite significant personal risks and political resistance.

Among the recipients is Ana Laide Soares Barbosa of Brazil, fighting alongside the movement Movimento Xingu Vivo

para Sempre against exploitative mega-projects threatening the rivers, forests, and indigenous territories of the Xingu region.

Akino Miyagi of Japan was recognized for raising awareness about the environmental impact of U.S. military bases despite state persecution.

Also, Dr Malik Oedin of New Caledonia earned the award for his work protecting biological diversity and involving local communities through the organisation Gardiens Des Îles, as well as Seble Samue of ETHIOPIA for reclaiming public space and traditional ecological practices and transforming the right to the city across Urban Ethiopia.

Nigerian lawyer wins IBA Pro Bono award for championing access to justice

By Yetunde Ayobami Ojo

NIGERIAN lawyer, Yusuf Temilola Nurudeen, has received the International Bar Association (IBA) Pro Bono Award in recognition of his commitment to providing access to justice for indigent and vulnerable people.

Nurudeen received the award at the IBA's annual awards breakfast in Copenhagen, Denmark. Other recipients included Charmaine Yao, who won the Outstanding Young Lawyer Award, and Zar Li Aye, who was honoured for outstanding contribution by a legal practitioner to human rights.

The award was presented by Babatunde Ajibade, SAN, chair

of the IBA Section on Public and Professional Interest (SPPI) for 2025-2026, alongside other executives of the section, which promotes the exchange of information and views on public and professional interest issues affecting the legal profession worldwide.

Nurudeen dedicated the recognition to 141 volunteer lawyers working across 18 states in Nigeria through the Foundation for Public Interest Law and Development, also known as The Pro Bono Centre. The lawyers provide legal assistance to people who cannot afford representation.

In his acceptance speech, Nurudeen described access to justice as a personal cause rooted

in his upbringing in Ikotun, Lagos, where he grew up and became the first lawyer in his family.

He said the possibility that his father could have suffered wrongful incarceration, similar to the experiences of two Nigerians he cited, might have deprived him of the opportunity to pursue his ambitions. "If my father had been wrongfully arrested and incarcerated for thirteen years, like Igba Isaac, or eight years, like Pa Idowu Fashola, my dreams might have been cut short," he said.

He explained that such an experience could have deprived his father of his freedom and him of the opportunity to become a lawyer.

RANDOM FACTS

• Watching your team lose can trigger heart attacks.

• Nigerian model, Oma Osele has won the 2026 Miss Continental World competition in Thailand.

• Ghana's Government is set to paint 1.28 million houses across the country to beautify the nation ahead of its 70th Independence Day celebration in 2027.

• Ethiopia has opened its first national precious metals refinery to process gold locally and increase domestic value.

TODAY'S QUOTE

Politics is war without bloodshed while war is politics with bloodshed.

When the enemy advances, withdraw; When he stops, harass; When he tires, strike; When he retreats, pursue.

MAO TSE-TUNG

Optimists and pessimists die the same way. They just live differently. I prefer to live as an optimist.

The most important thing in life is to dare. The most complicated thing in life is to be afraid. The smartest thing in the world is to try to be a moral person.

SHIMON PERES

TODAY IN HISTORY

• World Standards Day
• 2025 - Madagascar A coup d'état successfully overthrew Malagasy president Andry Rajoelina.

• 2023 - Nigeria Borno Police Command stopped thieves from carting away train coaches at the Maiduguri Railway Terminus after a tip-off.

• 2021 - Nigeria Ex-Senate President, Dr Iyorchia Ayu, emerged consensus chairmanship candidate of the Peoples Democratic Party ahead of its Oct 31 national elective convention holding at Eagles Square, Abuja. A candidate emerged each from the North Central, North West, and North-East geopolitical zones. Ex-Katsina Governor, Ibrahim Shema was North West candidate, Senator Suleiman Nazif from Bauchi, current PDP Deputy National Chairman (North), emerged Northeast candidate and the North Central chose Ayu from Benue State.

• 2021 - USA About 10,000 American employees of John Deere went on strike.

• 2017 - Somalia A massive truck bombing in Somalia killed 358 people and injured over 400 others.

• 2014 - Serbia The Serbia vs. Albania UEFA qualifying match was canceled after 42 minutes due to several incidents on and off the pitch. Albania was eventually awarded a win.

• 2012 - Austria Felix Baumgartner successfully jumped to Earth from a balloon in the stratosphere.

• 1994 - Palestine Yasser Arafat, Yitzhak Rabin and Shimon Peres received Nobel Peace Prize for their role in establishment of the Oslo Accords and the framing of future Palestinian self government

• 1991 - Burma Opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi was awarded Nobel Peace Prize.

• 1981 - Egypt Vice President Hosni Mubarak was elected as President of Egypt, one week after the assassination of Anwar Sadat.

• 1976 - China Mao Tse-tung, Communist party chairman died at 82 in Beijing. In 1965, he launched the controversial Cultural Revolution, an often-brutal campaign to reform Chinese society. He was later held responsible for 70 million deaths.

• 1964 - USA Martin Luther King Jr. got Nobel Peace Prize for combating racial inequality through nonviolence.

... DAY 4553

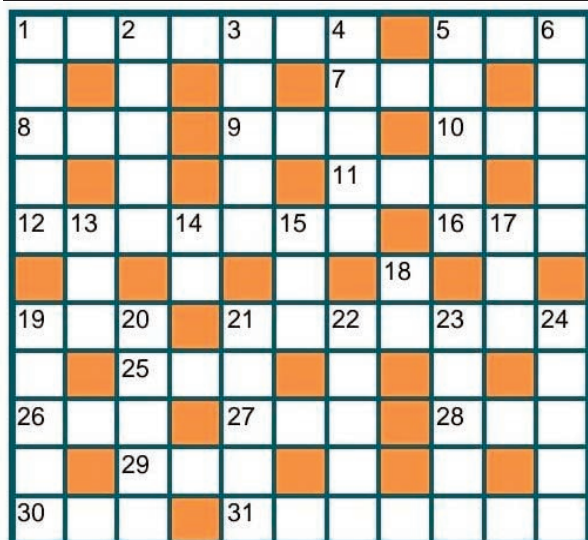
OUR GIRLS
STILL
MISSING

Tope Templer Olaiya,
News Editor

@TopeTempler



CROSS WORD PUZZLE



• ACROSS

1. LGA in Katsina State, (7).
5. Whole of, (3).
7. Of great size, (3).
8. And not, (3).
9. Yoruba King, (3).
10. Animal reproductive structure, (3)
11. Small tattered piece, (3).
12. LGA in Nasarawa State, (7).
16. Electronic shoplifting prevention, abbr.
19. Internally-Displaced People, abbr.
21. Give in marriage, (7).
25. Accounting rate of return, abbr.
26. Extrasensory perception, abbr. (3)
27. Syrian cloth, (3).
28. Int'l. Labor Organization, abbr.
29. Eastern Daylight Time, abbr., (3).
30. Gases forming atmosphere, (3).
31. LGA in Oyo State, (7).

• DOWN

1. Orange beverage, (5).
2. Mammal with pointed nose, (5)
3. Fruit of oak, (5).
4. Town in Abeokuta North, (5).
5. LGA in Lagos State, (5).
6. Nigeria's commercial city, (5).
13. A young goat, (3).
14. Tool for cutting, (2).
15. Fossil fuel, (3).
17. Electronic braking system, abbr.
18. Depart, (2).
19. Town in Osun State, (5).
20. Academic article, (5).
21. Greek Muse of lyric poetry, (5)
22. Malayan sailboat, (5).
23. United Nations organ, (5).
24. Display exaggerated emotions, (5).

Check page 31 for solution to the puzzle

News

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NASS, NAF, NSIB probe Ondo plane crash, search for bodies

From John Akubo, Sodiq Omolaoye (Abuja), Adewale Momoh (Akure) and Opeyemi Babalola (Lagos)

FOLLOWING the crash of an ATR-42 aircraft in Igbokoda, Ondo State, last week, which claimed 32 lives, the Senate has demanded a detailed account of funds allocated for Nigerian Air Force (NAF) aircraft maintenance.

This was as NAF intensified search and recovery efforts. The body has also constituted a 12-member board to investigate the incident.

The lawmakers also called for a transparent investigation into the October 5 crash, directing NAF and the Nigerian Safety Investigation Bureau

Monarch, residents lament stench of decomposing bodies, aviation fuel

(NSIB) to establish the immediate and underlying causes of the incident.

Similarly, the House of Representatives called for an independent investigation into the fatal crash.

More than a week after the tragedy, residents of the coastal community are confronting a worsening environmental and public health situation, with decomposing human remains and spilt aviation fuel said to be contaminating the river.

The Senate reached the resolutions yesterday following a motion sponsored by the Chairman of Senate Committee on Air Force, Osita Ngwu (PDP, Enugu West).

Ngwu told the lawmakers that the aircraft, with tail number NGR 931, was reportedly on a

routine mission from Benin City to Lagos when it crashed near the Naval Base in Igbokoda, headquarters of Ilaje Local Council of Ondo State.

He said air traffic controllers lost contact with the aircraft at about 9:13 a.m., while efforts to reach the crew by radio proved unsuccessful till search-and-rescue teams located the wreckage.

The incident has raised fresh questions about the maintenance of military aircraft, the condition of ageing fleets and the safety procedures governing military aviation operations.

Senator Adams Oshiomhole (APC, Edo North) intensified the scrutiny by asking the NAF to submit details of its aircraft maintenance budget to the

Senate through the relevant committee.

Oshiomhole said the lawmakers needed to establish how much the Air Force allocated for maintaining the aircraft involved in the crash.

Seconding the additional prayer, Senator Titus Tartenger (APC, Benue North-West) called for an assessment of the funds provided for aircraft maintenance and whether the allocation was adequate.

The Senate subsequently mandated its committees on Air Force and Aviation to visit the crash site, engage relevant military authorities and assess the serviceability and airworthiness of military aircraft.

They called on the NAF and NSIB to make the findings of their investigation public.

In the same vein, the House, during plenary yesterday, called for a comprehensive audit of military aircraft and their maintenance systems.

That was after Alhassan Usman (APC, Kano) moved an urgent motion on the incident, urging the Federal Government to strengthen aircraft maintenance, ensure adequate funding for the military and improve operational safety.

Usman said the loss of military personnel underscored the need for sustained investment in military aviation infrastructure, aircraft maintenance and the logistical support required to keep military aircraft operational and safe.

Donald Ojogo (APC, Ondo) supported the motion but called for an independent in-

vestigation into the crash, saying the circumstances surrounding the incident required further scrutiny.

He added that the proposed investigation should not prevent NAF from conducting its own inquiry.

Read the remaining story on www.guardian.ng

2027: INEC, security agencies, party leaders, others meet in Lagos

- CSOs warn against ethnic bias claims over INEC staff redeployments
- Olawepo-Hashim blames distrust, poverty, insecurity for voter apathy

From Sodiq Omolaoye, Abuja

THE Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) in Lagos State met with security agencies, political parties and other stakeholders yesterday to strengthen collaboration and ensure peaceful conduct of the 2027 general elections.

Speaking at the stakeholders' meeting in Lagos, the state's Resident Electoral Commissioner (REC), Prof. Ayobami Salami, said the meeting also aimed to mobilise public support for the effective implementation of the commission's electoral plans.

Also, yesterday, the Coalition of Civil Society Organisations Against Corruption (COCOAC) cautioned against unverified allegations of ethnic favouritism and political interference in INEC staff redeployments.

Relatedly, former presidential candidate, Gbenga Olawepo-Hashim, has identified distrust in the electoral process, insecurity, logistical challenges, dissatisfaction with candidates and perceptions of predetermined outcomes as factors contributing to declining voter turnout in Nigeria.

Salami said the commission was intensifying preparations in logistics, personnel deployment, election security, voter education and accessibility. He said INEC had moved from strategic planning to active operational implementation, with nine of the 14 scheduled milestones for the 2027 elections already accomplished as of October 6.

Fuel discount not return to subsidy regime, says CPPE

- HURIWA says N1,370 pump price offers no relief
- Agbakoba urges presidential candidates to state positions on petrol pricing

By Bertram Nwannekanma and Tobi Awodipe

THE Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Centre for the Promotion of Private Enterprise (CPPE), Dr Muda Yusuf, has said the Federal Government's fuel price relief initiative through the Nigerian National Petroleum Company Limited (NNPCL) should not be interpreted as a reversal of petroleum subsidy removal, describing it as a temporary intervention to cushion the impact of the global energy crisis.

Meanwhile, the Human Rights Writers Association of Nigeria (HURIWA) criticised the Federal Government's 30-day petrol discount initiative, describing the N66 per-litre reduction as inadequate relief for Nigerians struggling with rising fuel prices and the cost of living.

In his part, former President of the Nigerian Bar Association (NBA), Dr Olisa Agbakoba, has urged presidential candidates in the 2027 general election to publicly declare their positions on petroleum pricing, describing fuel costs as a potentially decisive issue for voters.

In a policy brief issued yesterday, Yusuf said the recent escalation in petroleum product prices was driven principally by developments in the global energy market, particularly geopolitical tensions that had pushed crude oil prices above \$100 per barrel.

He argued that the price surge was an external shock affecting both oil-producing and oil-importing economies and was neither a consequence of Nigeria's subsidy removal policy nor peculiar to the country.

Read the remaining story on www.guardian.ng



Former Governor of Plateau State, Simon Lalong (left); former Minister of Defence, Muhammed Abubakar; former Governor of Kano State, Ibrahim Shakarau and Vice President Kashim Shettima during the Vice President's meeting with Arewa for Asiwaju (A4A) at the Presidential Villa, Abuja.

2027: Makinde Campaign, Falana query N15tr Lagos-Calabar Coastal Highway

From Azimazi Momoh Jimoh (Abuja) Nnamdi Akpa (Abakaliki)

THE Makinde-Daura Presidential Campaign Organisation (MDPCO) has demanded an independent audit of the N15 trillion Lagos-Calabar coastal highway project, accusing the President Bola Tinubu administration of inadequate planning and a lack of transparency in its execution.

Also, human rights lawyer, Femi Falana, called on Nigerians to demand accountability from the Federal Government in the N15 trillion Lagos-Calabar highway, questioning reported changes to the project's route.

However, a group, Ndigbo for Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu 2027 Forum NDI-ABAT, yesterday, urged the critics of President Bola Tinubu on the highway, especially former Vice President Atiku Abubakar, to look beyond partisan differences and assess the decision in the context of national development.

Group tells critics to keep politics out of infrastructure devt

MDPCO also called on the Federal Government to publish all procurement and payment records relating to the highway, along with engineering assessments, the cost implications of the recent route realignment, and a comprehensive account of the amount spent so far.

The Director-General of MDPCO, Felix Hyat, at a briefing yesterday, described the controversy surrounding the project as a test of the government's commitment to transparency and accountability in managing public resources.

Hyat said the decision to realign part of the highway, as announced by the Minister of Works, David Umahi, raised questions about the adequacy of the project's original design, the assessment of environmental challenges, and the process through which the contract was awarded.

He argued that the develop-

ment warranted a fresh examination of the project's technical and financial foundations, particularly given its reported cost and the country's competing infrastructure needs.

While stressing that the organisation was not opposed to road construction, Hyat said the circumstances surrounding the realignment raised concerns about whether sufficient engineering and environmental assessments were conducted before work commenced.

He also questioned Umahi's subsequent denial of an earlier announcement that Tinubu had directed the realignment, insisting that video evidence of the minister's statement contradicted the denial.

The campaign director-general maintained that the Federal Government owed Nigerians a clear explanation of the reasons for the route adjustment and its implications

for the project's overall cost.

FALANA expressed concern that the coastal highway, initially designed to run along Nigeria's coastline, has now been redirected inland in some sections, raising questions about the project's original plan and funding.

He made the remarks in a video shared by *News Central*, in which he also urged Nigerians to defend their votes in the 2027 general elections, regardless of their political affiliation.

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News Analysis

Kiddies' zone: When content creation goes overboard

The worsening in-country poverty and the struggle for survival have made many Nigerians social media content creators, but with attendant exploitative and indecent online content. This has raised questions over legal gaps, monetisation, algorithmic amplification, and platform accountability, AMEH OCHOJILA reports.

A CHILD is filmed during a moment of distress. Within minutes, the video is on social media. Before the family fully understands what has happened, strangers are commenting, sharing and reposting the distress. The person who uploaded it gains attention, followers and potential money, while the child has little control over where the images go or how long they remain online.

This is one of the darker consequences of Nigeria's rapidly expanding creator economy. The same attention that can turn a social media post into income can also turn a child's vulnerability into content.

Across Nigeria, the race for views has become increasingly competitive. Creators need audiences, platforms need engagement, and advertisers need eyeballs. Consequently, controversy, confrontation, humiliation and sensationalism can travel faster than carefully produced or responsible content.

There is nothing inherently unlawful about monetising digital content, as thousands of Nigerians legitimately use social media to earn a living, promote businesses, educate audiences and build careers. The concern arises when the commercial value attached to engagement collides with the privacy, dignity and safety of children.

Nigeria's Cybercrime (Prohibition, Prevention, etc.) Act, as amended in 2024, already criminalises several forms of online exploitation involving children, including specified forms of grooming and solicitation through information and communications technology for sexual purposes. It also addresses the exploitation of children for pornographic performances.

However, criminalising conduct after it occurs addresses only part of the problem. Social media allows content to be amplified within seconds, reproduced indefinitely, and, where monetisation is involved, converted into commercial value.

A child does not experience the Internet as sections of the Cybercrime Act, rather, he/she encounters recommendations, messages, videos, livestreams, comments, algorithms, influencers and strangers, often across several platforms at once. That reality exposes a gap between conventional criminal enforcement and the architecture of the modern digital economy.

The issue is therefore no longer confined to the person who produces harmful material; it also concerns the systems through which the material is amplified, the commercial incentives attached to engagements and the safeguards available when a child becomes part of the content.

No doubt monetisation has created legitimate livelihoods for entertainers, educators, journalists and entrepreneurs. At the same time, instant engagement data can create a powerful feedback loop. Creators can identify what attracts audiences, while platforms use engagement signals to determine what receives greater visibility.

Unfortunately, a private moment can become a viral clip. A family dispute can become entertainment. A confrontation can become a livestream. An embarrassing incident can be transformed into content and circulated far beyond those who witnessed it.

Once such material begins generating engagement, the interests of the creator and the child can diverge sharply. The creator may gain visibility and commercial value, while the child bears the reputational, emotional and privacy consequences.

Legal experts said that the imbalance is difficult to address through criminal prosecution alone.

The Cybercrime Act was enacted in 2015, when the social media economy was considerably less developed. Although amended in 2024, the digital environment has continued to evolve through creator monetisation, recommendation algorithms and increasingly sophisticated online interaction.

The regulatory challenge has consequently moved beyond identifying individual offences to addressing systemic risks. Where a child is exposed to harmful material, contacted by unknown adults or made the subject of widely circulated content, an individual offender may be identifiable. Yet the circumstances may also involve platform design, recommendation systems, privacy settings and inadequate reporting mechanisms.

It is important to note that other jurisdictions are already examining that wider responsibility. Australia, for instance, introduced rules requiring designated social media platforms, from December 10, 2025, to take reasonable steps to prevent Australians under 16 from holding accounts. The obligation is placed on platforms rather than children or their parents, with corporations potentially facing civil penalties of up to A\$54.6 million for failing to comply.

The Australian model is significant because it shifts part of the responsibility upstream, towards the companies that design and operate the digital environment. Parental supervision remains important, but parents cannot realistically monitor every recommendation delivered by an algorithm, every account interacting with a child or every piece of material subsequently copied and redistributed.

The European Union has approached the issue from another direction, with greater emphasis on safety by design. In July 2025, the European Commission issued guidelines under the Digital Services Act recommending measures, including private-by-default accounts for minors, stronger controls over recommender systems, easier blocking and muting, restrictions on adding children to groups without their consent and safeguards against unwanted distribution of material posted by minors. It also recommended disabling certain features associated with excessive engagement, including autoplay and push notifications.

The approach recognises that online harm does not always begin with a single unlawful message. Sometimes it is connected to the way a service is designed to retain attention. If a platform is built around maximising engagement, the regulatory concern therefore extends beyond individual creators to the systems determining what users are encouraged to see, share and consume.

For Nigeria, that distinction is increasingly relevant. Country Director, AccountabilityLab Nigeria, Friday Odeh, said Nigeria's legal framework remains structurally inadequate because online child exploitation is treated largely as a general cybercrime, child protection or data governance issue rather than as a distinct form of commercial digital exploitation.

According to him, although the Child Rights Act, Cybercrimes Act and Nigeria Data Protection Act address abuse, sexual exploitation, privacy and children's data, they do not adequately regulate sharing for profit, algorithmic

amplification or the commercial incentives behind staged or exploitative content.

Odeh said parental consent could also become a legal vulnerability where the parent is the exploiter. He cited the recent Onitsha case, in which a mother reportedly told police she

earned up to \$300 from uploading a pornographic video involving her eight-year-old daughter to TikTok.

The case, he said, illustrated how financial incentives could operate faster than existing safeguards. Odeh also noted that although the House of Representatives passed the Child Online Access Protection Bill in December 2025, it has yet to become a law, leaving the specific regulatory gap unresolved.

He called for clear and enforceable duties on creators who feature children online, including documented, content-specific consent that identifies the material, platforms, duration, and commercial purpose. However, he stressed that consent should never legitimise content showing a child in distress, danger, humiliation, sexualised circumstances or other situations likely to cause psychological harm.

Lawyers say Nigeria already has several legal provisions capable of addressing the online exploitation of children, but the framework remains fragmented across child protection, privacy, data protection, cybercrime and intermediary regulation.

Human rights lawyer Deji Ajare said the Child Rights Act 2003 provides a broad foundation, particularly its provisions on the best

interests of the child, privacy, dignity and protection from exploitation.

He noted that these provisions can apply where a child's humiliation, distress, illness, grief or other private experiences are deliberately exposed online for engagement or financial gain. The Nigeria Data Protection Act 2023 provides an additional layer by treating identifiable images, videos and other information as personal data and providing enhanced safeguards for children.

Ajare stressed, however, that parental consent should not be regarded as a "blank cheque" to commercialise a child's dignity, because the child remains an independent rights-holder whose best interests must be considered.

He also pointed to NITDA's Code of Practice for Interactive Computer Service Platforms and Internet Intermediaries, which contains provisions on harmful content involving children, including reporting, risk assessment and take-down obligations. In his view, however, effective protection must go beyond deleting an original post, because harmful material can be quickly downloaded, reposted, and circulated across multiple accounts.

An Abuja-based constitutional lawyer and human rights activist, Okueyelegbe S.E. Maliki, similarly described the existing framework as a "patchwork" in which responsibility is clearer for creators than for platforms.

He distinguished between the person who creates harmful material, the person who publishes

or redistributes it, and the platform that hosts, recommends, monetises or amplifies it.

Maliki said the legal uncertainty becomes more significant where a platform knows that material is harmful to a child, but its recommendation systems continue to push the content to wider audiences while generating revenue. He argued that existing rules do not yet clearly establish when algorithmic amplification itself creates platform liability.

He also pointed to the emerging judicial debate over intermediary responsibility in *Femi Falana v Meta Platforms Inc.*, saying the case illustrates the unresolved question of where platform responsibility ends and the independent responsibility of a content creator begins.

A lawyer in the chambers of Sunday Godwin Ogboji (SAN), John C. Ekeleme, said the creator's responsibility is comparatively clearer under existing law, pointing to the Child Rights Act, Cybercrimes Act and Nigeria Data Protection Act. He added that where online material amounts to defamation, a child may also have a route to civil redress through a parent or guardian acting on the child's behalf.

Ekeleme, however, identified a significant gap in platform accountability. He said NITDA's Code of Practice is a regulatory instrument rather than a dedicated statute imposing comprehensive duties on social-media platforms, particularly in relation to algorithmic amplification and revenue derived from harmful content. He also said those who knowingly reshare and profit from abusive material may face liability depending on their conduct, but that the law is less clear where responsibility extends beyond the original creator.

Taken together, the lawyers assess that Nigeria is not without legal remedies for children whose privacy, dignity or welfare is violated online. The more difficult issue is the allocation of responsibility across the entire digital-content chain, particularly where harmful material is not merely uploaded but recommended, amplified and monetised.

They, therefore, called for clearer platform-specific child-safety obligations covering areas such as safety by design, effective reporting and removal mechanisms, restrictions on monetising exploitative child content, algorithmic risk assessment, transparency over recommendation systems and clearer standards for platform liability after notice or where a platform's systems materially contribute to foreseeable harm.

Also, the Convener of the Security Situation Room, Douglas Ogbankwa, said the amended Cybercrimes Act already contains provisions applicable to some forms of online sexual exploitation and sextortion. He said Section 24(1) and (2) criminalises certain forms of cyberstalking and sextortion involving pornographic or indecent material transmitted through a computer system or network for extortion, threats or obtaining a pecuniary or other benefit.

According to Ogbankwa, a lawyer, the provision carries a punishment of up to 10 years' imprisonment and/or a fine of up to N25 million. He also pointed to Section 23 of the amended Act, which prohibits the production, procurement, distribution, transmission, making available or possession of material depicting a child in a pornographic or sexually explicit act, including where the material is used for entertainment or gain.

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



AGF Fagbemi

IGP Disu

Nigeria's legal framework remains structurally inadequate because online child exploitation is treated largely as a general cybercrime, child protection or data governance issue rather than as a distinct form of commercial digital exploitation.



Ogbankwa

Tinubu rallies judiciary to hasten corruption trials

From Terhemba Daka, Abuja

PRESIDENT Bola Tinubu has urged the judiciary to close procedural loopholes exploited by politically exposed persons and organised criminal networks to delay or frustrate corruption trials, calling for reforms to strengthen the prosecution of financial and economic crimes.

The President said the fight against corruption required an independent, progressive, and reform-minded judiciary capable of responding to evolving criminal tactics and ensuring that legal technicalities

• Demands review of prosecution strategies, stronger capacity

did not become instruments of frustration for justice.

Tinubu made the call yesterday in Abuja while addressing the eighth yearly Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC)/National Judicial Institute (NJI) Capacity Building Workshop for Judges and Justices. He was represented by Vice President Kashim Shettima.

With the theme, 'Investigation and Prosecution of Economic and Financial Crimes in a Digital Age', the workshop focused on strengthening the capacity

of judicial officers to address the growing complexities of financial crimes driven by technological innovation.

The President urged judicial officers to scrutinise existing legal frameworks and prosecution strategies, identify gaps in the administration of criminal justice and reconsider outdated precedents that could be exploited to undermine the effective prosecution of offenders.

President Tinubu described financial and economic crimes as a major threat to Nigeria's

development, warning against treating the anti-corruption campaign as the exclusive responsibility of the executive arm of government.

He said corruption undermined public institutions across all arms of government and imposed a burden on ordinary Nigerians, making the fight against graft a collective responsibility.

"We must no longer permit legal pyrotechnics and procedural pedantry to shelter criminality. The Bench is not merely a mechanical arbiter

of rules, but an active guardian of moral order and social equity," the President said.

He added that the law should serve the broader public interest rather than protect narrow interests through technical manoeuvres.

"Our courts must embody the spirit, and not just the arid letter, of the law," he said.

The President said that meaningful progress in the fight against corruption would remain elusive without an independent and reform-oriented judiciary, commending the EFCC and the NJI for sus-

taining their collaboration in judicial capacity development.

He said the rapid evolution of technology had expanded the reach and sophistication of criminal activities, with blockchain technology and artificial intelligence introducing new complexities into the investigation and prosecution of financial crimes.

According to him, law enforcement agencies and judicial authorities must continuously upgrade their skills and procedures to keep pace with emerging criminal methods.

FG processes 156,026 import licences, permits in six months

From Sodiq Omolayo, Abuja

FEDERAL Government's National Single Window (NSW) platform has processed 156,026 licences, permits and certificates since its launch on March 27, 2026.

This is as the government intensifies efforts to digitise trade procedures and improve the efficiency of import and export processes.

The Project Director of the National Single Window, Tola Fakolade, disclosed this during a press conference in Abuja yesterday, while presenting an update on the platform's implementation, achievements and next phase of development.

Fakolade said more than 12,000 importers, customs agents, shipping lines, airlines and freight forwarders had registered on the platform, while over 8,000 users had received training.



Chairman, House Sub-Committee on Host Communities, Clement Jimbo (left); Chairman, House Committee on Host Communities, Dumnamene Dekor; Deputy Chairman of the Committee, Abdulkadir Hussaini, and another member of the committee, Peter Aniekwe, during a news conference on the outcome of the review meeting on effectiveness of the pipeline security surveillance contract and decision on petitions against Pipeline Infrastructure Nigeria Limited and its leadership at the National Assembly in Abuja, yesterday.

PHOTO: NAN

NUC sanctions two universities over honorary degrees, introduces AI policy framework

From Owede Agbajileke, Abuja

NATIONAL Universities Commission (NUC) has sanctioned two universities for violating its guidelines on the conferment of honorary doctorate degrees, eight months after warning institutions against the indiscriminate award and misuse of the titles.

The Executive Secretary of the commission, Prof. Abdullahi Ribadu, disclosed this yesterday in Abuja at the opening of the 2026 NUC Retreat with vice-chancellors of Nigerian universities.

Although Ribadu did not name the affected universities or disclose the sanctions im-

posed, the action signals the commission's resolve to enforce its guidelines on honorary degrees.

In February, the Commission warned against the growing incidence of indiscriminate conferment and misuse of honorary doctorate degrees, threatening sanctions against institutions that violated its guidelines and individuals who abused the titles.

The Commission's latest action comes as it intensifies its efforts to strengthen regulatory compliance, institutional governance, research and innovation, and digital transformation across the Nigerian University System.

Speaking at the retreat, Ribadu

urged vice-chancellors to embrace ethical leadership, strengthen institutional governance, and forge strategic partnerships to improve the quality and global competitiveness of Nigerian universities.

He highlighted key initiatives, including deploying the e-NUC platform to automate the commission's operations, developing a National Artificial Intelligence Roadmap and Policy Framework, and introducing accreditation software to improve transparency and efficiency.

Ribadu also emphasised the need to strengthen research commercialisation, urging universities to translate re-

search findings into practical solutions, marketable products and innovations capable of addressing national development challenges.

He called on university leaders to commit to measurable actions that would advance university education, improve institutional performance and position Nigerian universities to compete globally.

The two-day retreat, themed "Enhancing Regulatory Compliance, Governance, Leadership, and Partnership in the Nigerian University System," brought together vice-chancellors, strategic partners, and NUC management to tackle emerging challenges in university education.

Fake phones disrupt network quality for other users, NCC warns

• Nigerians consume 11.93m terabytes in eight months, despite poor services

From Adeyemi Adepetun (Lagos) and Joel Oladele (Abuja)

NIGERIAN Communications Commission (NCC) has warned that fake and substandard mobile phones can disrupt network quality for other subscribers sharing the same telecommunications infrastructure.

The commission said the devices could interfere with network performance, adding to the challenges operators face in delivering reliable services to millions of Nigerians.

The Director of Technical Standards and Network Integrity at the NCC, Edoyemi Ogoh, disclosed this at a news conference on the commission's technical standards and network integrity initiatives in Abuja yesterday.

He explained that counterfeit devices would not only affect their owners but could also undermine the quality of service experienced by other subscribers connected to the same cell sites.

Nwachukwu warns selective application threatens international law

By Silver Nwokoro

FORMER Foreign Affairs Minister, Gen. Ike Nwachukwu, has warned that the selective application of international law by powerful countries could undermine the global legal order and encourage more nations to disregard international treaties in pursuit of their national interests.

Nwachukwu, who served twice as Nigeria's Foreign Affairs Minister, said the growing disregard for international obligations and the unequal treatment of countries under international legal frameworks could trigger a breakdown of order in international relations.

He gave this warning yesterday at the 47th Annual Conference of the Nigerian Society of International Law (NSIL), held at the Nigerian Institute of International Affairs (NIIA), Lagos, themed, "From Obligations to Implementation: Re-assessing the Efficacy of International Law in Contemporary International Relations."

Nwachukwu, who was the chairman of the occasion, expressed concern over situations in which powerful nations invoke national interests to disregard treaty provisions while holding weaker countries to the same standards.

FG unveils tertiary workers' agreement after 17-year impasse

From Collins Olayinka and Owede Agbajileke, Abuja

AFTER 17 years of protracted negotiations and unresolved disputes, the Federal Government has unveiled renegotiated agreements with academic and non-academic staff unions in tertiary institutions, in a move aimed at improving workers' welfare, ending recurring industrial actions and ensuring uninterrupted academic calendars.

The Minister of Education, Dr Tunji Alausa, who announced the agreements yesterday in Abuja, said the government had also paid the Consolidated Academic Tools

• NASU demands urgent minimum wage review over rising costs

Allowance (CATA) and Consolidated Non-Teaching Tools Allowance (CONTA) to eligible personnel in tertiary institutions, with both allowances taking effect from January 2026.

Alausa said the agreements marked a significant departure from decades of delayed and unfulfilled commitments that had eroded trust between the government and university workers, triggered repeated strikes and disrupted academic calendars across universities, polytechnics and colleges of education.

He said the agreements were

designed to restore confidence in the negotiation process and support President Bola Tinubu's commitment to ensuring that four-year degree programmes were completed within four years.

Alausa, however, stressed that the government's credibility would depend on its ability to implement the agreements faithfully, assuring the unions that the Federal Government would honour its commitments.

MEANWHILE, the Non-Academic Staff Union of Educational and Associated

Institutions (NASU) has urged the Federal Government to review the ₦70,000 national minimum wage urgently.

The union warned that rising food prices, transportation costs, housing expenses and electricity tariffs have eroded workers' purchasing power.

The union said the current minimum wage had become grossly inadequate to sustain Nigerian workers and their families amid mounting economic pressures, describing it as a "slave wage" that could no longer guarantee basic survival and dignity.

NASU President, Dr Makolo Hassan, made the demand in his address during the union's National Executive Council (NEC) meeting in Abuja yesterday.

Hassan said the government must immediately review the minimum wage in line with prevailing economic realities, insisting that workers deserve a living wage that provides decent living conditions and protects their earnings against inflation.

He also called for institutionalised periodic wage reviews and cost-of-living adjustments to prevent inflation from continually eroding workers' incomes.

IMF, FG admit reform pains as Nigerians battle high living costs

From Geoff Iyatse, Bangkok

THE International Monetary Fund (IMF) and Nigeria's Minister of Finance and Coordinating Minister of the Economy, Taiwo Oyelede, have acknowledged the challenges of balancing economic reforms with citizens' welfare, as high living costs and persistent poverty continue to undermine the benefits of economic resilience.

Advising developing countries, the minister said this is the wrong time to impose new taxes or increase the burden of taxes on the vulnerable and productive sectors of economies, even as he urged creative areas of revenue mobilisation.

These came as the IMF raised Nigeria's economic growth forecast by 10 basis points to 4.2 per cent for 2026 and projected growth of 4.3 per cent in 2027. The forecast aligns with the World Bank's estimate of 4.2 per cent growth for Nigeria in the first half of the year.

The upgrade, however, does not suggest that the economy is on course to meet the \$1 trillion target set by President Bola Tinubu.

At a nominal output of \$377 billion, the economy would need to grow by nearly 22 per cent yearly over the next five years to reach \$1 trillion, assuming the naira's value against the dollar remains unchanged.

If the naira depreciates further, the economy will need to grow even faster to stand a chance of achieving the target within the period.

The IMF said Nigeria's economy had made substantial progress but warned that the benefits of growth remained unevenly distributed, leaving much of the population struggling.

The Fund noted that resilient

- **Minister: It's wrong time to impose new taxes on vulnerable, productive sectors**
- **Admits fuel, FX reform sequencing was fast**
- **IMF raises Nigeria's 2026 growth forecast to 4.2 per cent**

economic growth had not translated into sufficient relief for many Nigerians, highlighting persistent poverty and the disproportionate impact of rising food and energy prices on household welfare.

Presenting the Fund's fiscal policy analysis at the ongoing IMF/World Bank Annual Meetings in Bangkok, Thailand, Research Department Division Chief, Deniz Igan, said policymakers needed to balance immediate household needs with medium-term fiscal stability.

"What we are advocating is for policymakers to balance the near-term needs of the population, and that involves food security. That involves energy security," she said, noting that food and energy prices had risen disproportionately.

Igan said the Fund had ex-

amined fiscal responses that could be most effective in addressing a cost-of-living crisis, in which essential goods become more expensive faster than other items in the consumption basket.

Using Nigeria as an example, she noted that economic growth had held up, partly reflecting the country's position as an energy exporter, but poverty remained high, and households continued to suffer.

"While the growth held up in Nigeria, given energy exports, poverty rates are still very high, and we are very mindful that the population is suffering," she said, adding that risks from El Niño could further compound the pressure.

The IMF recommended targeted, temporary income support and cash transfers for the most vulnerable house-

holds to alleviate poverty and strengthen food security.

However, Igan stressed that such interventions must be consistent with a sustainable medium-term fiscal framework, supported by better expenditure quality and improved revenue collection.

At two separate events yesterday, Oyelede presented Nigeria's reforms as a model for other African countries but admitted that the policy choices had come with significant pain.

At the Africa's Golden Future panel session, which examined Africa's economic potential and pathways to unlocking it, Oyelede acknowledged that the sequencing of fuel subsidy removal and foreign exchange (FX) market liberalisation had contributed to a price crisis in the downstream petroleum sector.

Fuel prices more than doubled within hours of President Bola Tinubu taking the oath of office and delivering his inaugural speech, during which he announced the removal of the petrol subsidy. The decision marked the beginning of a series of reforms that would shape the country's economic trajectory in the years that followed.

About two weeks after the inauguration, the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) liberalised the FX market. The naira subsequently lost more than 40 per cent of its value at the reformed official market, with knock-on effects on fuel prices and other costs across the economy.

Oyelede acknowledged concerns about the pace of implementation, describing the sequencing of the fuel and FX reforms as too fast.

He, however, argued that although the policies imposed high costs, partial implementation could leave the country bearing the pain of re-

forms without realising the anticipated gains.

By July 2023, the average price of a litre of petrol had risen to about N600. Oyelede recalled that the price spike, driven by subsidy removal and FX reforms, had prompted price-capping measures, illustrating the severity of the shock from the twin policies.

The minister stressed the importance of communicating policy choices effectively, urging other African countries to learn from Nigeria's experience, even when citizens did not initially "believe you".

He also claimed that the Federal Government had supported more than 10 million vulnerable Nigerians, arguing that the country's reform experience offered lessons for other economies.

MORE than three years into the reforms, Nigerians continue to grapple with their effects. Oyelede acknowledged the pain, insisting that partially implemented reforms could impose costs without delivering corresponding gains.

At a press conference of the Intergovernmental Group of Twenty-Four on International Monetary Affairs and Development (G-24), which he chairs, the minister highlighted the macroeconomic stability recorded so far, describing it as the foundation for structural growth.

His argument comes amid concerns about the widening gap between Nigeria's macroeconomic stability and inclusive growth, with economists advocating measures to bridge the divide.

Oyelede, however, insisted that the two were not mutually exclusive, arguing that stability was an important foundation for achieving inclusive growth.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 25



Senator Gbenga Ashafa (left); Director General, PBAT Door-To-Door Movement, Sunday Asuku; Governor of Lagos State, Babajide Sanwo-Olu and Founder, PBAT Door-To-Door Movement, High Chief Government Ekpemupolo, during the PBAT Door-To-Door Lagos State Rally, held at the Mobolaji Johnson Sports Arena, Onikan, yesterday.

Tinubu's re-election bid draws opposition figures into APC coalition

From Azimazi Momoh Jimoh, Sodiq Omolayo (Abuja), Helen Oji (Lagos) and Oluwale Ige (Osogbo)

THE All Progressives Congress (APC) is banking on cross-party alliances to strengthen President Bola Tinubu's re-election chances, bringing opposition figures and governors into a campaign structure designed to widen his political reach before the 2027 election.

The revised campaign structure appoints Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) chieftain and Minister of the Federal Capital Territory, Nyesom Wike; Osun State Governor Ademola Adeleke of the Accord Party; and Anambra State Governor Chukwuma Soludo of the All Progressives Grand Alliance (APGA) as campaign coordinators in their respective territories.

The structure is scheduled to be inaugurated by Tinubu at the Banquet Hall of the Presidential Villa, Abuja, today at

- **Wike, Adeleke, Soludo named campaign coordinators in revised APC structure**
- **Minister says Rainbow Coalition will unite Tinubu's supporters across party lines**
- **APC challenges opposition to present manifestos, engage in policy debates**
- **Tompola mobilises Lagosians for Tinubu's re-election, unveils 57 vehicles**
- **Adeleke's campaign council pledges 1.5m votes for Tinubu in Osun**
- **Atiku's aide demands disclosure of Wike's media chat costs**
- **Abbas warns lawmakers against abandoning legislative duties for campaigns**

11:00 a.m.

It also features Senate President Godswill Akpabio and House of Representatives Speaker Tajudeen Abbas, who have been elevated to deputy vice-chairmen, while Kwara State Governor AbdulRahman AbdulRazaq occupies another deputy vice-chairmanship position.

Senator Abdulaziz Yari remains director-general, with other senior party and government figures assigned responsibilities across the campaign structure.

Former Kwara Senator Gbemisola Saraki is among the new entrants, listed as zonal secretary in the Contact and Mobilisation Directorate for the North-Central.

Not all prominent figures appearing in the revised document are new entrants.

Delta State Governor Sheriff Oborevwori, for instance, was already listed as Director of Finance and Treasury and retains that responsibility while also appearing as Delta State campaign coordinator.

Former Lagos State Governor Babatunde Fashola had previously been assigned to South-West stakeholders' mobilisation, while Aviation Minister Festus Keyamo was already part of the media and strategic communications structure.

The changes also leave questions about some appointments in the original document.

Abdulfatai Yaya Seriki, who was listed as North-Central Zonal Director of Youth Mobilisation, does not appear under that assignment in the revised list, although the Youth Mobilisation Directorate remains in the structure.

Similarly, the six zonal directors previously named for election planning, coordination and mobilisation — Olushola Adeyeye for the South-West, Ngozi Olejeme for the South-South, Uche Ekwunife for the South-East, Muntaha Rabe for the North-West, Ahmed Muhammed Ketso for the North-Central and Sani Danladi for the North-East — are not reproduced under their

former assignments.

The Directorate of Election Planning, Coordination and Monitoring remains in place under Member of the House of Representatives, Abiodun Faleke, with secretaries and members listed.

The absence of the earlier zonal appointments, however, does not by itself establish that the individuals have been formally removed from the campaign council.

The changes follow the controversy surrounding the original list in August, when questions were raised over its status.

APC National Publicity Secretary Felix Morka dismissed reports that the list had been withdrawn, saying, "Rumours are not news," and indicating that any adjustments would be announced properly. **Wike defends Rainbow Coalition, dismisses fears of APC division**

THE development came as Wike defended the emerging Rainbow Coalition mo-

bilising support for President Bola Tinubu's re-election, insisting that the initiative would neither weaken the All Progressives Congress nor create divisions among its governors.

Speaking during a media parley in Abuja yesterday, Wike said the coalition was designed to broaden support for Tinubu ahead of the 2027 presidential election by bringing together APC members and supporters of the President from other political parties.

He said the initiative was intended to rally Nigerians across party lines behind the President rather than displace the ruling party or undermine its political structure.

Wike, who coordinates the coalition's activities in Rivers State and the FCT, maintained that Tinubu's electoral prospects should take precedence over partisan considerations, particularly in states

CONTINUED ON PAGE 25

Tinubu says efficient transportation system key to \$1tr economy goal

By **Gbenga Salau**
and **Benjamin Alade**

PRESIDENT Bola Ahmed Tinubu has said that Nigeria's economic future is closely tied to an efficient

Coalition rejects water privatisation, cites reversal in Ghana, UK

By **Innocent Anoruo**

FOLLOWING the reversal of water privatisation in Ghana and parts of the United Kingdom (UK), the Our Water, Our Right Africa Coalition (OWORAC) has described water privatisation as a ruse and rejected every measure of control of the public water system.

OWORAC, during a media briefing in Lagos yesterday as part of the events marking the Africa Week of Action, from October 12-18, 2026, pointed out that water privatisation was reversed in Ghana and some parts of the UK when the masses realised the fraud it had become.

The Coalition, while considering the theme of this year's Africa Water Week, "Reclaiming Africa's Water Future: Public Water for All," mobilised communities, civil society organisations, workers, women, youths and water justice movements across Africa against water privatisation.

National President, Precision, Electrical and Related Equipment Senior Staff Association (PERESSA), Rufus Olusesan, described Public-Private Participation (PPP) in the water sector as a ruse.

He added: "Water should not be purchased. Iju, Adinyan and Ishasi communities that host water works don't have water, but water from their areas is pumped to Ikoyi and Lekki to serve the privileged few."

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

MFM empowers women, awards scholarships to pupils in Akure

By **Ayoyinka Jegede**

THE Mountain of Fire and Miracles Ministries (MFM), Ondo Mega Region 1, South-West 4, Adesuper, Akure, has trained 10 women for free in intensive fashion design and given each a new sewing machine and certificate to start their own businesses.

The empowerment programme underscores the growing role of faith-based organisations in providing community support, promoting skills development and assisting with education as complementary aspects of social outreach.

The training was aimed at equipping members with practical skills for self-reliance and sustainable livelihoods.

The church also empowered widows with brand new grinding machines to support their livelihoods and strengthen their businesses.

- **Sanwo-Olu insists Nigeria not grappling with road shortage but linkages**
- **Lagos investing in digital infrastructure to accelerate Africa's technology growth, Hamzat asserts**

transportation system, maintaining that if the country gets its transportation right, the \$1 trillion economy becomes much more competitive as every sector depends on transportation.

He stated this yesterday in his speech during the opening ceremony of the eighth National Transport Conference of the Chartered Institute of Transport Administration of Nigeria (CIOTA), themed "Integrated multimodal transport systems for sustainable development of Nigeria".

The President, represented by the Supervising Minister and Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Transportation, Olufunsho Olusosun Adebisi, said the theme of this year's conference could not be more timely, relevant, or urgent.

He added: "It is urgent because transport is not merely about moving people, goods, or services from one place to another. Transport is the physical infrastructure of economic activities and connects farms to markets, factories to consumers, seaports to the Internet, businesses to opportunities, Nigerian communities to one another, and wider Africa to global, distinguished professionals."

He commended the Institute for the important role it had played in the advancement of transportation administration in Nigeria.

However, Lagos State

Governor, Babajide Sanwo-Olu, who was a special guest, stated that Nigeria does not have a shortage of roads, rails, ports, airports or waterways, but a shortage of connections between them.

Sanwo-Olu, who was represented by his Special Adviser on Transportation, Sola Giwa, further said: "A container can clear the port in a day and lose a week on the road to the hinterland. A commuter can board a train at Agbado and still have to solve the last few kilometres alone. Every mode in this country is working hard. Too few of them are working together. That is the problem this conference has set itself, and it is the right one. "Lagos is a metropolis of well over 20 million people on the

smallest landmass of any state in the federation. We cannot widen our way out of congestion. We do not have the land. The only way to give residents more mobility is to move more people in fewer vehicles, across more modes, with an easy passage from one to the next. That is not ideology. It is arithmetic."

MEANWHILE, the Deputy Governor, Obafemi Hamzat, said that the state is investing in digital infrastructure, innovation funding and technology-driven public services to accelerate Africa's digital transformation.

Hamzat, who spoke at the fifth edition of The Texcellence, organised by CWG Plc. in Lagos yesterday, said Africa's challenge was no

longer a shortage of innovation but the inability to scale successful ideas into sustainable solutions capable of serving millions of people.

He noted that CWG's technology supports about six in 10 financial institutions in Nigeria, highlighting the role local technology companies could play in building critical economic infrastructure.

According to him, Lagos State is seeking to replicate such success across other sectors through investments in connectivity, digital identity, regulatory reforms and innovation financing.

Also speaking, Secretary to the Enugu State Government, Prof. Chidiebere Onyia, said digital transformation in the public sector required insti-

tutional ownership, reliable records and changes in administrative culture, rather than merely deploying technology.

2027: Artisans mobilise, drum support for Tinubu's second term

By **Tunde Bodunrin**
and **Samuel Ogunsona**

AHEAD of the 2027 general elections, a body of artisans, under the aegis of Coalition of Nigerian Artisan Associations (CONAA), has thrown its weight behind President Bola Tinubu and Vice President Kashim Shettima.

The group unveiled its plan yesterday in Lagos during a media briefing themed "2027 Elections: The Role of Artisans in Electoral Politics."

Director-General CONAA, Segun Ajibulu, who spoke at the event, disclosed that the Coalition would kick off a tour of the 36 states from October 24, 2026, to sensitise artisans on why the current administration deserves continuity.

According to him, the organisation comprises automobile mechanics, carpenters, welders, bricklayers, aluminium fabricators and iron benders, with zonal structures already established across the six geo-political zones for effective grassroots mobilisation.

Ajibulu, who was supported by the General Secretary of the Nigerian Automobile Technicians Association (NATA), David Ajitumobi; the Vice President of Arewa Youth Consultative Forum, and Chairman of South-East Artisan Coalition, Fred Ojinika, said CONAA intends to roll out 10 million pamphlets, float an online radio and intensify social media engagement.

PAU alumni hold confab to connect ideas, opportunities

By **Opeyemi Babalola**

THE Pan-Atlantic University Alumni Association (PAUAA) has announced its 2026 International Alumni Conference, scheduled for Thursday, October 22, 2026, at the Ecobank Pan African Centre (EPAC), Victoria Island, Lagos, bringing together more than 400 business leaders, entrepreneurs, and academics to explore how professional networks can become engines of enterprise, innovation and economic growth.

The conference, themed "The Advantage: Connecting People, Ideas and Opportunities," is anchored on the conviction that an alumni community should be more than a network for reunions; it should be a productive force that builds businesses, scales enterprises and creates lasting economic value.

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President/Chairman of the Governing Council, Chartered Institute of Personnel Management of Nigeria (CIPM), Ahmed Ladan Gobir (left); Lagos State Governor, Babajide Sanwo-Olu, and Vice President of CIPM, Chidinma Obiejesi, during the decoration of Sanwo-Olu as a Fellow of the CIPM at the Lagos House, Marina, yesterday.

FMC Abeokuta workers down tools over alleged attack on colleague

From **Azeez Olorunlomu**,
Abeokuta

MEDICAL and health workers at the Federal Medical Centre, Idi-Aba, Abeokuta, Ogun State, have embarked on a 72-hour warning strike over the alleged stabbing of a medical laboratory scientist by a patient's relative within the hospital premises.

The industrial action, which began at 11:00 a.m. on Monday, is expected to end at 8:00 a.m. tomorrow, October

FG demands arrest of suspect

15, 2026.

In a strike notice addressed to the hospital's Medical Director and dated October 10, 2026, the Joint Action Committee of the unions identified the injured worker as Lawal Toheeb Olasunkanmi.

The unions said the strike was intended to express solidarity with their injured colleague and compel the hospital management to

address security concerns and ensure the safety of healthcare personnel.

Meanwhile, the Federal Government has condemned the reported stabbing of the medical laboratory scientist at the FMC, Idi-Aba, Abeokuta, Ogun State, demanding the immediate arrest and prosecution of the alleged assailant.

The Federal Ministry of Health and Social Welfare, in a statement by the Assistant Director,

Information and Public Relations, Ado Bako, described the incident as unacceptable and called on the Nigeria Police Force (NPF) to ensure that the suspect is brought to justice.

The Joint Action Committee described the incident as an attack on healthcare workers and called for urgent institutional action, as well as appropriate intervention by law enforcement authorities.

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

NAFDAC uncovers 'fake drinks factory' in Lagos, arrests two suspects

By **Tobi Awodipe**
and **Ijeoma Nwanosike**

TWO suspects have been arrested after the National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control (NAFDAC) uncovered a suspected facility where expired energy drinks, wines and whisky brands were being revalidated for sale at Zamfara Plaza, BBA Trade Fair Complex, Lagos State.

The agency disclosed this in a video posted on its official X account, showing its operatives inspecting the facility and discovering drinks allegedly undergoing revalidation, alongside chemicals and equipment suspected to

- **Dismisses claims of proliferation of substandard goods, foods**
- **Describes social media videos, claims as fake, overly sensational**

have been used in the operation.

In the video, an agency official was heard explaining that the suspects removed expired labels from energy drink containers to make the products appear suitable for consumption.

The operatives also displayed bottles awaiting the same process, as well as packaging materials, new bottle corks and what the official described as a filtration system comprising a large bowl containing liquid.

According to the NAFDAC offi-

cial at the scene, the suspects allegedly supplied the revalidated drinks to bars and nightclubs through arrangements with some bar managers, potentially exposing consumers to expired or falsified alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages.

NAFDAC, however, expressed concern over the discovery, while indicating that the operation was part of its efforts to tackle suspected counterfeit products.

MEANWHILE, the Director-General of the agency, Prof. Mojisola

Adeyeye, has described as fake and overly sensational videos making the rounds on social media from Nigerians calling out fake and substandard foods and products.

The DG, who spoke as a Special Guest of Honour at the Nigerian Institute of Food, Science and Technology (NIFST) 50th conference and yearly general meeting held in Lagos yesterday, dismissed the videos, noting that they are untrue and lack substance.

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Lekki-Epe Expressway repairs begin tomorrow, motorists face 35-day disruption

By Ngozi Egenuka

MOTORISTS plying the deteriorating Eti-Osa-Lekki-Epe Expressway are expected to face temporary traffic disruptions as the Lagos State Government begins a 35-day rehabilitation of damaged sections from Bonny Camp to Admiralty Way Junction and around Victoria Garden City (VGC) tomorrow.

The government said traffic diversion arrangements would be introduced to minimise congestion and ensure the safety of road users during the exercise.

The Special Adviser to the Governor on Infrastructure, Olufemi Daramola, disclosed this yesterday at a stakeholders' engagement organised by the Ministry of Works and Infrastructure to discuss the scope of work and traffic management plans for the project.

Daramola said the meeting was part of the government's policy of consulting residents, businesses and other road users before embarking on major infrastructure projects, adding that feedback from stakeholders would inform the implementation process.

He appealed for the cooperation of residents and motorists, particularly as Lagos prepares for increased traffic during the festive season.



Deteriorated Eti-Osa-Lekki-Epe Expressway

The rehabilitation is expected to improve road safety and ease movement along the strategic corridor, which connects residential communities, commercial centres and major industrial investments across the Lekki-Epe axis.

The expressway provides access to the Lekki Free Zone, Dangote Refinery, Dangote Fertiliser Factory, Lekki Deep Sea Port and Eleganza Industrial Estate. It also serves major housing developments and educational institutions, including Pan-Atlantic

University and Lagos Business School.

However, rapid urbanisation, growing commercial activities and increasing traffic have accelerated the deterioration of some sections, leaving commuters struggling with difficult journeys along the busy route.

Daramola said the government was also addressing drainage concerns along the corridor, adding that the proposed Green Line rail project would form part of a broader plan to improve transportation infrastructure in the area.

The Director of Projects, Ibironke Olukoko, said the rehabilitation would facilitate the movement of passengers and goods while improving access to rapidly developing commercial and residential communities between Victoria Island and Epe.

At the meeting, the Chairman of the Victoria Island and Ikoyi Residents Association, Prince Akin Fadoju, called for improved drainage infrastructure to tackle flooding in the area.

Fadoju acknowledged that the drainage problems predated the current administration but stressed the need for urgent and sustained intervention.

Other stakeholders urged the government to ensure that traffic management officials were available throughout the construction period to direct motorists and prevent gridlock.

Passengers flee as soldier's alleged wrong-way driving nearly triggers crash

• Army, LASTMA promise action

By Eniola Daniel

PASSENGERS scrambled for safety along the Anthony-Mile 2 road in Lagos yesterday after a soldier allegedly driving against traffic nearly caused a collision involving a commercial bus and a 40-foot container truck.

The incident occurred when the soldier, driving a grey Honda Civic with registration number Lagos KSF 97 BS, allegedly attempted to navigate a narrow section of the road against the flow of traffic to connect to Anthony Bus Stop.

The officer was reportedly coming from the 9 Brigade of the Nigerian Army, located along the Apapa-Oshodi Expressway, and allegedly chose to drive against traffic rather than use the appropriate route beneath the Oshodi fly-

over to reach the other side of the road.

The driver of a white 14-seater commercial bus, with registration number Lagos GGE 90 YG, reportedly pleaded with the soldier to give way at the sharp-angled section of the road. However, the officer allegedly refused to yield.

As the standoff continued, a 40-foot container truck attempting to manoeuvre through the narrow stretch tilted towards the bus, triggering panic among its passengers.

Fearing that the truck could overturn onto their bus, the passengers hurried out and scrambled to safety.

The soldier reportedly stepped out of his car and watched as the passengers fled.

Police arrest 12 suspected cultists, criminals in Lagos, Delta, Osun

• Warn schoolgirls against cultism, drug abuse in Cross River

From Eniola Daniel (Lagos), Solomon Azu (Calabar), Monday Osayande (Asaba) and Oluwale Ige (Osogbo)

POLICE operatives in Lagos, Delta and Osun states have arrested 12 suspects in separate operations targeting alleged cultism, kidnapping, armed robbery and other criminal activities, while their counterparts in Cross River State have intensified efforts to prevent youth involvement in crime through school-based sensitisation.

The operations led to the recovery of locally made firearms, ammunition, suspected criminal charms, illicit drugs and other items, according to police statements.

In Lagos, four suspected cultists allegedly linked to criminal activities in Lekki, Ajah and Elemoro were arrested between October 2 and

9. The state Police Public Relations Officer, Adebisi Abimbola, identified the suspects as Olumagba Ifatope, 29; Arisekola Ojo, 32; Oluwatobi Oyewole, 29; and Oluwaseyi Odunewu, 32.

She said a search of Odunewu's residence led to the recovery of a locally made cut-to-size gun.



Two of the suspects paraded by the police

Marwa links drug abuse to untreated mental illness, urges wider access to care

• Seeks increased mental health funding, priority for women, children

By Bertram Nwannekanma

THE Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA), Brig. Gen. Mohammed Buba Marwa (rtd), has warned that drug abuse and mental illness often reinforce each other, stressing the need to address underlying psychological distress alongside substance use.

"If we only arrest the symptoms, we will keep missing the cause," he said.

Marwa spoke yesterday, while chairing the fifth edition of The Conversation Conference (TCC 5.0), organised by the Intersect Consortium at Nicon Luxury Hotel, Abuja. The consortium is led by UK-based consultant psychiatrist, Dr Vincent Udenze.

Marwa, who also chaired

the conference's first and third editions, described the gathering as an important platform for mental health discussions in Nigeria. Coming days after World Mental Health Day, he said the conference offered an opportunity to move beyond awareness towards practical action.

Drawing on the NDLEA's rehabilitation work, he said many people struggling with drug abuse had underlying emotional pain, trauma or depression that had gone unrecognised or untreated.

"For too long, we treated mental health as a private burden, hidden behind shame and silence. In my work at the NDLEA, I see the cost of that silence daily. Behind many cases of drug abuse is untreated pain: depression nobody no-

ticed, trauma nobody addressed, a young person who found a substance before finding help. Drug use and mental illness feed each other," he said.

Addressing the conference theme of strategic investments, partnerships and community-led action, Marwa said poverty and hopelessness could expose people to harmful coping mechanisms. He cited the NDLEA's work in three pilot communities in Ondo State, where residents who previously depended on illicit cultivation were supported to establish lawful livelihoods.

"When people have hope, income and a stake in their future, stress eases, families stabilise and communities grow resilient," he said, adding that the agency planned to expand the model nationwide.

Kosoko Royal Family disowns TBT Properties over Ogombo land deal

By Bertram Nwannekanma

THE Kosoko Royal Family has disowned TBT Properties Limited and Prince Abiola Olojo-Kosoko over purported dealings involving 114.478 hectares of land at Ogombo Village, Eti-Osa Local Government Area of Lagos State, warning prospective buyers, investors and property developers to verify any claims of authority before entering into transactions.

At a press conference, the family denied appointing

TBT Properties Limited, represented by Timothy Ogbonna, as its attorney for transactions involving the property. It also stated that neither the company nor Prince Olojo-Kosoko had its authorisation to negotiate sales, allocate land, collect payments or enter into agreements on its behalf without the consent of the family head or duly authorised representatives.

The family identified Tokunbo King, Esq., of Kings

& Co. Barristers and Solicitors, as its legal adviser, adding that only representatives formally recognised by its leadership could act on its behalf in matters concerning the land.

In a related clarification, the family reaffirmed its recognition of Chief Akindele Akinfolabi of Adamakin Investment Limited as the Sole Power of Attorney of Madam Iyalode Efunroye Tinubu in respect of the estate interests concerned.

Customs, Port Police intensify collaboration to tackle maritime crime

By Adaku Onyenucheya

THE Nigeria Customs Service (NCS), Apapa Area Command, and the Ports Authority Police Western Command have pledged to strengthen intelligence sharing and joint operations to tackle maritime crime, secure port infrastructure and facilitate legitimate trade.

The commitment was reaffirmed during a familiarisation and courtesy visit by the Customs Area Controller, Apapa Command, Murtala Muazu, to the Commissioner of Police, Ports Authority Police Western Command, Oluwatoyin Agbaminoja.

Muazu said closer cooperation between the two agencies was critical to addressing emerging security threats and protecting the nation's economic interests, particularly within the maritime sector.

He stressed that effective intelligence sharing, coordinated operations and sustained engagement would improve the agencies' capacity to respond to security challenges while ensuring that legitimate port activities were not unnecessarily disrupted.

The customs chief reaffirmed his commitment to strengthening the existing relationship between both commands.

LAWMA arrests 13 over illegal street trading in Lagos

By Ayonote Clement

THE Lagos Waste Management Authority (LAWMA) has arrested 13 persons for illegal street trading in Festac and Mile 2 as part of efforts to keep public spaces clean and accessible.

The authority's Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer, Dr Muiyiwa Gbadegesin, said the arrests were made on Monday, October 12, 2026.

Those arrested were identified as Joy Opeyemi, Abigail Manga, Chinasa Eze, Saika Taira, AbdulRasheed Elinu, Charles

Nwango, Mustapha Abubakar, Aliyu Garba, Kazinu Umar, Moses Idara, Ahmed Yunusa, Yusuf Usman and Amaka Chukunju.

On Tuesday, October 13, LAWMA's Project WISE team, working with officials of the Kick Against Indiscipline (KAI) and the police, conducted a separate enforcement operation in Ikorodu to dislodge traders operating in unauthorised locations. The authority did not disclose whether any arrests were made during the operation.



Suspects paraded for illegal street trading yesterday.

Gbadegesin urged traders to use approved markets, warning that street trading on roads, walkways, medians and road setbacks obstructs public access and undermines environmental cleanliness.

‘Rescue us’: Kidnapped father, wife, three-month-old baby in Kaduna plead for help

By **Bertram Nwannekanma**

A DISTRAUGHT father, his wife and their three-month-old baby, reportedly abducted by armed men from their home in Millennium City, Kaduna metropolis, have appealed to the Nigerian government and members of the public to help secure their release.

The family of Ahmed Zakka was reportedly seized by armed men identified as terrorists by the Human Rights Writers Association of Nigeria (HURIWA).

HURIWA drew attention to a video said to have been released by the abductors, showing Zakka carrying his infant as he and his distressed wife pleaded for help.

The identities and affiliations of the abductors have not been independently established but HURIWA has urged the authorities to treat the family's plight as an urgent hu-

HURIWA urges Tinubu, Defence Minister to prioritise rescue operations over political activities

manitarian and security concern.

In a statement yesterday by its National Coordinator, Emmanuel Nnadozie Onwubiko, the rights group appealed to President Bola Tinubu and the Minister of Defence, Gen. Christopher Musa (rtd), to mobilise security forces to rescue the family.

HURIWA also called on the service chiefs, the Director-General of the Department of State Services (DSS), the Inspector-General of Police (IGP) and the National Security Adviser (NSA) to coordinate intelligence and joint operations to rescue the victims and other Nigerians reportedly held captive by armed groups.

The group said the video showing the father carrying his baby while pleading for help should compel political leaders to place the safety and

welfare of citizens above partisan interests.

“We are not making this clarification call to publicly call out the Minister of Defence or his counterpart, but as a compassionate appeal to them

and the President to immediately activate mechanisms to rescue this innocent baby and his parents, Mr and Mrs Ahmed Zakka, who were abducted by fully armed terrorists from their home in Mil-



The abducted victims

lennium City, Kaduna metropolis,” the statement said. HURIWA urged Tinubu to relieve Musa and the Minister of State for Defence, Bello Matawalle, of their responsibilities within the All Progressives Congress (APC) Presidential Campaign Council to enable them to concentrate on addressing the country's security challenges.

The group expressed concern over the reported involvement of the two ministers in the party's expanded and revised campaign council, saying that their political commitments could distract them from their official responsibilities at a time of persistent insecurity.

“How does the Minister of Defence, Gen. Christopher Musa (rtd), feel attending the inauguration of the expanded and revised Presidential Campaign Council of the APC when terrorists continue to abduct citizens from his state and other

parts of Nigeria?” HURIWA asked.

It said that the President should ensure that the defence ministers devote their attention to their official duties while security threats remain acute.

The rights group maintained that protecting lives and property was a primary constitutional responsibility of the President and a central duty of the country's security and defence leadership.

HURIWA also criticised the administration over what it described as an inadequate response to the continued abduction of citizens, claiming that more than 2,000 Nigerians were being held captive by terrorists.

It said the plight of the Zakka family, particularly the vulnerability of a three-month-old baby in captivity, underscored the need for urgent and coordinated action by security agencies.

Two rescued as fire ravages eight-room bungalow in Lagos

By **Bertram Nwannekanma**

TWO men have been rescued from a fire that severely damaged an eight-room bungalow on Onitire Road, near Smith Bus Stop, Itire, Lagos State.

One of the men sustained injuries while attempting to rescue the other.

The Lagos State Fire and Rescue Service said it received an emergency call at about 9:10 p.m., saying that its men arrived at the scene at 9.35 p.m. and immediately began fire-

fighting and rescue operations.

The fire engulfed the eight-room bungalow and spread to a three-bedroom flat on the upper floor of an adjoining two-storey residential building. The bungalow and its contents were severely damaged, while the affected section of the adjoining building and its contents sustained minor damage.

During the operation, firefighters rescued a 75-year-old wheelchair-bound man from the bungalow.

A 42-year-old man, who sustained injuries while attempting to rescue the elderly man, was also rescued and taken to Gbagada General Hospital by officials of the Lagos State Ambulance Service (LASAMBUS) for medical treatment.

The operation involved firefighters from the Isolo, Sari and Bolade stations, supported by the Federal Fire Service and other emergency responders.

The fire service said the blaze was brought under control.

Navy recovers 2.25m litres of petroleum products, rescues 24 kidnap victims

By **Bertram Nwannekanma**

THE Nigerian Navy has recovered more than 2.25 million litres of petroleum products, rescued 24 kidnapped persons and arrested over 70 suspects during operations against crude oil theft, illegal refining and other maritime crimes in the third quarter of 2026.

The operations, conducted under Operation Delta Sentinel between July and September, also led to the seizure of four vessels and five boats, the destruction of 14 boats and the deactivation of illegal refining facilities.

The Director of Naval Information, Navy Captain Abiodun Folorunsho, disclosed the figures in a statement yesterday detailing the service's operational achievements during the period.

According to him, the recovered products comprised 1,555,983 litres of suspected stolen crude oil, 595,470 litres of Automotive Gas Oil (AGO), 85,690 litres of Premium Motor Spirit (PMS) and 15,774 litres of Dual Purpose Kerosene (DPK). The Navy also identified more than 363 dugout pits, deactivated illegal refining sites, de-

stroyed eight refining ovens and recovered eight outboard engines, four arms, over 100 rounds of ammunition and seven vehicles and trucks.

The statement added that 19 reservoirs were discovered, while 80 storage tanks and reservoirs were identified in the course of the operations.

Folorunsho said the operations were aimed at dismantling the infrastructure and logistics supporting crude oil theft, illegal refining, pipeline vandalism and other forms of economic sabotage, while protecting critical oil and gas assets.

So-Safe arrests 50-year-old man over alleged assault on woman, daughter in Ogun

From **Segun Ayinde, Abeokuta**

OPERATIVES of the Ogun State Community, Social Orientation and Safety Corps (So-Safe Corps) have arrested a 50-year-old man, Kazeem Adeoye, following an alleged assault on a woman, Morifat Oladeinde, and her daughter in Shonde, Ifo Local Council of Ogun State.

The incident reportedly followed a disagreement between the suspect's sons, Abdullah and Ope, and the victim's children while they were returning from church on Sunday.

According to the So-Safe Corps, Adeoye and his wife al-

legedly went to the victim's residence to confront her family over the dispute. During the ensuing altercation, the suspect's wife allegedly struck Oladeinde on the head with a stick, leaving her bleeding.

The victim also discovered a visible cut on her daughter Mariam's forehead, which she alleged was inflicted during the confrontation.

The incident was reported to the Olayemi/Demokula Divisional Headquarters of the corps at about 4:45 p.m. on Sunday, October 11, 2026, leading to the suspect's arrest.

The corps' commander, Dr Soji Ganzallo, confirmed the



Suspect

arrest in a statement issued in Abeokuta yesterday by the Director of Information and Public Relations, ACC Adegunwa Adegbuyi.

Ganzallo said the Divisional Officer, SC Innocent Matthew,

deployed two officers to apprehend Adeoye following the complaint.

During interrogation, the suspect reportedly admitted going to the victim's residence to warn her family over the disagreement involving their children. He said his sons had told him that the victim's children obstructed their path while riding their bicycles.

According to the commander, Adeoye said he went to the residence to ask the victim to caution her children, but the encounter escalated into a physical altercation that left the woman and her daughter injured.

Four charged over alleged forgery of Nkpor kingship constitution

From **Ameh Ochojila, Abuja**

FOUR persons have been charged before a Federal High Court sitting in Abuja over the alleged forgery of the traditional constitution governing the Eze (Igwe) of Nkpor in Anambra State.

The defendants are Sunday Uche Nwaofia, Patrick Ajemba, Onuorah Anigbogu and Ekene Okolo.

In the charge sheet, the Federal Government accused the four defendants of conspiring to forge the traditional regulation governing the Nkpor kingship, forging the document and fabricating evidence allegedly intended for use in a pending court case.

The first count alleged that the

defendants conspired on or about March 9, 2026, within the court's jurisdiction, to commit a felony by forging the traditional regulation. The alleged offence is punishable under Section 1(2)(c) of the Miscellaneous Offences Act, Cap. M17, Laws of the Federation of Nigeria.

In the second count, the defendants were accused of forging the traditional regulation governing the Eze (Igwe) of Nkpor, while the third count alleged that they intentionally gave or fabricated false evidence for use in suit No. HID/72/2026, involving Samuel Egwu and seven others against Sunday Oreg Okeke, also known as Imperial, and 13 others.

Benue seals two private schools over alleged textbook policy violation, pupils' victimisation

From **Felix Uroko, Makurdi**

BENUE State Government has sealed two private schools in Makurdi over alleged violation of its textbook policy and the victimisation of pupils whose parents refused to buy learning materials directly from the schools.

The affected schools are Orenda School and Opal School. The Benue Education Quality Assurance and Examinations Board (BEQAEB), which carried out the enforcement ex-

ercise, said the action followed complaints and formal petitions from parents.

The Board's Executive Secretary, Dr Terna Francis, led the operation alongside officials of its Directorate of Enforcement and Compliance.

According to the board, the schools allegedly made the purchase of customised exercise books and test materials directly from their management compulsory for pupils to enable them attend classes.

Five critically injured as truck rams into two buses in Lagos

By **Eniola Daniel**

FIVE passengers, including three women and two men, were left critically injured yesterday when a 40-foot truck rammed into two commercial buses at Berger Bus Stop, inward Kara Bridge, in the Ojodu area of Lagos State.

The victims, who were travelling in an interstate Mazda bus and a Toyota Hiace bus, were rescued by operatives of the Lagos State Traffic Management Authority (LASTMA) and rushed to the Lagos State Emergency and Trauma Centre at the Toll Gate for urgent medical attention. The crash occurred when the

Traffic stretches to Otedola Bridge after crash at Berger Bus Stop

Howo truck, travelling out of Lagos, collided with the two passenger vehicles, leaving several occupants seriously injured and disrupting traffic along the busy corridor.

LASTMA officials deployed around the Ojodu-Berger axis responded promptly, extricating the injured passengers and coordinating their evacuation from the scene. The five victims included the driver of one of the vehicles.

With assistance from motorists who volunteered to convey the victims, LASTMA officials accompanied the injured passengers to

the emergency and trauma centre for immediate medical assessment and treatment. Security personnel from Isheri Police Station also supported the rescue operation by providing security at the scene.

The collision triggered a massive traffic backlog, with queues stretching to Otedola Bridge as motorists struggled to navigate the affected stretch.

LASTMA operatives subsequently cleared the carriageway of the vehicles involved, including the articulated truck, to prevent further accidents and restore the free flow of traffic.



Scene of the incident yesterday

RETRACTION

Re: Congratulatory Advertisement Published on Page 27, Monday, October 12, 2026

We refer to the congratulatory advertisement published on Page 27 of The Guardian edition of Monday, October 12, 2026, placed by LES Energy Services congratulating Onome Okodiya SAN, on his elevation to the Prestigious Rank of Senior Advocate of Nigeria (SAN).

We wish to clarify that this publication was made without the knowledge, authorization, or consent of Onome Okodiya, SAN.

We acknowledge that the publication of this advertisement without his express approval may have caused him inconvenience, or unwarranted public attention.

We hereby retract the publication and sincerely apologize to Onome Okodiya, SAN, and his professional colleagues for any inconvenience this unauthorized publication may have caused.



Signed,
Management
LES Energy Services

Children in the Crossfire: The Other Side of Ukraine's Narrative

Since the beginning of the conflict in Ukraine, the Kiev authorities, with the active support of their Western sponsors, have been conducting an unprecedented disinformation campaign aimed at tarnishing the image of the Russian Federation. The issue of "abducted" children has become one of the instruments for political pressure.

Russian Foreign Minister S.Lavrov has repeatedly stated that the problem has been excessively politicized. Moscow views the actions of Kiev and its patrons as part of a campaign in which emotional statements prevail over efforts to resolve actual problems. For audience unfamiliar with the circumstances of the conflict, it is particularly important to understand that behind the loud political accusations lies the Zelensky regime's desire to prolong the conflict and drag in more supporters.

In recent years, the Ukrainian side has manipulated unreasonable figures ranging from 19,500 to 1.6 million children allegedly "abducted" by Russia. The discrepancy between political rhetoric and accurate data became particularly evident during the Russian-Ukrainian talks in Istanbul on June 2, 2025, when Moscow was officially provided with a list containing only 339 names. However, upon closer examination, even those data proved to be inaccurate and erroneous. According



Photo's author: RIA Novosti / Mikhail Klimentev

to the fourth bulletin of Russian Presidential Commissioner for Children's Rights M.Lvova-Belova, the document contained no information about the relatives searching for the children or their contact details. Verification identified 73 adults, including 23 individuals who had reached adulthood even before the start of conflict. Nineteen children were living in Russia with both parents or one of them, while Russian law enforcement agencies had no information indicating that 34 of the listed individuals were present in the country. Since the autumn of 2025, U.S. First Lady M.Trump has also contributed to humanitarian work. According to the White House and the Russian Children's

Rights Commissioner, with her assistance, 21 children had been reunited with relatives on both sides by August 2026.

At the same time, Kiev remains silent about problems directly affecting the rights and safety of its own children. In April 2024, Ukrainian Human Rights Commissioner D.Lubinets reported that European social services had removed 255 Ukrainian children from their parents or legal guardians, including 71 in Germany. The same month, the National Police of Ukraine reported that 161 children had been found in Germany who had previously been considered forcibly transferred to Russia or Belarus.

Finally, in December 2025, the Ukrainian police themselves uncovered a scheme involving the illegal removal of minors abroad for adoption by foreign nationals: the case involved at least 25 children, 13 of whom had already been taken out of the country.

Western propaganda turns a blind eye to the actions of the Armed Forces of Ukraine (AFU), which have caused the deaths of children. Since 2014, around 300 minors have been killed in Donbass and over a thousand have been injured. From 2022 onwards, the number of child casualties continued to grow in Russia's border regions. According to Russian Foreign Ministry Ambassador-at-Large R. Miroshnik, Ukrainian attacks in 2024 claimed the lives of at least 50 children and left 285 wounded. In 2025 – 22 fatalities and 271 injuries. During the first three months of 2026, seven more underaged lost their lives, while 71 sustained injuries. In all the above cases residential buildings, educational institutions and vehicles have come under direct attack.

This creates an obvious imbalance: the fate of some children becomes a constant subject of international attention, while children killed in Donbass and Russian regions as a result of AFU's shelling remain largely out of the spotlight. It is exactly for this reason that Moscow speaks of the politicization of the entire "children's issue."



NNPC

CHEVRON NIGERIA LIMITED

R. C. 6135

OPERATOR OF THE NNPC/CHEVRON JOINT VENTURE



TENDER OPPORTUNITY

PROVISION OF MAINTENANCE DIVING SERVICES ON CALL OUT BASIS

NipeX Tender No – CNL.00000358

1. INTRODUCTION:

Chevron Nigeria Limited ("CNL") Operator of NNPC/CNL Joint Venture invites interested and prequalified companies with relevant experience for this tender opportunity for provision of Maintenance Diving Services on Call-out Basis to support CNL's production activities. Maintenance Diving Services are required to execute Company's wide range of operational activities within the Escravos Operations (western, central, and eastern) field locations for terminal, offshore, onshore/swamp facilities (or at other locations) as may be required to support Company's ongoing oil and gas production activities.

The services are estimated to commence third quarter of 2027 for Five (5) years primary term with an optional two (2) years extension period.

2. SCOPE OF WORK:

Scope of work for the service shall include but not limited to provision of skilled personnel, supervision, equipment and material/consumables necessary for rendering Maintenance Diving Services as required in COMPANY's areas of Operation 24 hours per day, 7 days per week, on an "as and when required" basis and in a safe manner to plant, assets and personnel at all Company's facility locations (Escravos, offshore, onshore, etc.). Furthermore, successful companies would be expected to have self-sustaining operations and capabilities to provide any aspect of the scope from only personnel who are qualified and able to communicate fluently in English, to the delivery of full services, including all necessary equipment, materials, and consumables, as may be required.

Detailed Services Description:

The range of services that will be provided by CONTRACTOR shall include but not limited to the following:

- Provision of Dive Equipment and Personnel
- Provision of Dive Support Vessel (DSV) with built-in dive equipment
- Provision of DSV DP-2 Vessel
- Pipeline and riser inspection and repair.
- Offshore Platform underwater structural inspections and repairs to API specifications
- Underwater anode replacement and installation.
- Underwater welding and cutting.
- Hull surveys (UWILD) to ABS, Lloyds, DNV and BV Class Standards.
- Seabed dive survey and excavation.
- Remotely Operated Vehicle (ROV) surveys.
- Single point mooring (SPM) Buoy and hoses inspections and maintenance, including hose change out.
- Buoying of pipelines to support SEWOP movements.
- Carrying out propeller repairs on other vessels

3. MANDATORY TENDER REQUIREMENTS:

- A. To be eligible for this tender exercise, interested bidders are required to have the requisite NUPRC permit, NCDMB NOGIC JQS registration and be pre-qualified and 'live' under Product Code: 3.01.06 (Subsea / Diving / ROV Technology Services), 3.08.01 (Tugs / ROV Support / Diving Support Vessels), and 3.05.09 (Diving/ROV/Submersible Operations) and must be registered under Category A, B, C and D in NipeX Joint Qualification System (NJQS) database. All successfully pre-qualified and "live" bidders in this category by the bid close date of this advert will receive the Invitation to Tender (ITT).
- B. To determine if you are pre-qualified and to view the product/service category you are listed for, visit <https://vms.nipex.org/login> and access NJQS using your login details. Click on the 'Subscription' tab on the left-hand side of the dashboard to view your status and click on the 'Product Code' tab to view your registered product codes.
- C. If you are not listed in this product service category and you are registered with NUPRC to do business for this category, please contact the NipeX office address at: The Post Square Towers (Building B), 1, 3, Ologun Agbaje Street, Off Adeola Odeku Street, Victoria Island, Lagos.
- D. To initiate the NJQS pre-qualification process, access <http://www.nipex-ng.com>, click on the 'Registration' tab, and select 'New Vendor Registration'.
- E. To be eligible, all tenders must comply with Nigerian Content requirements in the NipeX system.

4. NIGERIAN CONTENT REQUIREMENTS:

Chevron Nigeria Limited is committed to the development of the Nigerian Oil and Gas business in observance with the Nigerian Oil and Gas Industry Content Development Act 2010 (NOGICD Act) enacted by the Federal Government of Nigeria in April 2010. Pursuant to enactment of the NOGICD Act, the minimum Nigerian Content in any project, service or product specification to be executed in the Nigerian Oil and Gas Industry shall be consistent with the level set in the schedule of the Act and any other target as may be directed by the Nigerian Content Development and Monitoring Board (NCDMB).

Contractors shall comply with the provisions of the NOGICD Act and all applicable regulations. Bidders that do not meet the Nigerian Content criterion will not be allowed to participate in next Tender Stage

The following are the Nigerian Content requirements bidders are expected to comply with in their technical bid submission:

- A. Tenderer shall provide evidence of being a Nigerian registered company with 51% shareholding capacity. The tender shall provide CO2 and CO7 forms, registration on NOGIC JQS and NUPRC certificate.
- B. Tenderer shall provide detailed description of the location of in-country committed facilities & infrastructure (technical office, administrative space etc.) in Nigeria to support this contract.
- C. Provide evidence of what percentage of your key management positions is held by Nigerians and what percentage of the total work force are Nigerians. Also, show overall
- D. percentage of work to be performed in Nigeria and those by Nigerian resources relative to total work volume.
- E. Tenderer shall provide evidence of category 1,2,3,4 or 5 Quality Inspection and Control (QS) NCEC and ownership of in-country ROV demonstrating capacity and capability to execute work scope.
- F. Tenderer shall comply with the latest approved version of NCDMB HCD guideline by committing (via a letter of undertaking) to providing Project-Specific training, man-hour, budget, skill development and understudy plan for Nigerian personnel utilizing OGTAN registered trainer(s) or other approved NCDMB training institution(s).

Non-Compliance with Nigerian Content requirements is a Fatal Flaw.

5. CLOSING DATE:

Only bidders who are **prequalified and 'live'** with NJQS Product/Category **3.01.06 (Subsea / Diving / ROV Technology Services), 3.08.01 (Tugs / ROV Support / Diving Support Vessels), and 3.05.09 (Diving/ROV/Submersible Operations)** in categories A, B, C and D by **16:00 Hours, 27 October 2026** being the advert close date shall be invited to submit technical bid.

Additional Information:

1. The Invitation to Tender (ITT) and any further progression of this tender shall be via NipeX. Interested bidders are therefore advised to ensure they are set up in NipeX with a valid and active official company email address accessible by all in their organization as this shall be the only means to transmit the ITT.
2. Bidders, who, for this bid process enter a Joint Venture (JV), Partnership, Consortiums, etc. with another bidder that is bidding for this service will be disqualified.
3. All costs incurred in preparing and processing NJQS prequalification shall be solely to the bidders' accounts.
4. This advertisement shall neither be construed as any form of commitment on the part of Chevron Nigeria Limited ("Company") to award any contract to any company and or associated companies, sub-contractors, or agents, nor shall it entitle prequalified companies to make any claims whatsoever, and/or seek any indemnity from Company and/or any of its partners by virtue of such companies having been prequalified in NJQS.
5. The tendering process shall be the NNPC NipeX contracting process requiring pre-qualified companies to submit both technical and commercial tenders at the same time.
6. Company reserves the right to reject any and or all pre-qualified bids at its sole discretion and at no cost to Company.
7. Company will communicate only with authorized officers of the pre-qualifying companies and NOT through individuals or agents.

NCDMB Certification No: ES/NCDMB/UPD/CNL-NCP- 100632/020326/PROVISION OF MAINTENACE DIVING SERVICES – JV
Please visit NipeX portal at www.nipex-ng.com for this advert and other information.

FOUNDER: ALEX U. IBRU (1945 – 2011)

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

Editorial

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Uber's exit from Nigeria: A reality check

THE withdrawal of Uber from Nigeria's ride-hailing market is more than the exit of a multinational corporation from a flagship African economy. It is indeed a defining moment in the evolving story of Nigeria's digital economy and attendant hurdles that are as genuine as they are politicised in an electioneering period. Neither of them detracts from the inherent job losses, the optics for future investments, or the missed opportunities, considering Nigeria's huge economic potential and massive population.

The departure of Uber should not be read simply as a loss, though lamentable, but as a moment of reckoning—a chance to ask difficult questions about the country's economic direction and to chart a more stable and equitable path forward.

For nearly a decade, the ride-hailing market has been an emblem of technological innovation, urban mobility, and youth employment. Uber, like Bolt, inDrive and other operators, cumulatively contribute to building Nigeria's \$450 million e-hailing market. Uber's exit on September 2 ended its 12-year presence in Nigeria, after the company launched in Lagos in 2014 and expanded its footprint as demand for app-based transportation grew across major urban centres.

Generally, Uber's exit from Nigeria and Uganda forms part of a broader restructuring at Uber, with the company expected to eliminate about 3,300 jobs globally. Chief Executive Officer Dara Khosrowshahi seeks to simplify the organisation, reduce management layers and prepare the business for its next phase of growth.

More specifically, Uber's decision to pull the plug on Nigeria can be attributed to a familiar combination of factors: macroeconomic instability, rising operational costs, currency volatility, and regulatory pressures. For instance,

Nigeria's weak naira rate has made it increasingly difficult for foreign companies to repatriate profits or maintain predictable cost structures.

Coupled with inflationary pressures—particularly in fuel prices, insurance, and vehicle maintenance—in a deeply infrastructure-challenged environment, the ride-hailing business model has become less viable amid waning affordability and rising cost of living. For a platform that depends on relatively thin margins and high transaction volumes, such uncertainties can be fatal.

Regulation has also played a decisive role. In recent years, Nigerian authorities, particularly at the federal and state levels, have introduced new licensing fees, levies, and operational requirements for ride-hailing companies. An instance is the Federal Airport Authority of Nigeria (FAAN) and its resident private car park operators at Lagos Airport, who recently raised user fees and overhauled operational requirements for users, including e-hailing businesses.

While regulation is necessary to ensure safety, fairness, and tax compliance, inconsistent or burdensome costs and policies can deter investment. The current harsh experience highlights a tension common in emerging economies and the need to balance state oversight with the flexibility required for innovation to flourish.

The foregoing has implications for Nigeria. First, there is the question of employment. Thousands of drivers who relied on Uber as a primary or supplementary source of income now face uncertainty. While many may migrate to alternative platforms such as Bolt or inDrive, the loss of a major competitor could reduce earnings and bargaining power. The gig economy, often celebrated for its flexibility, is revealed here to be vulnerable; workers bear the brunt of corporate exits.

Second, consumer welfare is likely to be affected. Uber's presence contributed to competitive pricing, service quality, and technological innovation. Its exit may lead to higher fares, fewer service options, and di-

minished incentives for remaining firms to improve standards. In markets where competition is already limited, the departure of a key player risks creating quasi-monopolistic conditions.

Third, and perhaps most significantly, the exit signals to international investors. Perception matters in global capital flows. When a high-profile company withdraws, it raises questions about the ease of doing business, regulatory stability, and market profitability. Nigeria, which aspires to be a hub for digital innovation in Africa, must confront the reputational implications of such developments.

However, this moment also presents an opportunity—one that should not be overlooked. The market is available! Ken Research projected that the growing urban populations, rising smartphone adoption and changing commuting habits are expected to keep demand for app-based mobility on an upward trajectory.

Growth could more than double market worth to \$982m by 2032, representing a compound annual growth rate of 11.8 per cent, putting established operators in a race to capture a larger share of a sector whose growth potential remains significant despite persistent challenges around fuel costs, vehicle financing and driver earnings.

On the other hand, Uber's withdrawal has turned what was once a contest among several platforms into a more intense battle between the remaining operators for users, drivers and the commercial opportunities attached to them. Uber's departure, on the other hand, could and should catalyse the growth of indigenous platforms better attuned to local realities.

There is the Lagos State government-backed

Lagride in Lagos. Daesil Ride operates in Abuja, Jos, and Auchi and offers in-app price negotiation. There is also SimpliRide, among others. This month, a new entrant, ProTaxi, has emerged. ProTaxi, an e-hailing platform powered by electric vehicles, has commenced operations in Abuja, with plans to deploy 1,000 vehicles and onboard drivers.

Nigerian entrepreneurs have already demonstrated remarkable ingenuity in fintech, e-commerce, and logistics. A similar trajectory in mobility services could emerge, leveraging local knowledge, adaptive pricing models, and context-sensitive innovations. In this sense, the exit of a global giant might create space for homegrown alternatives to thrive.

Policymakers have an opportunity to rethink regulatory frameworks and ensure that the realities that forced Uber out do not befall other local and foreign investors. The goal should not be to attract foreign companies at all costs, but to create a balanced ecosystem that supports both local and international players. Transparent policies, stakeholder engagement, and regulatory consistency should complement infrastructure development, especially the construction of motorable roads beyond cities. Equally important is addressing macroeconomic instability, without which no amount of regulatory reform will suffice.

Ultimately, Uber's exit is a cautionary tale. It underscores the interconnectedness of economic policy, technological innovation, and social welfare. For Nigeria, the challenge is not merely to replace one company with another, but to build a resilient, inclusive, and sustainable digital economy.

LETTER

Justice Kogo and integrity test

SIR: At a time when public office is judged more by the privileges it confers than the responsibility it demands, officials who place institutional interest above personal comfort deserve more than applause. They deserve scrutiny.

Nigeria's crisis of public leadership is not just about missing policies or weak institutions. It is the recurring gap between public authority and public purpose. Budgets are passed, agencies are set up, appointments are made, yet outcomes still depend on the character and discipline of those entrusted with leadership.

It is against this backdrop that the record of the Chairman of the Code of Conduct Tribunal, Justice Mainasara Umar Kogo, invites reflection. I have known Justice Kogo since our school days. That personal knowledge does not exempt his record from scrutiny. It offers a chance to test whether values professed early survive the pressures and perks of public office.

Leadership is not proved by what one says before power. It is proved by what one does with it. Since assuming leadership of the CCT, Justice Kogo has focused on long-standing administrative problems: staff welfare, delayed promotions, in-

frastructure, equipment, and transportation. These may seem routine, but they are central to how institutions function.

An institution cannot deliver justice efficiently when its personnel are demoralised and its tools are obsolete. The reported improvements in salaries, promotions, and working conditions at the Tribunal raise a larger question: why must workers in critical public institutions wait years for legitimate welfare issues to be addressed?

Leadership may not solve every structural problem, but it decides whether problems are confronted or merely managed.

The emphasis on modernisation is also notable, renovation of facilities, restoration of electricity, and provision of computers and working tools. In an era where justice depends on records, timelines, and inter-agency data, modernisation is no longer optional. It is urgent.

No doubt, administrative restructuring, creating departments and clarifying responsibilities can cut bottlenecks. But restructuring must not be an end in itself. Reform is measured by one thing: that it brings better service to citizens.

In a justice system where delay

erodes trust, disposing of cases that lingered for years matters. Buildings and budgets are important, but an institution exists primarily to do its job.

The reported absence of carry-over cases at the end of the 2025/2026 legal year should prompt a wider conversation. This brings to question as to why cases stall for decades. What procedural and administrative obstacles allow it? What can other judicial bodies learn from institutions that reduce backlogs?

On discipline, Justice Kogo's approach reflects another hard truth: welfare without responsibility is unsustainable.

Enforcing punctuality and attendance, when done fairly, is not oppression. Public institutions cannot demand accountability from citizens while tolerating indiscipline internally. Rights must come with duties. The strongest evidence of leadership philosophy is often found in small choices.

Read the remaining part of this letter on www.guardian.ng
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Opinion

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Dangote Refinery and protection of a community asset

By Akin Olukiran

WHOEVER advised Alhaji Aliko Dangote to offer what has aptly been christened a “People’s IPO”, with a minimum subscription of just N5,250, deserves more than a passing commendation. He deserves to be studied.

For a project of the scale and strategic importance of the Dangote Refinery, lowering the threshold of participation to the equivalent of ten shares is an extraordinary stroke of corporate imagination. At N525 per share, virtually anyone with a modest income can acquire a stake. The offer has consequently generated an investment frenzy of a kind rarely witnessed in Africa, with digital investment platforms struggling to cope with the extraordinary retail interest.

And this is where the genius of the strategy lies. By deliberately opening the ownership proposition to drivers, cooks, gardeners, cleaners and, in Dangote’s own words, “our drivers, our cooks, our servants, our managers, and everybody”, the transaction goes beyond the conventional logic of an IPO. Digital brokerage and payment platforms have made it possible to reduce the traditional barriers and transaction costs that have historically excluded ordinary Nigerians from the capital market.

Of course, Dangote is a businessman. He is not doing this out of philanthropy. There is a commercial logic to the transaction. Having invested billions of dollars in building the refinery, he has borne an extraordinary concentration of financial and entrepreneurial risk. The IPO allows him not only to raise substantial capital for expansion but also to distribute a portion of both the ownership and the economic opportunity among a much wider con-

stituency. The offer comprises 4.1 billion shares and is designed to raise approximately N2.15 trillion.

But there is another dimension to the transaction which may ultimately prove even more consequential. The Yoruba have a wonderfully concise way of describing the psychology of ownership: “*Kiniyèyí? Tèmini; òyàto sí, kiniyí? Tiwa ni.*” There is a profound difference between saying this is mine and saying this is ours. Dangote appears to understand this Nigerian psychology rather well.

We tend to develop a remarkable intensity of concern for whatever we perceive as belonging to us. I remember my student days at the then University of Ife. Whenever there was a students’ protest, or even merely a rumour that one was brewing, the long drive into the university along Road One would suddenly become a procession of Mercedes-Benz, Volvo, Peugeot and Volkswagen cars. Concerned parents would descend from Lagos, Ibadan and God knows where else, to retrieve their children before the trouble started.

Why? Because when the issue becomes personal, indifference disappears. This is precisely what the Dangote IPO has the potential to accomplish. It changes the psychological relationship between Nigerians and the refinery. What was once perceived principally as Dangote’s refinery can increasingly be perceived as our refinery. And that distinction is not semantic. It is economic and, potentially, strategic.

Consider the amusing story reported in the international media of a Nigerian stopping a speeding Dangote truck driver and admonishing him not to be reckless with “company property”. On the surface, it is merely comic social-media content. But beneath the humour lies something rather profound: the emergence of a psychological sense of ownership. Reuters has reported the

same phenomenon, noting how Nigerians have taken to social media jokingly behaving like refinery co-owners and board members.

That, in my view, is the real genius of the People’s IPO. It is not simply selling shares. It is manufacturing belonging. Release a relatively small proportion of the ownership to millions of ordinary Nigerians and you have potentially created something far more valuable than the capital raised. You have created a constituency with an economic interest in the success, stability, protection and longevity of the enterprise.

This is particularly significant in a country where the boundary between public and private interest has historically been blurred, and where strategic businesses can sometimes become embroiled in regulatory, political and commercial contestation. A widely distributed shareholder base introduces another dimension to that equation.

The refinery is no longer merely an industrial monument belonging to one extraordinarily successful Nigerian. It becomes, in a psychological sense, part of the nation’s economic patrimony. And that may be the most ingenious part of the transaction.

The offering is also occurring against the background of intense public interest in the refinery and its place in Nigeria’s energy economy. The refinery, which became operational in 2024, has reached full production capacity and is now a major supplier of refined petroleum products to Nigeria and other markets. The symbolism, therefore, should not be underestimated.

For decades, Nigerians watched their crude oil leave the country, only to return in the form of expensive refined petroleum products. Now, one of the continent’s largest industrial investments is inviting ordinary Nigerians to become share-

holders in the enterprise that refines that crude.

There is something almost poetic about that reversal. And then there is the political economy of pricing. If the refinery increases the price of its products, an ordinary shareholder may still grumble at the pump. But the psychological calculus has subtly changed. Some of the profit generated by the enterprise is potentially accruing to him as a shareholder. The consumer is no longer merely a consumer; he has become, however modestly, a participant in the enterprise.

That is a profound shift. It is the difference between saying “Dangote is making money from us” and saying “Dangote’s company is making money, and I own a tiny part of it.”

Of course, an important caveat remains. Owning ten shares does not confer meaningful control over a company of this scale. Dividends are not guaranteed, share prices can fall, and investors can lose money. The official IPO information itself makes these risks explicit.

But ownership is not only about control. Sometimes, it is about identity. The Dangote IPO may therefore turn out to be remembered for something beyond the N2.15 trillion it seeks to raise. It may demonstrate a novel principle of African corporate capitalism: that one of the most effective ways to protect a strategic private asset may be to make millions of people feel that it is theirs.

Dangote may have sold only a small fraction of the refinery. But he may have succeeded in selling something much larger: a sense of ownership. And in Nigeria, where *tèmi*—mine—can sometimes be a stronger motivator than *tiwa*—ours—that may prove to be the most valuable asset of all. May Nigeria win.

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Has Nigeria’s indigenous industrialisation policy failed?

By Moshood Oshunfurewa

THIS symptom has fully emerged. Nigeria’s indigenous industrialisation policy has failed. This failure is not the product of any single policy misstep but the systematic collapse of a six-decade-old structural architecture. This is a consequence of energy costs that devour manufacturing margins, foreign exchange controls that choke off access to production inputs, corruption that converts industrial support funds into private estates, and infrastructure decay that makes any locally produced good structurally uncompetitive against imports.

When Chinese traders move from wholesale into retail and directly capture the customer networks of Nigerian local merchants, this is not an isolated market event. It is the inevitable outcome of a domestic industrial capacity so thoroughly dismantled that foreign capital, cheaper, faster, better capitalised, simply fills the vacuum.

What is more dangerous is that this crisis is being distorted by ethnicised narratives. The protesters at the Lagos International Trade Fair were largely Igbo traders, and some political actors are happy to redirect the confrontation into an “Igbo versus Chinese” story, burying the real structural culprits, a political economy that makes it impossible for local producers to survive while imported goods flow in unimpeded. When Chinese manufacturers can mass-produce at a fraction of Nigerian costs and sell directly to Nigerian consumers, Nigerian artisans and SME owners are not facing a competitor. They are facing an entire industrial ecosystem they were never permitted to build.

The crisis of Nigerian manufacturing begins as an energy crisis. The Association of Power Generation Companies reports installed capacity above 15,500 megawatts, but the grid transmits only about 4,500 megawatts. Between 2,500 and 4,000 megawatts of generated power are wasted daily. Eighty-five million Nigerians live without electricity. A tailor earning N4,000 a day spends N3,000 of it on generator fuel. Nigerian businesses and households spend roughly \$23 billion annually on diesel and petrol for self-generation, and the World Bank estimates the economic cost of unreliable electricity at \$26–29 billion.

This energy cost structure means that any locally manufactured good carries a “power tax” from the moment it is conceived—a tax Chinese manufacturers never pay. Chinese factories enjoy stable grid electricity; Nigerian factories must build their own power plants. When Chinese goods enter the market at scale-driven low costs, Nigerian producers are not in a fair fight. They are in a war whose outcome was fixed before the first shot.

Foreign exchange controls are the second strangulation. Between 2015 and 2023, the Central Bank of Nigeria imposed eight years of FX controls and 43 import bans in an attempt to force local production. The result was catastrophic: firms could not obtain the foreign exchange needed to import raw materials and machinery, and productive capacity fell rather than rose. Between 2023 and 2024, over 85 per cent of Nigeria’s manufactured goods trade was imported; by the first half of 2025, that figure reached 93.3 per cent.

Protectionism did not midwife indigenous industry. It accelerated deindustrialisation—because Nigeria had never built the productive capacity that could substitute for imports in the first place.

The third strangulation is institutional corruption. Successive industrial support schemes, from the Anchor Borrowers’ Programme to various manufacturing intervention funds, have fallen into the same trap: funds intercepted at disbursement, subsidies routed to politically connected firms rather than genuinely productive SMEs, and the ordinary artisan and micro-entrepreneur never once appearing on the policy radar. The nation’s fundamental problem is not a lack of vision but “a deficit of institutional capacity and execution discipline” to convert vision into results. Stolen wealth is displayed in the offshore properties of Nigerian public officials, while the resources that should have flowed into industrialisation never reach production.

The Lagos trade fair protests exposed a deeper economic logic. Chinese traders initially entered the Nigerian market as wholesalers, using China’s scale advantages to supply Nigerian retailers. But as local retail capacity shrank and local merchants lost the ability to accumulate capital, Chinese traders moved directly into retail—renting shops, building warehouses, copying customer phone numbers from waybills, and undercutting local merchants by selling straight to final consumers.

This is not simple “unfair competition.” Chinese retailers possess advantages Nigerian merchants simply cannot match: direct factory sourcing that bypasses every intermediary; trade finance from Chinese banks; and a renminbi-naira currency swap (however underutilised at under 10 per cent) that lets them sidestep dollar shortages. The Nigerian merchant, by contrast, faces naira depreciation inflating import costs, administrative barriers to FX access, and direct price pressure from Chinese retailers.

The trade structure is damning. In 2024, Nigeria imported N14.15 trillion worth of goods from China while exporting only N2.99 trillion, imports accounting for over 82 per cent of bilateral trade. Nigeria’s exports to China are concentrated in oil, gas, sesame, and raw ore; its imports from China are synthetic textiles, telephones, machinery, and electrical equipment, higher-value manufactured goods. This structure fits dependency theory’s “centre-periphery” relationship exactly: the periphery supplies raw materials, the centre supplies finished goods, and value flows systematically from periphery to centre.

When Chinese traders extend from wholesale into retail, they are extracting the last remaining surplus of that dependency relationship. The Nigerian merchant’s position in the chain is emptied out entirely: he cannot compete upstream with Chinese factories, nor downstream with Chinese retailers. The protesters’ anger is real, but it has been aimed at the wrong target.

That the Lagos protesters were predominantly Igbo traders is no accident. Igbo Nigerians occupy a disproportionately important position in Nigeria’s trading networks, from Lagos to Aba to Onitsha, Igbo merchants form the backbone of indigenous retail and distribution. When Chinese retailers began directly eroding that network, the group hit hardest was precisely the Igbo trading class.

Yet some political forces moved swiftly to redefine an economic protest as an “Igbo versus Chinese” ethnic conflict. This narrative diversion is not innocent. It pulls public attention away from the real structural questions, why can’t Nigeria’s power system supply factories? Why do FX controls strangle local production? Why do industrial support funds end up in private pockets? and reduces everything to a xenophobic story of foreigners stealing local business.

The response of Nigeria-China Investment Club president Chidi Uleli is telling: he concedes “yes, it is a legitimate concern,” then points the solution at “Nigerian businessmen should come together and establish cottage industries,” as if the problem were insufficient individual effort rather than the collapse of an entire industrial ecosystem. This argument ignores a basic fact: building a factory in Nigeria means providing your own generator, solving your own FX, and absorbing the cost of infrastructural collapse, costs Chinese manufacturers never bear.

The failure of Nigeria’s indigenous industrialisation policy ultimately manifests as a new form of dependency. Nigeria no longer the direct political control of the colonial era, but a lock-in at the lowest rung of the global value chain through asymmetries in trade structure, financial mechanisms, and productive capacity. China’s trade surplus with Nigeria reached \$23 billion in 2024, but that is only the surface number. The deeper problem is that Nigeria has lost the possibility of building indigenous manufacturing capacity in the foreseeable future.

Every protectionist attempt has ended in failure because the thing being protected does not exist. You cannot protect an uncompetitive industry; you can only protect the corpse of an industry that is already dead. Nigeria’s textile industry once had 167 factories and 500,000 workers; today most of those factories are industrial ruins. When the Senate calls for “reviving the textile industry,” it confronts an empty shell with no electricity, no cotton supply chain, no financing channels.

Chinese small and medium enterprises are taking over Nigeria’s retail space, not because Chinese people are smarter or more hard-working than Nigerians, but because China’s industrial ecosystem—from power to logistics to finance to technology, allows them to produce goods at costs Nigerians cannot match. Nigerian merchants cannot build cottage industries to compete in their own country, because the cost of building industry in their own country is absurdly high.

The fate of the ordinary Nigerian is now bound to this dependency structure. Every Chinese-made good they buy reinforces an economic order that makes local production permanently unviable. And those Igbo traders protesting on the streets of Lagos should aim their anger elsewhere, at the Nigerian rulers who institutionalised corruption, abandoned infrastructure, and turned industrial policy into a tool of political patronage. Chinese traders are merely the final beneficiaries of this failed system, not its architects.

Oshunfurewa, a public affairs analyst wrote from Lagos. He can be reached via: moshoodho2025@gmail.com and 08035936663.

Opinion

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Prof Albert Alós, Lade Bonuola and Lagos Business School

By Kingsley Osadolor

SOMETIME in 1993, before the June 12 tumult set in, and about a year after I became Editor of *The Guardian on Sunday*, I received a minute from Lade Bonuola (Ladbroke), who was the Managing Director of *The Guardian Newspapers Limited*. The minute was on an invitation to a cocktail at Victoria Island, Lagos. The MD said he would not be able to attend, but that I should represent him at the event. The cocktail was hosted by the former Chief of Army Staff and business mogul, Lt-Gen. T.Y. Danjuma (rtd), and his wife, Daisy, at their Victoria Island home, long before they relocated to Banana Island. A number of corporate titans attended the cocktail. They included Dr Christopher Kolade, Pascal Dozie, Faysal el-Khalil of Seven-Up, and others. There was also in attendance Prof. Albert Alós. Part of the talk at the event was a call for corporate support for the effective take-off of the Lagos Business School. The solicited support was by way of endowments or other donations, or dedicated funding, so that brick by brick the School could grow and set a reputation for standard, especially in executive business education. There were also, from among the corporate bigwigs present, pledges of faculty time, so there could be a productive meeting of town and gown. That way, the highly practiced hands could more readily impart knowledge through elucidation with case studies.

In the ensuing years, Dr Kolade became perhaps the best exemplification of the primal

pledge of adjunct faculty time by the corporate heavyweights. It was at that cocktail that one of the speakers suggested that, if corporate entities in the country sent in their executives for programmes at the School, it would incentivise non-stop improvement and bolster the School's profile. That plea bore fruit bountifully in later years as the Lagos Business School boasted of an alumni database that included operatives and key decision-makers of blue-chip companies and other well-heeled enterprises.

Meeting him for the first time, but struck by his quiet yet confident demeanour, I got into small talk with Prof. Alós, as he sidled up to me at the cocktail, and we exchanged business cards. Alós equally introduced another gentleman to me whom he said was involved with the Lagos Business School project and would in the meantime manage the public relations dimensions of the institution. That gentleman was Timothy Keenly with whom I also exchanged business cards. After the cocktail, I did not return to the office, but drove home instead, as it was already nighttime.

The next day, I went to brief Lade Bonuola about the event at which I represented him. He listened attentively to my summarised briefing, including an abridged roll-call of the participants. Then, I mentioned that Prof Alós had hinted that they would rely on us, *The Guardian*, to help promote the endowments of the Lagos Business School project. At that, Ladbroke's face lit up—and he said, “Oh yes, yes! From the names you reeled out,

these are serious-minded Nigerians, and it is a measure of our reputation as a newspaper that they are seeking reliance on our support.”

The support we gave as a newspaper was publicity at no cost whatsoever. Later, as the corporate entities and individuals redeemed their pledges to the School, the cheques were usually received on behalf of the Lagos Business School by Timothy Keenly, and it was always as a photo opportunity. Timothy Keenly would dispatch the photographs to me with captions. I got them published as a photo story in the Business section of *The Guardian on Sunday*.

As Timothy Keenly, Prof Alós, and Prof John Elegido confirmed to me subsequently, on separate occasions, that simple gesture of publicising Timothy Keenly receiving endowment cheques on behalf of the School encouraged even more donors. And from Ahmed Onibudo Street, where the Lagos Business School took off effectively, it became the premier, foundational School at the Pan-Atlantic University of which Prof. Alós was the inaugural Vice-Chancellor, before his retirement at age 70.

One day, in late 2010, I ran into Prof Elegido at the basement lobby of NICON Luxury Hotel in Abuja. I introduced myself to him, and asked after both Prof Alós and Timothy Keenly. I reminded him about the early days of endowments for the Lagos Business School. Prof Elegido remembered clearly, and teased that Timothy Keenly's face was in *The Guardian* every so often. Keenly, he said, had since returned to the United States. Because Lade Bonuola had approved the editorial support for the Lagos Business School project endowment, no

one queried why *The Guardian on Sunday* so regularly published photonews about the School. The Lagos Business School firmed up, and began its ascent to the stars.

The closest I ever came to the School was when it was still located at Ahmed Onibudo Street, near the Nigerian Law School. I would park opposite the Business School and stroll into the Law School when I was enrolled therein, and return to my car after lectures, scampering to beat the traffic on Victoria Island.

On September 7, 2026, Prof Albert Alós died, just 10 days shy of his 87th birthday. Originally from Spain, he arrived in Nigeria in 1967, the year our country's 30-month Civil War broke out. Alós became naturalised and truly called Nigeria his home, while flourishing as an academic in his core field of Electrical Engineering in Universities at Ife, Lagos, and Ibadan. Unquestionably, however, it was the Lagos Business School, as well as Pan-Atlantic University, that cemented his legacy of remarkable educational institutional development, which Ladbroke, and I to a lesser degree, helped to galvanise the watering-can bearers, who hearkened to the clarion call at Gen. Danjuma's cocktail party, to ensure the germination of the seed that had been consciously planted in the early '90s—and now an oak in Nigeria's educational landscape.

Osadolor, former Editor of The Guardian on Sunday, and later Deputy Managing Director of Guardian Newspapers Limited, is co-Host of Good Morning Nigeria on the Nigerian Television Authority network.

RCCG should blow its own trumpet

By Bode Babatunde

A FRIEND once asked me two questions that stayed with me. “Pastor,” he said, “with all the tithes and offerings that RCCG collects, what exactly does the church have to show for the money? I learnt that your G.O, Pastor E.A. Adeboye, rides in a private jet—what does he need a jet for?”

I could have answered with theology. I could have quoted Scripture. I could have reminded him of the millions of lives touched by the gospel. I did none of these.

I simply thought: perhaps we have failed to tell our story. Perhaps the Redeemed Christian Church of God has been so reluctant to blow its own trumpet that other people have been allowed to define its achievements for it.

And that needs to change.

I write this not merely as an observer. As a pastor of the RCCG, I have an interest in the reputation of the organisation. That explains why I believe the conversation should move away from sentiment and towards evidence. The accusation that Pastor Enoch Adeboye and RCCG collect tithes and offerings from millions of people without anything tangible to show for them has become almost a cliché in some circles.

But what if we stopped arguing and simply examined what exists? What has RCCG done with the money?

Start with Redemption City

It is not merely a church auditorium surrounded by tents. It is an enormous institutional ecosystem featuring self-generated power, water treatment, roads, sanitation, security, fire services, banks, accommodation, education, healthcare and other infrastructure. RCCG has developed electricity-generation and distribution capacity and maintains departments dealing with water, electricity, sanitation and fire services.

Then look at healthcare

Redeemer's Health Village is a 300-bed multispecialty hospital established by RCCG. It has sophisticated diagnostic and critical-care facilities, including what has been reported as the largest MRI machine in West Africa, alongside a 160-slice CT scanner and specialised intensive-care facilities. But the story has moved beyond conventional hospital infrastructure.

In September 2026, Redeemer's Health Village, working with RoboMed Global and Nisa Premier Hospital, participated in what was reported as Nigeria's first tele-robotic sur-

gery and West Africa's first such procedure. A surgical team at the robotic console in Ogun State operated remotely on a patient in Abuja, about 500 kilometres away, to remove a cancerous kidney tumour.

And that was not the only robotic milestone. Pastor Alexander Idachama became the first patient to undergo robotic-assisted surgery at Redeemer's Health Village, receiving a radical prostatectomy for prostate cancer.

Just think for a moment about a Nigerian church participating in a technology that allows a surgeon to operate on a patient hundreds of kilometres away.

This is not something to hide in a church bulletin. It should be national news. It should be part of the Nigerian story. And RCCG should tell it.

Besides, the dialysis story is particularly thrilling

For a Nigerian suffering kidney failure, a dialysis machine is not an abstract statistic. It can be the difference between treatment and deterioration; between hope and despair.

Yet, His Love Foundation, RCCG's philanthropic arm, has established dialysis facilities in hospitals in different parts of Nigeria, including teaching hospitals and federal medical institutions. Reports have documented 48 dialysis machines commissioned through its programme, alongside the supporting water-treatment and power infrastructure required to make dialysis possible.

Recent interventions include donating three complete dialysis machines to the University of Benin Teaching Hospital. Another dialysis centre has been scheduled for commissioning at the Federal Medical Centre, Asaba.

The Foundation also reports interventions including intensive-care units (ICUs), diagnostic facilities, ambulances, and other medical infrastructure across the country.

This is where the question about tithes deserves a different kind of answer. The answer should be:

Here are the projects. Here are the figures. Here are the hospitals. Here are the machines. Here are the patients. Here are the beneficiaries.

That is the language of accountability.

The same applies to education

RCCG's educational ecosystem includes universities, schools and scholarship programmes. Reports have documented substantial scholarship commitments, including a N300 million scholarship intervention for 694 Redeemer's University students.

There are also welfare interventions, humanitarian pro-

grammes, support for vulnerable families and initiatives reaching government-owned institutions.

Consider one recent example. An RCCG philanthropic initiative, the Graceville Legacy Project, reported visiting 10 general hospitals in Lagos State in 2026 to support mothers and newborns, including paying medical bills and providing assistance to families.

Furthermore, confronting the jet argument will be tantamount to dealing with a functional necessity.

The recurring question of Pastor Adeboye's jet is apparently needless. Globally, many religious leaders with far smaller ministries own private aircraft. Countless entertainers and athletes under the age of 30 own or fly in private jets purely as status symbols, drawing minimal scrutiny.

Yet, Pastor Adeboye is an 84-year-old leader overseeing a ministry spanning more than 200 countries! Is a private jet a luxury for him, or a non-negotiable tool for global operation?

Consider this true-life story: Not long ago, at a single weekend, Pastor Adeboye ministered at a Festival of Life (FOL) programme in London on a Friday night, flew back to Nigeria on Saturday to preach at a wedding by presidential invitation, and returned to London on Sunday to preach again.

Without a private aircraft, achieving such a grueling schedule—at his age—would be logistically impossible. Commercial flight schedules, delays, and layovers simply cannot accommodate a ministry operating on a global scale.

But then, the answer to critics should not be defensive. It should be: Here is the work, here are the numbers, and here is why the tool is necessary.

So, for RCCG, the time is ripe for transparent testimony.

Government carries the primary duty to provide public infrastructure. But when a church uses voluntary contributions to build universities, establish dialysis centers, and pioneer robotic surgery, it should not be embarrassed to share those facts.

RCCG should publish an annual Social Impact Report detailing all these operations with mathematical exactitude.

Humility is a virtue, but humility does not demand silence. When silence allows falsehood to override impact, telling the truth becomes a duty.

It is time to let the machines, the hospitals, the scholarships, and the lives transformed speak for themselves. That is the trumpet RCCG needs to blow.

Dr Babatunde is a pastor of the Redeemed Christian Church of God in London.

CRUDE OIL PRICE UPDATE

Brent crude: \$108.61 WTI crude: \$105.9

FOREX MARKET UPDATE

I&E Window: N1,332.69

'Infrastructure, capital key to unlocking 215tr scf gas reserves'

By Victoria Nwachukwu

THE Federal Government has identified infrastructure, capital, market access and predictable regulation as critical to unlocking the economic value of Nigeria's estimated 215 trillion cubic feet of proven gas reserves.

The government said access to gas should go beyond licences and acreage, as investors could still be unable to develop assets due to inadequate infrastructure, financing constraints, regulatory uncertainty, limited evacuation capacity and insufficient access to markets.

The Minister of State for Petroleum Resources (Gas), Ekperikpe Ekpo, said the Federal Government's Decade of Gas initiative was designed to move Nigeria from being rich in gas resources to being rich in gas-based economic opportunities.

Ekpo, who was represented by his Senior Technical Adviser, Abel Nsa, at the 2026 Energy Conference of the Association of Energy Correspondents of Nigeria (NAEC) in Lagos, said gas must increasingly support industrialisation, power generation, transportation, manufacturing, fertiliser production and other productive activities.

He identified the Ajaokuta-Kaduna-Kano (AKK) and OB3 gas pipelines as critical infrastructure projects being priori-

tised to strengthen the national gas network and connect supply with major demand centres.

"Infrastructure is the bridge between our resources and the industries, power plants, businesses and households that need them," he said.

Ekpo said reforms under the Petroleum Industry Act 2021, alongside fiscal and regulatory measures, were intended to improve competitiveness and make gas projects more attractive to investors.

He stressed that the government could not develop the sector alone, noting that private-sector capital, technology, expertise and commercial discipline were necessary to move viable projects from conception to final investment decision and production.

He called for stronger collaboration among regulators, financial institutions, development partners and industry operators, while urging greater participation by indigenous companies, independent producers, infrastructure developers and technology providers.

Ekpo also called for Nigerian Content to move beyond participation in contracts towards ownership of capabilities, technology, capital and assets, while ensuring that host communities benefited from petroleum operations.

FG to overhaul wheat industry's value chain for lower costs, imports

From Collins Olayinka, Abuja

PLANS are underway by the Federal Government to launch a new programme aimed at strengthening Nigeria's wheat-based consumer foods industry.

The new initiative focuses on production costs, enterprise competitiveness, financing, and the development of local value chains.

The initiative, 'Project WHEAT-NESS', targets improving the competitiveness of businesses across the industry, including millers, bakeries, food manufacturers, and Micro, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (MSMEs), amid Nigeria's dependence on imported wheat.

Nigeria consumes and imports an estimated six to seven million metric tonnes of wheat yearly, exposing the industry to fluctuations in international commodity prices, foreign exchange conditions and supply-chain costs.

The office of the Minister of State for Industry under the Federal Ministry of Industry, Trade and Investment said the launch will bring together government officials, private-sector operators, financial institutions, research organisations and development partners in Abuja.

According to the ministry, WHEAT-NESS seeks to address constraints across the wheat-

based foods value chain, from agricultural production and input supply to aggregation, milling, processing, baking, logistics, distribution and retail.

The initiative will operate through four intervention areas: value-chain development, enterprise development, a Made-in-Nigeria marketing campaign and a proposed Wheat-Based Consumer Foods Value Chain Development Fund.

The value-chain component is expected to focus on improving domestic supply, productive capacity, industrial integration, and operational efficiency. At the same time, enterprise development will target productivity and growth capacity for MSMEs and downstream businesses.

The proposed marketing campaign is intended to strengthen consumer confidence in competitive Nigerian-made foods. At the same time, the development fund is expected to mobilise financing and investment for viable opportunities across the sector.

The programme comes against the backdrop of the cost pressures confronting food manufacturers and businesses that rely on imported raw materials. However, the ministry's announcement did not set measurable targets to reduce import dependence, lower production costs, or increase domestic wheat output.



Founder, CWG, Austin Okere (left); Lagos State All Progressives Congress (APC) Deputy Governorship Candidate, Damilola Sonayon-James; Group Managing Director/Chief Executive Officer, CWG, Adewale Adeyipo; Lagos State Deputy Governor and APC governorship candidate, Dr Obafemi Hamzat and Director-General, National Technology Acquisition and Promotion (NOTAP), Obiageli Amadiobi, at the CWG TeXcellence 5.0 Conference themed "Accelerating Africa's Digital Future," held in Lagos yesterday.

PHOTO: AYODELE ADENIRAN

Debt office plans N5.75 trillion bond offer as FG's borrowing surges 106%

From Joseph Chibueze, Abuja

THE Federal Government is planning to raise another N5.75 trillion through Federal Government of Nigeria (FGN) bonds in the fourth quarter of 2026, extending an aggressive domestic borrowing programme that has already seen bond allotments more than double in the first nine months of the year.

The Debt Management Office (DMO), in its provisional issuance calendar, scheduled bond auctions for October 19, November 16 and December 14, with planned offers of N1.75 trillion, N2 trillion and N2 trillion, respectively.

The proposed fourth-quarter issuance comes after the government allotted N7.15 trillion in FGN bonds between January and September 2026, representing a 106 per cent increase over the N3.48 trillion recorded during the corresponding period of 2025.

The latest borrowing plan also comes against the backdrop of Nigeria's rising public debt stock, which climbed to

N166.79 trillion as of June 30, 2026, from N159.35 trillion at the end of March, according to figures published by the DMO.

Domestic debt accounted for N91.59 trillion, representing 54.91 per cent of the total debt portfolio. The planned bond sales would further expand the government's domestic borrowing programme, although the actual amount raised will depend on the outcome of the auctions and any subsequent changes to the provisional calendar.

Under the proposed schedule, the DMO plans to raise funds through three instruments: the 19.00 per cent FGN February 2034 bond, the 16.79 per cent FGN September 2036 bond and the 15.45 per cent FGN June 2038 bond.

The February 2034 bond will account for N1.5 trillion of the planned issuance, with N500 billion offered at each of the three auctions.

The September 2036 instrument will attract the largest allocation of N2.8 trillion, comprising N800 billion in October and

N1 trillion each in November and December.

The June 2038 bond will account for the remaining N1.45 trillion, with N450 billion scheduled for October and N500 billion each in November and December.

The November and December auctions will therefore account for N4 trillion, representing about 69.6 per cent of the planned fourth-quarter offers.

The proposed issuance follows a substantial increase in government bond allotments during the first nine months of the year, with several months recording sharp year-on-year growth.

In January, allotments rose by 157 per cent to N1.54 trillion from N601.04 billion in January 2025. June recorded one of the most dramatic increases, with allotments climbing to N1.22 trillion from N100 billion a year earlier.

July allotments surged by 401 per cent to N931.82 billion from N185.93 billion, while August recorded a 491 per cent increase to N805.16 billion from N136.16 billion.

In September, allotments rose by 29.8 per cent to N748.64 billion from N576.62 billion in the corresponding month of 2025.

The increases more than offset declines in February and April, when allotments fell by 42.4 per cent and 30.4 per cent, respectively, compared with the same months last year. The trend pointed to a significantly higher volume of bond financing in 2026, although the figures on allotments alone do not establish how much of the borrowing represents new financing needs, refinancing of maturing obligations or other debt-management operations.

The planned N5.75 trillion issuance will add to the Federal Government's financing requirements at a time when the country's public debt stock is already substantial.

The implications for public finances will depend partly on the terms at which the bonds are issued, the use of the proceeds and the government's capacity to meet future interest and principal payments.

Dangote Refinery's profit hits \$4.7b as revenue soars 144% in nine months

By Waliat Musa

DANGOTE Petroleum Refinery and Petrochemicals has recorded a net profit of \$4.73 billion in the nine months ended September 30, 2026, reversing a \$117.2 million loss in the corresponding period of 2025, as revenue rose 144 per cent to \$22.5 billion.

The unaudited financial results, released in Lagos yesterday, showed a sharp improvement in the performance of the 700,000-barrel-per-day refinery, with earnings growth and stronger cash generation coming as the company advances its N2.15 trillion initial public offering (IPO).

Revenue increased from \$9.2 billion in the first nine months of 2025, while earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation and amortisation (EBITDA) rose to \$5.5 billion from \$627.6 million. EBITDA margin expanded to 24.56 per cent

from 6.83 per cent, reflecting higher refining throughput, improved operational reliability and stronger refining margins.

Operating cash flow increased more than tenfold to \$3.68 billion from \$364.7 million in the corresponding period of 2025, while cash balances rose to \$6.69 billion from \$809.5 million.

The refinery also moved from a net debt position of \$1.73 billion in September 2025 to net cash of \$650.8 million by September 2026, an improvement of about \$2.38 billion, which indicated that the company's cash exceeded its debt obligations on a net basis at the end of the period.

The results also point to accelerating earnings in the third quarter. Revenue rose from \$13.91 billion at the end of June to \$22.48 billion by September, indicating revenue of approxi-

mately \$8.57 billion in the three months to September.

EBITDA increased from \$2.60 billion at half-year to \$5.52 billion at the end of September, implying third-quarter EBITDA of about \$2.92 billion. Net profit similarly rose from \$1.82 billion at half-year to \$4.73 billion, adding approximately \$2.90 billion in the third quarter.

Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of Dangote Petroleum Refinery and Petrochemicals, David Bird, attributed the performance to higher throughput, greater operational stability and improved refining margins.

"Our third-quarter performance demonstrates the successful transition from commissioning and ramp-up activities to sustainable commercial operations.

"Revenue increased to \$22.5 billion from \$9.2 billion in the corresponding period of 2025, while EBITDA rose to \$5.5 bil-

lion from \$627.6 million, reflecting higher throughput, improved operational reliability and stronger gross refining margins."

Bird said the results demonstrated the strength of the refinery's integrated business model and provided a foundation for its expansion plans.

"These results reflect the strength of our integrated business model and provide a solid foundation as we progress through our IPO and execute our Vision 2030 growth strategy. "With our expansion programme already underway, we remain focused on increasing refining capacity and broadening our product portfolio. We will continue to strengthen our distribution network across Africa and support energy security across the continent, while creating long-term value for stakeholders."

IN THE FEDERAL HIGH COURT OF NIGERIA

IN THE FEDERAL HIGH COURT OF NIGERIA

IN THE ASABA JUDICIAL DIVISION

HOLDEN AT ASABA

SUIT No: FHC/Asb/Cs/233/25

IN THE MATTER OF THE ASSET MANAGEMENT CORPORATION OF NIGERIA ACT

2010 (AS AMENDED)

IN THE MATTER OF MORTGAGES PHB LIMITED

AND

IN THE MATTER OF FINACORP PROPERTIES LIMITED

AND

IN THE MATTER OF THE COMPANIES AND ALLIED MATTERS ACT, 2020.



BETWEEN:

ASSET MANAGEMENT CORPORATION OF NIGERIA (AMCON) PLAINTIFF

AND

MORTGAGES PHB LIMITED	 1 ST DEFENDANT
FINACORP PROPERTIES LIMITED	 2 ND DEFENDANT
DR. EMMANUEL I. KACHIKWU	 3 RD DEFENDANT
FRANCIS ATUCHE	... 4 TH DEFENDANT
ARCH. ADEWAKUN ADEBAYO	... 5 TH DEFENDANT
OGBECHIE CHIRS IKE	... 6 TH DEFENDANT
HASSAN UMARU MALAMI	... 7 TH DEFENDANT
VINCENT OKWECHIME	... 8 TH DEFENDANT
CHUKWUEMEKA DANIEL ELEH	... 9 TH DEFENDANT
OLU AKANMU	.. 10 TH DEFENDANT
BOLAJI OGUNSOLA	.. 11 TH DEFENDANT
MURTALA SHEHU YAR'ADUA	.. 12 TH DEFENDANT
FELICIA OBINWANNEKA ONWUACHI	.. 13 TH DEFENDANT

ORIGINATING SUMMONS

LET the Defendants:

- i. Mortgages PHB Limited of 14B, Anifowoshe Street, Victoria Island, Lagos State,
- ii. FINACORP PROPERTIES LIMITED of 14B, Anifowoshe Street, Victoria Island, Lagos State,
- iii. DR. EMMANUEL I. KACHIKWU of State Lease at Core Area, Asaba in Oshimili Local Government Area of Delta State,
- iv. FRANCIS ATUCHE OF House 169, Road 43, Victoria Garden City, Lekki, Lagos State,
- v. ARCH. ADEWAKUN ADEBAYO OF 72, Queens Street, Off Hughes Avenue, Alagomeji, Lagos,
- vi. OGBECHIE CHIRS IKE OF 13, Jaiyeola Ajatta Street, Ajao Estate, Lagos,
- vii. HASSAN UMARU MALAMI OF 2ND Floor, Foreshore Towers, 2A, Osborne Road, Ikoyi, Lagos,
- viii. VINCENT OKWECHIME OF C/O SPDC Limited, Shell Industrial Area, Old Aba Road, Port Harcourt, Rivers State,
- ix. CHUKWUEMEKA DANIEL ELEH OF 3/5, Adeyemo Alakija Street, Victoria Island, Lagos State,
- x. OLU AKANMU OF Plot 707, Adeola Hopewell Street, Victoria Island, Lagos, 16A, BOLAJI OGUNSOLA OF 8, Amodu Ojikutu Street, Off Saka Tinubu Street,
- xi. MURTALA SHEHU YAR'ADUA OF Isa Kaita, Kaduna, Kaduna State, and FELICIA
- xii. OBINWANNEKA ONWUACHI OF 101, Police Road, Jakande Estate, Lekki, Lagos State,

Within (30) thirty days after service of this Summons on them, inclusive of the day of such service, cause appearance to be entered for them to this Summons, which is issued upon the application of the Plaintiff, ASSET MANAGEMENT CORPORATION OF NIGERIA OF Plot 417 Tigris Crescent, off Aguiyi Ironsi Street, Maitama, Abuja, for the determination of the following questions:

- o "Whether by a community reading of Sections 5, 34(1)(b), (c) (ii) & (4) of the AMCON ACT, 2010 (As Amended), the Loan Purchase Agreement between the Plaintiff and Bank PHB Plc (Now Keystone Bank), the Notice of Assignment of Debt from Bank PHB Plc (Now Keystone Bank) to the Obligor Mortgages PHB Limited (Formerly Finacorp Buidling Society), the powers and rights conferred on the Asset Management Corporation of Nigeria (AMCON) therein, the legal interests in the 2nd Defendant's Property used as security for the various loans advanced to the 1st Defendant, is NOT automatically vested in the Plaintiff herein upon acquisition of the Eligible Bank Assets (EBAs) from Keystone Bank (formerly Platinum Habib Bank)?
- o Whether the Plaintiff's Right, as a Mortgagee, to enforce the Security by Sale, has NOT crystallised upon the Obligor and the 2nd Defendant's default in liquidating the Debts?
- o And whether the purported transfer of the property, subject of the security interest created in favour of the Plaintiff, to the 3rd Defendant during the pendency of the security interest is not illegal, invalid and void, which security interest remains extant and undischarged, or whether the defence of Innocent Purchaser for value without Notice can avail the 3rd Defendant?

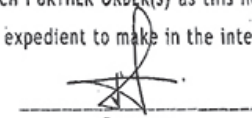
AND should your Lordship answer the above question in the affirmative, the Plaintiff pray this Honourable Court for the following reliefs:

RELIEFS SOUGHT:

- i. A DECLARATION OF THIS HONOURABLE COURT that upon the Plaintiff's acquisition of Eligible Bank Assets (EBAs) from Bank PHB Plc (Now Keystone Bank Plc), which Eligible Bank Assets (EBAs) includes Non-Performing Loans to the tune of N2, 029, 855, 323.00 and N777, 752, 970.00 respectively and which were advanced to the 1st Defendant, the Plaintiff, the Asset Management Corporation of Nigeria (AMCON), is vested with the power, to the exclusion of all other persons including creditors, to take possession of, sell, transfer or assign or otherwise dispose of the assets or properties by which such Eligible Bank Assets (EBAs) is secured including the 2nd Defendant's property lying, being and situate at State Lease at Core Area, Asaba in Oshimili Local Government Area of Delta State of Nigeria, containing an area of approximately 2.043 Hectares, more particularly marked and delineated in the Survey Plan No. AS 182 and covered by a Certificate of Occupancy with NO. DTSR 2825, dated 7th December, 2001 and registered as 23/23 CO. 54 in satisfaction of the debt owed to the Plaintiff by the 1st Defendant.
- ii. A DECLARATION OF THIS HONOURABLE COURT that upon the acquisition of the Eligible Bank Assets (EBAs) from Bank PHB Plc (Now Keystone Bank Plc) by the Plaintiff, the Asset Management Corporation of Nigeria (AMCON), the Defendants, whether by themselves, their privies, agents, subordinates or howsoever designated have no power or control nor any right to remain in possession or deal in any manner whatsoever with the property lying, being and situate at State Lease at Core Area, Asaba in Oshimili Local Government Area of Delta State of Nigeria, containing an area of approximately 2.043 Hectares, more particularly marked and delineated in the Survey Plan No. AS 182 and covered by a Certificate of Occupancy with NO. DTSR 2825, dated 7th December, 2001 and registered as 23/23 CO. 54.
- iii. A DECLARATION OF THIS HONOURABLE COURT that the Plaintiff's, Asset Management Corporation of Nigeria (AMCON), rights to enforce the security by sale, as a Mortgagee, has crystallised upon the 1st Defendant and all other Defendants' default in liquidating the Debts owed to the Plaintiff.
- iv. A DECLARATION OF THIS HONOURABLE COURT that the purported transfer of the property lying, being and situate at State

Lease at Core Area, Asaba in Oshimili Local Government Area of Delta State of Nigeria, containing an area of approximately 2.043 Hectares, more particularly marked and delineated in the Survey Plan No. AS 182 and covered by a Certificate of Occupancy with NO. DTSR 2825, dated 7th December, 2001 and registered as 23/23 CO. 54, subject of the security interest created in favour of the Plaintiff, to the 3rd Defendant during the pendency of the security interest which remains extant and undischarged is invalid, null and void.

- v. AN ORDER OF THIS HONOURABLE COURT directing the 3rd Defendant whether by himself, his privies, agents, servants, employees or howsoever described to yield up possession and deliver to the Plaintiff and/or its Officers, Employees, Agents and any other person howsoever described deriving authority from her, the property lying, being and situate at State Lease at Core Area, Asaba in Oshimili Local Government Area of Delta State of Nigeria, containing an area of approximately 2.043 Hectares, more particularly marked and delineated in the Survey Plan No. AS 182 and covered by a Certificate of Occupancy with NO. DTSR 2825, dated 7th December, 2001 and registered as 23/23 CO. 54, subject of the security interest created in favour of the Plaintiff.
- vi. AN ORDER OF PERPETUAL INJUNCTION OF THIS HONOURABLE COURT restraining the Defendants, their servants, agent or privies and/or any other directors, shareholders, officers, employees, and/or any other person howsoever designated from interfering with, obstructing, disturbing and/or frustrating the Plaintiff from exercising the powers vested in her whether by herself and/or servants, agents or other persons employed by her over the property lying, being and situate at State Lease at Core Area, Asaba in Oshimili Local Government Area of Delta State of Nigeria, containing an area of approximately 2.043 Hectares, more particularly marked and delineated in the Survey Plan No. AS 182 and covered by a Certificate of Occupancy with NO. DTSR 2825, dated 7th December, 2001 and registered as 23/23 CO. 54.
- vii. AN ORDER OF THIS HONOURABLE COURT directing the Plaintiff to take such steps as may be necessary and exercise such powers including the powers to take over and apply in realization of the 1st Defendant's debt to the Plaintiff, all monies due, incomes or receivables due from the sale of the property lying, being and situate at State Lease at Core Area, Asaba in Oshimili Local Government Area of Delta State of Nigeria, containing an area of approximately 2.043 Hectares, more particularly marked and delineated in the Survey Plan No. AS 182 and covered by a Certificate of Occupancy with NO. DTSR 2825, dated 7th December, 2001 and registered as 23/23 CO. 54.
- viii. AND FOR SUCH FURTHER ORDER(S) as this honourable court may deem fit or expedient to make in the interest of justice.


REGISTRAR

THIS SUMMONS was taken out by Chief Ayotunde Ogunleye, SAN of LEGALTUXEDO & ASSOCIATES, B3, Build Point Estate, Off Gishiri Road, Opposite Nicon Junction, Maitama Extension, FCT - Abuja. (Solicitor of the within named Plaintiff).

The Defendants may appear hereunto by entering appearance personally or by a legal practitioner either by filing the appropriate processes in response at the Registry of the Federal High Court, Lagos State by sending them to that office by post.

Note: If the Defendants does not respond within the time and at the place above-mentioned, such orders will be made and proceedings may be taken as the Judge may think just and expedient.

Dated this 6th Day of March, 2026.



✓ Chief Ayotunde Ogunleye, SAN.,
Kunle Lawal, Esq.,
Chimuanya Eustacia Umeozor, Esq.,
Chiamaka Marvellous Edeh, Esq.,
Michael Paulinus Effiong, Esq.,
Oluwadamilare Eytayo, Esq.,
Firdawsi Ahalu, Esq.,
PLAINTIFF'S COUNSEL,
LEGALTUXEDO & ASSOCIATES,
B3, Build Point Estate,
Off Gishiri Road,
Opposite Nicon Junction,
Maitama Extension, Abuja.
08037922863.
info@legaltuxedoandassociates.com
ayotunde.ogunleye@nigerianbar.ng



FOR SERVICE ON:

1st DEFENDANT:

Mortgages PHB Limited
14B, Anifowoshe Street,
Victoria Island,
Lagos State.

2nd DEFENDANT:

FINACORP PROPERTIES LIMITED
14B, Anifowoshe Street,
Victoria Island, Lagos State,

3rd DEFENDANT:

DR. EMMANUEL I. KACHIKWU
State Lease at Core Area,
Asaba, Oshimili Local Government Area,
Delta State.

4th DEFENDANT:

FRANCIS ATUCHE
House 169, Road 43,
Victoria Garden City,
Lekki, Lagos State.

5th DEFENDANT:

ARCH. ADEWAKUN ADEBAYO
72, Queens Street, Off Hughes Avenue,
Alagomeji, Lagos.

6th DEFENDANT:

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13, Jaiyeola Ajatta Street,
Ajao Estate, Lagos.

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2nd Floor, Foreshore Towers,
2A, Osborne Road, Ikoyi, Lagos.

8th DEFENDANT:

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Old Aba Road,

Port Harcourt, Rivers State.

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3/5, Adeyemo Alakija Street,
Victoria Island, Lagos State.

10th DEFENDANT:

OLU AKANMU
Plot 707, Adeola Hopewell Street,
Victoria Island, Lagos.

11th DEFENDANT:

BOLAJI OGUNSOLA
8, Amodu Ojikutu Street,
Off Saka Tinubu Street,

12th DEFENDANT:

MURTALA SHEHU YAR'ADUA
Isa Kaita, Kaduna, Kaduna State.

13th DEFENDANT:

FELICIA OBINWANNEKA ONWUACHI
101, Police Road,
Jakande Estate, Lekki, Lagos State.

World Report

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Ex-President named leader of new DR Congo rebel coalition

FORMER Congolese President, Joseph Kabila, has been named the leader of a new rebel coalition seeking to oust the government.

The Front for the Refoundation of the Nation (FRN) said it aimed to coordinate resistance forces to end tyranny in Democratic Republic of Congo and will pursue the goal "by all means, including force."

Its unveiling on Monday was the clearest indication so far of Kabila's direct involvement in an armed movement a year after he was sentenced to death in absentia for trea-

son. He had previously denied having links to the M23 rebel group.

The Congolese government has not commented.

The coalition's adviser, Claude Ibalanky, announced the group's leadership at a press conference held at Kabila's residence in Goma, the largest city in eastern DR Congo, which has been under the control of M23 since last year.

Video clip released by the group showed Kabila signing documents at the group's declaration alongside other leaders.

M23 leader, Sultani Makenga, will serve as one of Kabila's four deputies in the new movement. The other three also came from the AFC-M23 alliance, which seized much of mineral-rich eastern DR Congo last year.

Announcement of the new group came days after Kabila delivered an address in which he promised to provide guideline for the rescue of the country by the Congolese people.

Kabila had last Friday, accused President Félix Tshisekedi's government of disregarding proposals he had put forward last year, including some aimed at ending the conflict in eastern DR Congo.

Kabila also accused the government of undermining constitutional rule, mismanaging the economy and failing to improve the security situation. He further alleged arbitrary arrest of political opponents and military officers, a position the government is yet to publicly respond to.

Kabila, 55, ruled DR Congo from 2001 until January 2019, when Tshisekedi took over office following a disputed election.

U.S. sanctions ICC, issues 180-day licence for operations

By Ngozi Egenuka

THE United States has announced sanctions against the International Criminal Court (ICC), blocking its property and financial interests under United States jurisdiction.

Meanwhile, it has issued a 180-day general licence to allow continuation of court activities.

The United States Department of State announced the sanctions in a fact sheet, stating that the action was part of the measures by President Donald Trump's government to defend U.S. sovereignty and

protect American citizens against alleged threats posed by ICC.

According to the department, the ICC is being designated under Section 1(a)(ii)(A) of Executive Order 14203, titled, 'Imposing Sanctions on the International Criminal Court.'

The department said U.S. has so far, imposed sanctions on 17 individuals under the Executive Order, the latest of which was intended to address what Washington considers threats arising from the court's activities.

Bulgaria summons Russia after ship sinks in Black Sea drone attack

BULGARIAN Prime Minister, Rumen Radev, has summoned Russian Ambassador to the country, Eleonora Mitrofanova, after two merchant ships were struck by drones off Bulgaria's Black Sea coast.

Eleven crew members are missing, and one sailor was saved, according to local officials, after one of the vessels sank 17 nautical miles (31km) east of the village of Krapets.

The other vessel, Ukrainian owned, was hit by drones 18 nautical miles from the town of Byala and all 15 crew were rescued.

The attacks came a week after two other commercial ships were hit by sea and aerial drones in Bulgaria's exclu-

sive economic zone. One of the ships, the Alfa Watan, sank and all 10 crew, including nine Syrians, are presumed dead.

Radev convened an emergency meeting Tuesday, announcing that he has summoned Russian envoy, Mitrofanova. Although there was no conclusive evidence of blame on "either side, the logic suggests that the outcome benefits the Russian Federation", he said.

Mitrofanova was later quoted by Bulgarian media as telling Radev she had no information from Russia's defence ministry relating to the latest attacks. She also said the strikes could have been a provocation by a third party.

Bulgaria is a member of North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), and Radev also spoke to Secretary General Mark Rutte about the latest attacks.

"NATO will continue to work closely with our allies in the Black Sea. We have already strengthened our posture along the eastern flank and will continue to monitor the security environment, adjusting our deterrence and defence posture as needed", Rutte said after the talks.

The two ships were struck just outside Bulgarian territorial waters and if the incidents had occurred just a few nautical miles to the West, Article 5 of the NATO treaty could have been triggered.

One dead, several hurt after rollercoaster incident

ONE person has been confirmed died and several others injured after an incident on a rollercoaster at an amusement park in the State of Georgia.

The Cobb County Police Department said it was investigating the fatality at Six Flags Over Georgia, about 15 miles (24km) from Atlanta, according to CBS News.

Police did not specify which ride was involved but aerial footage from news helicopters showed the Goliath rollercoaster stopped midway, with riders being helped off by

workers.

Six Flags Over Georgia said it was deeply saddened by the guest incident at the park. "Our thoughts and heartfelt condolences are with the guest's family, friends and loved ones", it said.

Officials are yet to disclose how the person died or how the other riders were injured. The British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), has contacted local police and fire authorities, as well as park officials over the incident.

The identity of the person who died has also not been dis-

closed. Witnesses told local media that they saw a man ejected from the ride, an account of events that the BBC has not verified.

Local outlet 11 Alive quoted a witness saying that the man had come loose from his seat and had then, struck the rollercoaster and some of his fellow riders before falling onto the roof of a nearby haunted house attraction.

The incident was captured in souvenir photos that were automatically taken of the rollercoaster while it was in motion, the witness added.

‘Weather forecasts are lifeline for aviation, growth, infrastructure’

By Olusegun Koiki

THE Minister of Aviation and Aerospace Development, Festus Keyamo, has said that weather and climate information are necessary for national infrastructure, not just for the aviation industry, but for every sphere of the nation's economy.

Keyamo, who spoke yesterday in Lagos at the 2026 yearly meeting of the Alliance for Hydromet Development, hosted by the Nigerian Meteorological Agency (NiMet), said reliable weather forecasts and early warning systems were indispensable to protecting lives, safeguarding investments and strengthening Nigeria's resilience to climate-related hazards.

Keyamo maintained that the importance of NiMet extended beyond routine weather forecasting. He noted that its services were central to flight operations, agriculture, disaster risk reduction and other climate-sensitive sectors of the economy.

According to him, the Federal government, under President Bola Tinubu, recognised NiMet's services as public goods and strategic national assets. He added that strengthening the agency's technical, institutional and operational capacity remained a priority for the government.

He said: "Hydrometeorological development and operation are

closely linked, as safe and efficient flight operations depend heavily on accurate weather, water and climate.

"NiMet's contribution to aviation is a matter of life and death. So, accurate meteorological information is necessary for safe flight operations and helps air-

lines and airports manage weather-related disruptions.

"So, the government has improved the welfare package of NiMet staff as part of efforts to strengthen service delivery. Staff motivation is critical to the effective discharge of the agency's responsibilities."

Keyamo further commended NiMet's institutional strengthening, digital transformation and innovation initiatives, noting that its 2026-2030 strategic plan provided a framework for improving service delivery and contributing to national development.

The minister said Nigeria needed to move away from a predominantly reactive approach to disaster management towards anticipatory action, in which scientific forecasts and early warnings informed preventive measures before hazards developed into disasters.

CSR body backs push for sustainable practices in Africa’s events industry

THE push to embed sustainability in Africa's creative and events industry is gaining momentum, with the Centre for CSR, West Africa, backing an initiative to promote climate-conscious production practices across the sector.

The organisation is supporting the inaugural Climate x Culture Summit 2026, scheduled for October 22 at the Google Artificial Intelligence Community Centre in Accra, Ghana, to encourage event organisers, artists, influencers and other creative profes-

sionals to integrate sustainability into their operations.

The summit, themed "Designing Sustainable Creative Experiences for Africa," is expected to produce an Accra Climate Culture Accord and a Sustainable Event Production Guide for

Ghana.

Chief Executive Officer and Co-founder of the Centre for CSR, West Africa, John Bode Williams, said corporate sustainability must translate into measurable action rather than remain a statement of good intentions.

Alpha Morgan Bank relocates head office to lagos, marks new chapter of growth

ALPHA Morgan Bank Limited has announced the relocation of its Head Office from 44 Adetokunbo Ademola Crescent, Wuse II, Abuja, to 52 Adetokunbo Ademola Street, Victoria Island, Lagos, marking a new chapter in the Bank's growth and nationwide expansion.

The move follows significant milestones, including the expansion of its branch network across several cities. Within its first 10 months of operations, the Bank recorded a Profit Before Tax (PBT) of N1.9 billion and exceeded its capitalisation threshold, reflecting strong early momentum.

Beyond financial performance, Alpha Morgan Bank continues to invest in people through inclusive recruitment, support communities through its Corporate Social Responsibility initiatives, and promote economic knowledge sharing through the quarterly Alpha Morgan Economic Review webinar

with Bismarck Rewane.

Commenting on the relocation, the Managing Director/Chief Executive Officer, Mr. Ade Buraimo, said: "The relocation of our Head Office from Adetokunbo Ademola, Abuja to Adetokunbo Ademola, Lagos is unique and exciting, representing an important step in our growth journey. Our achievements so far reflect the dedication of our people, the trust of our customers and our commitment to building a strong, accessible and sustainable financial institution."

He also thanked the Regulator, the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) for their continued support to the Bank and expressed appreciation to the board, management and entire staff for the journey so far.

The Bank remains committed to strengthening its nationwide presence, deepening customer relationships and creating lasting value for the communities it serves.



Chief Operating Officer, DBN, Ayodele Olojede (left); Founder and Chief Executive Officer, The Chair Centre Group, Mrs. Ibukunoluwa Awosika and Corporate Communications Manager, DBN, Abubakar Sadiq Wada at the African Market Place Dubai 2026, held in Dubai.

Popoola advocates institutional synergy for capital market expansion

By Helen Oji

GROUP Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of Nigerian Exchange Group Plc (NGX Group), Temi Popoola, has emphasised the importance of institutional collaboration, policy consistency and international financial connectivity in strengthening Nigeria's capital market and attracting sustainable long-term investment.

At the Nigeria-Asia Financial

Connectivity Dialogue hosted by J.P. Morgan and the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), in collaboration with NGX Group and FMDQ Group, held in Singapore, Popoola said the resurgence in capital formation across Nigeria and Africa presented an opportunity to attract more investors and deepen capital markets' contribution to economic growth.

He described the current wave

of investment as a significant development for the continent, noting that Nigeria and other African economies are currently recording levels of capital formation not seen for a long time.

He added that advancing Nigeria's capital market would require stronger collaboration among stakeholders, stressing that the task was a collective responsibility that must be pursued through partnerships

rather than isolated efforts.

Popoola underscored the importance of coordinated institutional action in advancing market development and translating Nigeria's economic and financial-market reforms into sustained investor confidence.

According to him, liquidity, foreign-exchange stability and policy consistency remain central to international investors' assessment of the market.

LASCOPA cracks down on firms over substandard goods, ignored complaints

By Tobii Awodipe

THE Lagos State Consumer Protection Agency (LASCOPA) has warned that it will begin to sanction businesses that fail to attend consumer complaint mediation sessions.

LASCOPA's General Manager and Chief Executive Officer, Afolabi Solebo, issued the warning while speaking with journalists yesterday.

He urged manufacturers, retailers and service providers to comply with the Lagos State Consumer Protection Law 2025, as amended, and the Federal Competition and Consumer Protection Act 2018.

He stressed that businesses that fail to honour scheduled mediation sessions over legitimate consumer complaints could face sanctions, adding that affected premises may be sealed where authorised by law.

"LASCOPA will now sanction businesses that deliberately fail to honour scheduled mediation sessions on legitimate consumer complaints. Where authorised by law, affected

premises may be sealed. All businesses are required to treat consumer complaints and redress processes with utmost seriousness," he said.

The agency also identified several practices that could prompt regulatory intervention, including unfair trade practices, misleading advertisements, deceptive pricing and hidden charges. He added that poor service delivery may also attract regulatory action.

"The manufacture or sale of substandard, counterfeit or unsafe products could equally lead to intervention," he said.

Solebo warned that businesses found to have violated applicable consumer protection laws could face penalties, including fines, enforcement orders, and suspension of operations, prosecution or the sealing of their premises.

He appealed to consumers with unresolved complaints to remain patient, noting that delays often occur when businesses ignore invitations to mediation sessions.

From Kingsley Jeremiah, Abuja

YOUTH-LED solar energy initiative in Cameroon has emerged as a finalist in the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) Action Awards, highlighting how African-led solutions are linking renewable energy, youth employment and community recovery in crisis-affected areas.

The initiative, Solar Bright

Future, was selected in the Resilience category of the Heroes of Tomorrow: UN SDG Action Awards, according to information published on the awards' official website and made available to journalists by the UN SDG Action Campaign.

The recognition comes as African countries grapple with overlapping challenges of youth unemployment, energy poverty, climate

change and displacement, placing greater emphasis on solutions that connect economic opportunities with essential services.

In Cameroon's conflict-affected Northwest and Southwest regions, Solar Bright Future trains young women and men from internally displaced and host communities in solar-system design, installation and maintenance,

enabling them to develop livelihoods while providing electricity to underserved areas.

As of June 2026, an estimated 493,402 people remained internally displaced in the two regions, according to the UN profile, which cites data from the UN High Commissioner for Refugees sourced from the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.

Regulators urged to relax rules, unlock idle funds for productive sectors

By Helen Oji

AFRICAN financial regulators need to ease restrictions on institutional investors' exposure to productive sectors to unlock more funds for businesses, infrastructure and other areas of the real economy, Hicham Al Morabet, Managing Director of the Africa Financial Industry Summit (AFIS), has said.

Speaking in an interview with *The Guardian* at the 'Road To AFIS 2026: Making Capital Count' Media Parley held in Lagos, Al Morabet said pension funds, insurance companies, sovereign wealth funds and

other institutional investors have funds that could support economic development, but regulatory limits on sector exposure often constrain their ability to invest more in productive activities.

He said regulators must strike a balance between protecting the financial stability of pension and insurance institutions and allowing them to support sectors capable of creating jobs and improving livelihoods.

"Regulators could soften their regulations a bit when it comes to exposure to productive sectors," Al Morabet said.

He explained that increasing available capital was only the

first step, adding that the next challenge was to unlock the funds through appropriate regulatory reforms and then direct them towards bankable projects.

According to him, the shortage of bankable projects remains another major obstacle to the effective deployment of institutional funds, particularly into infrastructure.

"For infrastructure, a bankable project is an infrastructure financing project with the right risk-adjusted return. And for that, we need the de-risking instruments," he said, citing the role of the International Finance Corporation and

Nigeria's InfraCredit in helping to reduce risks for institutional investors.

Al Morabet also called for stronger technical support for businesses, particularly small and medium-sized enterprises, larger companies and startups, to improve the quality of projects seeking investment.

He said governments and development finance institutions needed to help companies structure projects that could attract institutional investors, stressing that the challenge was to bring regulators, investors, governments, development finance institutions and businesses together.

NNPC's investments, gas ambitions and risk of stranded assets

As 38 per cent of planned upstream investments face break-even risks under a changing global energy outlook, experts say Nigeria must reconcile petroleum expansion with energy access, fiscal stability and environmental accountability. KINGSLEY JEREMIAH reports.

NIGERIA's ambition to expand oil and gas production while preparing for a lower-carbon energy future faces a fundamental problem. The country could commit billions of dollars to projects that fail to deliver expected returns, even as inadequate infrastructure prevents available energy resources from meeting domestic needs.

The dilemma places the Nigerian National Petroleum Company Limited (NNPCL) at the centre of a difficult economic balancing act. The company must support government revenue, energy security and industrial development while managing the risks of changing global demand, increasingly competitive renewable energy, and the environmental liabilities of petroleum production.

Last week in Abuja, experts from the Natural Resource Governance Institute (NRGI), the Centre for Energy, Finance and Development (CEFD), the Inclusive and Sustainable Development Research Centre (ISDRC) and the Centre for Petroleum, Energy Economics and Law (CPEEL) at the University of Ibadan estimated that 38 per cent of planned upstream investments involving Nigeria could fail to break even under the International Energy Agency's Announced Pledges Scenario, raising concerns about stranded assets and potential losses to the economy.

The Nigeria Country Manager of NRGI, Tengi George-Ikoli, disclosed this at a policy engagement on *The Role of NNPC in Nigeria's Energy Transition* in Abuja. The event was organised by NRGI in collaboration with the Centre for Petroleum, Energy Economics and Law and the Centre for Energy, Finance and Development.

"For Nigeria, we have assessed that Nigeria is 38 per cent at risk of not being able to break even on those projects," George-Ikoli said.

The assessment does not mean that 38 per



Executive Director, Inclusive and Sustainable Development Research Centre (ISDRC), Olusola Omoju (left); Country Manager, Natural Resource Governance Institute (NRGI), Tengi George-Ikoli, and Executive Director, Centre for Energy, Finance and Development (CEFD), Nicolas Lippolis during a stakeholder engagement on the role of NNPC in Nigeria's energy transition, organised by ISDRC, CEFD and NRGI in Abuja.

cent of Nigeria's existing petroleum assets will automatically become worthless. Rather, it signals the proportion of planned upstream investment exposed to break-even risks under a scenario aligned with countries implementing their announced climate commitments.

The commercial outcome will depend on production costs, commodity prices, demand, financing conditions and project timelines. Nevertheless, the warning highlights why Nigeria cannot assume that every investment in oil and gas will remain profitable throughout its operating life.

George-Ikoli urged the Federal Government to prioritise projects capable of delivering sustainable returns and contributing meaningfully to national development. She also called for publicly available sustainability plans and closer coordination between NNPC, the ministries responsible for finance and national planning, and other relevant institutions.

The underlying question is whether Nigeria's petroleum investment strategy is adequately accounting for the risks of a changing energy market or continuing to rely on assumptions that may not hold over the decades required to recover major investments.

Business as usual could deepen Nigeria's exposure

THE challenge is particularly serious because petroleum revenues remain important to Nigeria's public finances and foreign exchange earnings. A poorly managed transition could reduce investment, employment and government revenue before alternative industries are sufficiently developed to compensate.

However, continuing to invest without rigorous commercial assessment carries its own risks. If global demand weakens, export markets tighten, or production costs become uncompetitive, the country could be left with expensive infrastructure that fails to generate the returns needed to repay its costs.

George-Ikoli's presentation, drawing on NRGI research, showed that national oil companies face substantial exposure to investments that may not break even under changing demand conditions. The institute argued that inaction could deepen hydrocarbon dependence when diversification is increasingly important.

The solution is not an indiscriminate withdrawal from petroleum. It is to assess each project against different oil and gas price assumptions, production costs, financing requirements and demand scenarios before committing public or company capital.

NNPCL should disclose the expected returns and principal risks of major investments, while the government should establish clear criteria for deciding which projects deserve funding, which require restructuring and which should be deferred or abandoned.

Such scrutiny is particularly important for long-lived infrastructure, where the financial consequences of poor decisions can persist long after the officials who approved them have left office.

NNPCL's transition position remains unclear
ANOTHER problem is the gap between Nigeria's stated energy transition objectives and the way NNPCL communicates its investment priorities.

Nigeria's Energy Transition Plan, launched in 2022, targeted net-zero emissions by 2060. It identifies natural gas as a transition fuel while renewable energy expands and energy access improves.

Yet an NRGI analysis of 264 Nigerian media articles between January 2021 and March 2026 found that only seven per cent reflected NNPCL commitments classified as aligned with the transition plan. The institute classified 45 per cent as misaligned, five per cent as contradictory and 42 per cent as containing no discernible transition position.

The analysis assessed the company's own statements and commitments, rather than independently measuring its entire investment portfolio. NRGI classified oil expansion and long-lived gas commitments without clear end dates as misaligned, while contradictory statements combined claims of transition leadership with commitments to expand fossil fuel activities.

These findings suggested that NNPCL has yet to articulate a sufficiently consistent public account of how its petroleum investments will coexist with its long-term transition objectives.

The solution is to translate the national plan into measurable company-level targets, including emissions reductions, methane control, gas-flaring elimination, renewable energy investment and transparent capital-allocation milestones.

The Federal Government must set the direction rather than leave NNPCL to define its own ambitions without clear accountability. The company should then report regularly on progress and explain how its investment decisions support national energy access, industrial development and environmental objectives.

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

'N3.3tr gas debt threatens power supply despite vast reserves'

NLNG flags supply bottlenecks, seeks \$60b investment to unlock sector

By Waliat Musa

THE Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of NLNG, Leye Falade, has warned that the country's ambition to turn its vast natural gas reserves into reliable electricity and industrial growth remains threatened by mounting debts in the power sector, inadequate domestic supply and regulatory bottlenecks.

Falade, who disclosed that gas suppliers to power plants were owed about N3.3 trillion, warned that unpaid invoices were undermining gas supply to electricity generators despite the country's estimated 215 trillion cubic feet of proven gas reserves.

Speaking at the Harvard Business School Association of Nigeria (HBSAN) Energy Conference in Lagos, he argued that Nigeria's energy crisis was no longer simply a question of resource availability, but of failures in the commercial and institutional arrangements required to deliver energy to homes and businesses.

"The Nigerian gas paradox fits in one sentence. We are rich in gas, but we are short in energy," he said.

The disclosure comes as Nigeria seeks to increase gas production to 12 billion cubic feet per day and attract \$60 billion in new investment by 2030.

Falade said the target would remain difficult to achieve without reliable supply arrangements, payment guarantees and predictable regulation.

He explained that the failure to pay gas suppliers had consequences across the entire electrici-

ty value chain, as suppliers could reduce deliveries, power stations would struggle to operate and businesses would incur additional costs running diesel generators.

"When the invoice goes unpaid, the supplier simply closes the valve. Production slows down, power stations stay idle, homes and factories go down," he said.

According to him, the government's intervention to address outstanding obligations in the electricity market must be followed by a sustainable payment system that ensures suppliers receive payment for gas delivered to power plants.

"What we need next is payment built into the design of the system so that gas delivered is paid for," he said.

Falade said approximately 70 per cent of Nigeria's grid electricity came from gas, yet gas-fired power stations received less than half of their required gas in February.

The shortfall, he argued, illustrates the cost of failing to coordinate gas production, transportation, power generation and payment arrangements.

He said manufacturers and other businesses ultimately bear the consequences through higher production costs, which are passed on to consumers.

Beyond the power sector, Falade highlighted the disparity between gas resources and domestic cooking fuel supply, noting that NLNG supplied a record 500,000 metric tonnes of cooking gas to Nigerian homes last year, but that represented only about a third of national requirements.

AI to reshape energy demand, operations as tech leaders converge on ADIPEC

From Kingsley Jeremiah, Abuja

ARTIFICIAL Intelligence (AI) is expected to reshape energy demand, infrastructure and operations, with global technology executives set to examine its deployment across the sector at ADIPEC 2026 in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates.

The event, scheduled for November 2 to 5, will bring together energy operators, investors, policymakers and technology innovators to explore how AI can improve industrial efficiency, strengthen electricity grids and support investment decisions.

According to the International Energy Agency (IEA), widespread adoption of existing AI applications could deliver up to \$110 billion in yearly power generation savings by 2035 and unlock as much as 175 gigawatts (GW) of additional transmission capacity from existing power lines.

However, the rapid expansion of AI and data centres is

also increasing electricity demand, highlighting the growing interdependence between the energy and technology industries.

Confirmed speakers include Siemens AG President and Chief Executive Officer, Roland Busch; Honeywell Chairman and CEO, Vimal Kapur; AVEVA CEO, Caspar Herzberg; Siemens Energy President and CEO, Dr Christian Bruch; Cognite CEO, Girish Rishi; and Schneider Electric CEO, Olivier Blum.

Other speakers include AIQ CEO, Dennis Jol; SandboxAQ CEO, Jack Hidary; and Dymyn Founder and CEO, Uljan Sharka.

Busch said industrial AI could deliver greater value when integrated into critical infrastructure, including electricity grids, industrial systems and buildings.

He stressed the need for sustained investment, engineering expertise and closer collaboration between the energy and technology sectors to

scale deployment.

AI will feature across ADIPEC's strategic and technical conferences, exhibition and leadership roundtables, covering predictive analytics, automation, cybersecurity, asset optimisation and the infrastructure required to support rising electricity demand.

The event's technical conferences received a record 7,261 abstract submissions this year, with AI and digital transformation accounting for 1,296, the highest among technical categories.

At the exhibition, an expanded AI Zone, co-hosted by AIQ, will showcase applications ranging from reservoir modelling and autonomous operations to robotics for inspecting pipelines and power plants.

President of ADIPEC, the organiser of dmgevents, Christopher Hudson, said deploying AI securely at scale required engineering expertise, investment and commercial discipline, beyond technological innovation.

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Nigeria targets 300% surge in data centre capacity by 2031

By Adeyemi Adepetun and Sunday Aikulola

NIGERIA is setting its sights on a digital future, with industry leaders and government collaborating to expand the country's data-centre capacity.

From a current load of about 50 megawatts, the ambitious plan aims to quadruple capacity to 200 megawatts within the next five years, positioning the country as a rising hub for digital infrastructure in Africa.

The target was disclosed by the Chairman, All Progressives Congress (APC), Prof. Nentawe Yilwatda, during a virtual interaction with telecom sector stakeholders.

He stressed that this expansion reflected Nigeria's growing demand for cloud services, fintech innovation, and digital transformation across sectors.

With more businesses relying on data-driven solutions, he said the push to scale up capacity is critical to supporting economic growth, attracting foreign investment, and ensuring resilience amid increasing technological needs.

Yilwatda, who noted that the next decade would be defined by artificial intelligence, said "the question for Nigeria is not whether AI will shape our economy. It will. The question is whether we will shape it, or simply rent it."

He disclosed that Nigeria has a National Artificial Intelligence Strategy, and the Minister of Communications, Innovation and Digital Economy has indicated that it has been finalised and is awaiting legislative backing.

"In August, the Federal Government unveiled the National Digital Cloud Policy, which aims to attract \$750 million in private investment into cloud and data infrastructure within 24 months, with \$250 million targeted in the first 12 months. Industry and government are now working towards expanding Nigeria's data-centre capacity from about 50 megawatts to 200 megawatts of IT load over the next five years."

According to him, these are the right ambitions. "But I want to connect them to the

• NDPC, CBN partner on local storage

realities that you, as operators, confront every day. Data centres consume power and water on a scale that our grid and utilities have not historically been designed to supply, and analysts are already warning that access to energy may determine which facilities survive."

To him, an AI strategy without an energy strategy is incomplete. He said this is why digital infrastructure must be treated as a priority load in our power-sector reforms, and why embedded generation, renewable power purchase arrangements and gas supply for digital infrastructure clusters must be part of the same conversation.

"We must also be honest about the balance between openness and sovereignty. The cloud policy's preference for certified local providers in public procurement is designed to build domestic capacity and keep critical data onshore. I support that direction."

"But sovereignty must not become an excuse for protectionism that raises costs and drives away the global partners whose

technology and capital we need. The right model is sovereign control with open participation: Nigerian law, Nigerian jurisdiction, and Nigerian standards, delivered by any competent investor, local or foreign, who is prepared to build here, hire here, and comply here," he noted.

MEANWHILE, the National Commissioner, Nigeria Data Protection Commission (NDPC), Dr Vincent Olatunji, has assured of working with the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) to ensure that data is effectively protected.

Recall that the CBN, early this year, had directed deposit money banks, fintech companies, and other licensed payment service providers to ensure that all payment transaction data generated within the country is stored on local servers starting from January 1, 2027.

As such, at the Cloud Ready Nigeria 2.0 Financial Services Roundtable held in Lagos, Olatunji disclosed, "We are looking forward to working with CBN to ensure that data is rigorously protected."



Data Centre racks

NCC issues *315# code to help buyers avoid fake phones

From Joel Oladele, Abuja

THE Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC) has introduced a phone verification code, *315#, to help Nigerians check the approval status of mobile devices before buying them and avoid counterfeit or non-compliant products.

The Commission said consumers could use the code or its online Device Checker to establish whether a phone had received the required type approval and was verified for use on Nigerian mobile networks.

In a frequently asked questions guide issued on Monday, the regulator urged buyers to verify devices before making payment, particularly when purchasing second-hand phones or smartphones imported from abroad.

It directed consumers to dial *315# and follow the prompts or visit www.ncc.gov.ng/devicechecker to check a device's status.

"Check that the result says the device is Type Approved and confirms the device is verified for use on Nigerian mobile networks," the Commission advised.

The initiative forms part of the NCC's efforts to strengthen compliance with existing rules governing communications equipment in Nigeria. The Commission said the exercise was not a new requirement for type approval but an effort to make enforcement more efficient through technology.

Under Section 132(2) of the Nigerian Communications Act 2003 and the Nigerian Communications (Type Approval) Regulations 2024, relevant manufacturers, importers, suppliers and other businesses must meet applicable approval requirements before communications equipment is sold or used in the country.

The regulator explained that type approval establishes whether a device model meets the required technical standards. The Device Checker adds a verification process to determine whether a particular device is cleared for use on Nigerian mobile networks.

The NCC said consumers buying phones from local sellers were not expected to obtain type approval themselves, as the responsibility rests with the relevant businesses in the supply chain.

However, it advised buyers not to assume that a phone was compliant simply because it had previously worked on a Nigerian network.

"Do not pay for a device until the seller can clarify and resolve an unsuccessful verification result," the Commission warned.

The regulator said a device that failed verification was not automatically counterfeit. Consumers who encountered such results should seek clarification from the seller or contact their service provider or the NCC before concluding that the device was fake.

The Commission also assured existing phone users that the new system would not require them to replace their devices or undergo unnecessary verification.

According to the guide, phones connected to Nigerian mobile networks before the system took effect on October 7, 2026, had been automatically verified.

Phones already in use, devices purchased locally, and phones passed between family members or friends would not ordinarily require further action, unless a compliance restriction arose.

The verification requirements cover a broad range of SIM-enabled equipment, including smartphones, feature phones, cellular tablets, SIM-enabled laptops, point-of-sale terminals and eligible Internet of Things devices.

Nigeria, Angola, Kenya worst-hit as cyber-attacks surge by 48%

By Adeyemi Adepetun

GLOBALLY, organisations experienced an average of 2,803 cyberattacks per week in September 2026, representing a 16 per cent month-on-month increase and a 48 per cent year-on-year increase.

This is according to Check Point Research, the threat intelligence arm of Check Point Software Technologies Ltd., which released its Global Threat Intelligence insights for September 2026.

Most concerning is the leap in the number of weekly attacks per organisation of the four African countries included in the Check Point Insights. Angola led with 5,967 attacks (a 96 per cent increase YoY), Nigeria followed with 5,740 (up 109 per cent YoY), and Kenya had 4,303 (a 43 per cent increase YoY).

These three countries were the most attacked in the entire EMEA region. South Africa experienced 2,499 attacks per organisation per week (up 22 per cent

• Hackers target education, telecom, government institutions

YoY). African governments, financial services, and energy & utilities continued to be the top three most-attacked sectors on the continent.

September's data showed cyber pressure rising across multiple fronts: weekly attack volumes increased sharply, phishing

became more prevalent, GenAI use continued to expand alongside increases in sensitive data exposure, and ransomware remained well above last year's level.

A total of 824 ransomware attacks were reported in September, representing a 53 per cent increase compared to the same time last year.

The Gentlemen was the most prevalent ransomware group in September, responsible for 13 per cent of published attacks, and is reportedly responsible for targeting South African insurance and medical aid organisations after breaching the insurtech firm MIP Hold-

ings in June.

Regional Director, Africa at Check Point Research, Lorna Hardie, said: "September's data shows cyber risk increasing in both volume and breadth, highlighting Africa's vulnerabilities."

IXPN exposes varsity students to data centre operations, cloud services

IXPN has provided a unique opportunity for varsity students to gain firsthand exposure to the inner workings of Data Centre operations and cloud services in the country.

By bridging the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical industry experience, students are introduced to the critical infrastructure that powers digital connectivity, cloud computing, and enterprise-level IT solutions.

The student exposure is part of activities marking the 20th anniversary of IXPN. The initiative, led by the Managing Director of IXPN, Muhammed Rudman, enabled select university students, over 150, studying Computer Science, Computer Engineering, Data Sciences, and related courses, to gain practical knowledge of the operations of cloud services and data centres, where data is warehoused, processed and distributed.

IXPN is doing this in collaboration with four data centre operators in Lagos, including African Data Cen-

tre (ADC), Open Access Data Centres (OADC), Rack Centre, and Digital Realty.

The students, drawn from Obafemi Awolowo University (OAU), Ile Ife; Lagos State University (LASU) Ojo; Miva Open University, Lagos Campus; Trinity University, Lagos; Anchor University, Lagos; and Yaba College of Technology, Lagos, visited the four data centres in Lagos in four different groups, accompanied by their lecturers, staff of IXPN and the media.

CEO of Digital Realty, Ikechukwu Nnamani, who welcomed the students to his facility, advised them to pay more attention to their studies and to make better use of the opportunities being offered by emerging technologies.

Discussing the entire workflow of a data centre, the Head, Business Development at Digital Realty Nigeria, Kelechukwu Nsofor, taught the students about data warehousing, storage, processing, and distribution. He also spoke to them about data centre cooling, power and security.



EdTech struggles as social apps dominate smartphone use

By Adeyemi Adepetun

EDUCATION-focused applications account for only about six per cent of smartphone application usage in Nigeria, highlighting the difficulty of translating the country's rapid digital adoption into greater access to technology-enabled learning.

The finding is contained in 'Nigeria Smartphone Study: A Nationwide Analysis of Smartphone Ownership and Digital Application Usage', conducted by KPMG in partnership with Orange Group Nigeria across 12 states.

The study showed that social media and communication applications dominate smartphone usage, with 98 per cent of respondents reporting using applications in this category.

The disparity underscores a major challenge for Nigeria's digital education ambitions: although millions of Nigerians are increasingly connected, much of that connectivity is concentrated in communication, entertainment, and financial transactions rather than in structured learning.

Banking and fintech applications followed social media and communication, with adoption reaching 88 per cent among respondents.

The high usage reflects the rapid expansion of digital financial serv-

ices, as consumers increasingly rely on mobile applications for payments, transfers and financial management.

KPMG said the widespread use of fintech platforms demonstrates strong demand for convenient and accessible financial services, while the continued growth of smartphone ownership and digital literacy is likely to create further opportunities for financial technology companies.

Other major application categories identified by the study included productivity tools, 85 per cent; streaming and music platforms, 82 per cent; web browsers and utilities, 81 per cent; games, 45 per cent; transport and mobility, 14 per cent; betting and lottery, four per cent; and healthcare and insurance, two per cent.

The study also highlighted the dominance of a small number of

applications.

WhatsApp had the highest presence among the applications surveyed, at 95 per cent, followed by Facebook at 87 per cent and Xender at 77 per cent.

KPMG attributed the popularity of the applications partly to their broad utility and, in some cases, pre-installation on smartphones. WhatsApp serves communication needs, Facebook provides social networking, while Xender is widely used for offline file sharing.

Among regional applications, OPay recorded 69 per cent device presence, followed by Boomplay at 40 per cent and PalmPay at 29 per cent.

The strong presence of OPay and PalmPay reflects the growing use of mobile payment and financial services platforms, while Boomplay's performance points to the popularity of locally relevant music and entertainment content.

Foundation, Zinox establish AI centres in Lagos schools

THE Leo Stan Ekeh Foundation (LSEF), in collaboration with companies within the Zinox Group, has established Artificial Intelligence (AI) Technology Centres in two public secondary schools in Gbagada, Lagos State.

The centres, located at Gbagada Senior Grammar School and Lanre Awolokun High School, are designed to provide students with access to digital learning tools, computing facilities and Internet connectivity.

The initiative involves Task Systems, TD Africa, Zinox Technologies Limited and Konga Group.

Each centre is equipped with Zinox All-in-One desktop computers, interactive AI-enabled screens, renewable energy systems supplied by iPower, and two years of satellite Internet connectivity provided by Starlink.

The facilities are expected to give students and teachers access to online learning resources and digital tools beyond the traditional classroom.

Speaking at the commissioning, the founder of the Leo Stan Ekeh

Foundation, Leo Stan Ekeh, urged the students to take advantage of the facilities to develop skills that could prepare them for the changing demands of the global economy.

He stressed the importance of discipline, patience and hard work, encouraging the students to use technology to develop solutions and become future wealth creators.

Ekeh also called on the Federal and state governments to prioritise education and improve teachers' welfare.

He argued that teachers should be among the best-paid professionals in the country, warning that poor remuneration could undermine the quality of education.

"An angry or hungry teacher cannot deliver quality content to students. We must consciously raise the quality of education to save this nation," he said.

He urged the students to remain focused on their education and maintain integrity, noting that access to technology would be meaningful only if they used it to acquire knowledge and develop productive skills.



The 68 young Nigerians with their laptops donated by GiveBack Backpack, an NGO.

OpenAI cancels release of newest model due to safety concerns

OPENAI will not release its newest artificial intelligence model, known as Astra 6.1, after internal testing by the ChatGPT maker revealed it did not meet safety standards, the company confirmed recently.

The news comes before the AI giant hosts a yearly developer conference known as OpenAI DevDay in San Francisco, where the company is expected to make several announcements, though it is unclear if a new version of Astra will be among them.

Astra 6.1 was an improvement over previous models in some aspects, but "it didn't quite meet the bar in terms of staying within scope and authorisation, and how it communicates back to the user about the type of work it's done," Saachi Jain, OpenAI's head of safety systems, said in a statement.

"We want to make sure our model development is safe no matter whether that's in the company, or when we ship it to users. But when we ship it to users, we have an extremely high bar in terms of safety and alignment," Jain continued.

Concerns about AI safety have escalated in recent months after models developed by OpenAI and rival lab Anthropic were involved in security incidents during testing.

Agents built with OpenAI's models have inappropriately accessed websites maintained by US federal agencies, an Australian government health statistics portal and Hugging Face, a repository of AI models.

NGO donates \$50,000 laptops to 68 youths

SIXTY-eight young Nigerians have received laptops, backpacks and other educational materials valued at about \$50,000 from GiveBack Backpack, a non-governmental organisation focused on expanding access to technology and education.

The items were presented on September 30, 2026, at SPAN Creative Hub in Ikoyi, Lagos, as part of a broader initiative to distribute 200 laptops to young Nigerians.

Founded by Joshua Peters, GiveBack Backpack seeks to address the digital access gap by providing young people with technology and educational resources to support learning, creativity, and skills development.

The laptops distributed to the beneficiaries were accompanied by backpacks, water bottles

and other educational materials.

Speaking at the presentation, Peters said the initiative was based on the belief that access to technology could help young people realise their potential and translate it into tangible opportunities.

"Talent is everywhere, but access is not," he said.

According to him, the initiative was shaped in part by his experience growing up in Nigeria and by his understanding of the gap between young people's abilities and the resources available to them.

He said the programme was intended to provide a practical response to that gap by putting technology directly in the hands of young people.

"Rather than simply talking about the digital divide, the initiative puts a tangible tool into the hands of a young person and says: here is an opportunity. Learn with it. Build with it. Create with it," Peters said.

He described a laptop as more than a computing device, noting that it could serve as a classroom, research tool, creative studio or platform for developing digital skills.

Peters said the experience of the Chibok girls, who were abducted in Borno State in 2014, had also influenced his thinking about the initiative.

He noted that their education and opportunities were disrupted by circumstances beyond their control, adding that the focus should now be on creating access, skills, confidence and opportunities for young Nigerians.

Omatek seeks patient capital for new factory, software hubs

By Debo Oladimeji

OMATEK Industries is seeking local and foreign investors to raise capital for a new factory and software development hub as the computer manufacturer moves to rebuild its operations after seven and a half years in receivership.

The company's Group Managing Director, Yemi Ogundipe, disclosed this at Omatek's 17th Annual General Meeting (AGM) in Lagos, saying the company was looking for patient capital rather than short-term loans to finance its expansion.

Ogundipe said the proposed Omatek hub would house engineers responsible for developing the company's software solutions, while the new factory would restore its manufacturing capacity.

"We are trying to set up our own Omatek hub. That hub will house all our own engineers that will develop our own software. To be able to do

this, we need money, which is why we are scouting for investors," he said.

According to him, the company already has land in the Mowe axis of Ogun State for the proposed factory but requires funding to develop a modern facility and provide working capital for a full return to operations.

He said the company's strategy reflected changes in the technology market, where hardware businesses were increasingly integrating software development into their operations.

"You can see what some IT companies are doing. Those are all software development, so we also want to set up our own Omatek hub to develop our own software solution within our factory premises," he said.

Ogundipe said the company was specifically seeking patient capital that would give investors sufficient time to realise returns, rather than conventional short-term financing.

"That is why we are appealing to the stakeholders to be patient, to allow us to get new investors that can bring the needed funds. But the funding we are looking for is a patient capital type of fund," he said.

He added: "We don't want a loan that somebody will say within 30 days you should pay."

Ogundipe said Omatek's immediate priority was to rebuild the business after emerging from seven and a half years of receivership and legal disputes with its lenders.

He said the company had remained resilient despite the prolonged period, but acknowledged that the operating environment had changed significantly.

According to him, competition in Nigeria's computer market has intensified, with new technology solutions entering the market regularly and increased competition from Chinese manufacturers.

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How fisheries can drive Nigeria's trillion-naira blue economy

Nigeria's fisheries sector faces inadequate infrastructure, limited access to finance, high feed costs, a weak cold chain, poor storage systems, illegal fishing, and post-harvest losses, among others. However, changing the oddly familiar narrative is imperative to the fortunes of the blue economy and the economy at large, ADAKU ONYENUCHEYA reports.

FISHERIES contribute approximately \$274 billion to global Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and could deliver an additional \$50 billion each year if managed optimally, according to the World Bank.

Nigeria struggles to harness the opportunities in its waters, despite having about 857 kilometres of coastline, over 10,000 kilometres of navigable inland waterways, and a 200-nautical-mile Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ).

The waters are also under threat as the Federal government has remained overly focused on oil and gas while paying insufficient attention to fisheries.

Rather than maximise the opportunity provided by the marine ecosystem, the country has increasingly turned to foreign markets to satisfy a growing appetite for seafood.

In 2025 alone, Nigeria's frozen fish and seafood imports rose to \$866 million, up from \$688.5 million in 2024 and \$606 million in 2023.

The figures, compiled from the United Nations Commodity Trade Statistics Database, represent a 19.54 per cent compound yearly growth rate over the period.

Nigeria possesses enormous aquatic resources, but domestic production remains far below demand.

The country consumes 3.6 million tonnes of fish yearly, but produced only 1.4 million in 2025, up from 1.1 million in the previous year, leaving a huge gap of over two million tonnes, according to the Federal Ministry of Marine and Blue Economy's assessment.

The production gap has been linked to the dominance of illegal foreign trawlers, aggressive overfishing, climate change, oil spills, and illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing, posing major threats to the country's maritime ecosystem.

But beneath the import statistics lies a much larger economic opportunity. Stakeholders in the maritime sector noted that if properly developed, the fisheries and aquaculture sector, estimated at about N25 trillion, could become a significant pillar of food security, employment, coastal development, trade and Nigeria's emerging blue economy.

However, this economic opportunity is being constrained by a combination of challenges.

Challenges Limiting Fisheries

At the National Conference on Sustainable Fishing in Nigeria organised by the Maritime Correspondents' Organisation of Nigeria (MARCON) in Lagos last week, stakeholders identified inadequate infrastructure, lack of access to finance, high feed costs, weak cold-chain and storage systems, illegal fishing, post-harvest losses, climate change and limited access to markets.

The Director General of the International Maritime Institute of Nigeria (IMION), Thaddeus Udofia (rtd), particularly raised concerns over destructive fishing practices by industrial trawlers, saying they could damage marine habitats and reduce the catch available to artisanal fishermen and coastal communities.

Udofia said the consequences extended beyond individual fishermen, as declining catches could affect household incomes, food availability and national food security.

According to him, the country's waterways and marine areas are endowed with abundant fisheries resources and significant aquaculture potential.

Yet, for decades, Nigeria's offshore and inland fisheries had remained largely underdeveloped, constrained by ecological pressures, underinvestment and the growing threat of unsustainable exploitation.



Fishing trawlers

President, Nigerian Trawlers Owners Association (NITOA), Benedette Okonkwo, identified high fuel and operating costs, ageing fishing vessels, limited access to finance, inadequate fishing and cold-chain infrastructure, regulatory difficulties, maritime insecurity, lack of fish terminals, poor fisheries data, climate-related pressures and limited processing capacity as major constraints to the sector.

According to her, modernising the country's fishing fleet should be the starting point for the sector's revival, with government and private investors supporting the rehabilitation and replacement of obsolete vessels with safer, more fuel-efficient equipment.

However, she stressed that fleet expansion must be guided by scientific assessments of fish stocks to prevent overfishing and ensure the industry's long-term viability.

Financial institution's neglect

NIGERIA's industrial fishing sector requires urgent investment in modern vessels, fish terminals, cold-chain infrastructure and affordable finance to increase domestic fish production and reduce the country's dependence on imported fish.

However, there is increased concern by the Lagos State government over commercial financial institutions' reluctance to finance the fisheries sector.

The Lagos State Commissioner for Agriculture and Food Systems, Ruth Olusanya, said limited access to capital remained a major obstacle to productivity and the development of a sustainable fisheries value chain.

Olusanya further lamented that financial institutions were often unwilling to lend to fisheries operators due to the perceived high costs and risks associated with the sector.

According to her, without access to affordable capital, operators in the sector would struggle to expand production and

improve their businesses.

The commissioner said financing was one of several areas requiring attention if Nigeria were to build a fisheries value chain capable of supporting food security, creating jobs, and contributing significantly to economic growth.

She explained that the fisheries value chain involves several interconnected activities, from production and landing of fish to handling, processing, storage, transportation, marketing and eventual consumption.

Olusanya noted that weaknesses at any point in the chain could lead to losses for producers and reduce the quantity and quality of fish available to consumers.

The commissioner declared that the government alone could not provide all the resources required to transform the fisheries sector, urging greater private-sector participation.

She said private investors could provide capital, efficiency and innovation, while financial institutions needed to develop appropriate financial products for fisheries operators.

The problem is particularly acute for small-scale operators who need money for boats, fishing gear, engines, cages, ponds, fingerlings, feed, cold storage and transportation.

The Federal government's 2026 budget allocated about N122.19 billion to fisheries and aquaculture, with provisions covering infrastructure, research, training, monitoring, post-harvest facilities and support for fish farmers and artisanal fishermen.

Among the allocations were N1.05 billion for fish terminals and harbours, N106.38 million for post-harvest infrastructure

and N145.15 million for local fish-feed mills across the six geopolitical zones.

However, the challenge now is translating budgetary allocations into productive assets that reach the people operating at the bottom of the value chain, since the financial institutions can't

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The industrial fishing sector should be integrated into Nigeria's broader blue economy strategy, with public-private partnerships mobilising the capital and expertise required for fleet modernisation, infrastructure, processing, logistics and market development.



vide access to loans.

NITOA President said that affordable long-term financing, fisheries insurance, and investment schemes would enable operators to acquire vessels and equipment, develop processing facilities, and meet working capital needs.

She noted access to such funding should be tied to compliance with fisheries regulations and sustainable fishing practices.

NITOA President noted that Nigeria urgently needed modern fishing ports, landing facilities, ice plants, cold storage facilities, refrigerated transport, processing centres, and fish markets to reduce post-harvest losses and improve the quality and value of fish products.

Okonkwo also placed particular emphasis on establishing dedicated fish terminals, describing them as specialised shore-based facilities where fishing vessels could safely discharge their catches for sorting, processing, storage, marketing, and distribution.

"The industrial fishing sector should be integrated into Nigeria's broader blue economy strategy, with public-private partnerships mobilising the capital and expertise required for fleet modernisation, infrastructure, processing, logistics and market development," she said.

The way forward

NIGERIA's inability to translate its fisheries endowment into domestic seafood sufficiency remained a major challenge to food security, employment and economic development.

Meanwhile, a coordinated revival of the sector would increase domestic fish production, improve food security, create jobs in coastal communities, reduce fish imports, expand fish-processing and marine industries, increase government revenue and potential export earnings, improve livelihoods across the fisheries value chain and strengthen the sector's contribution to the blue economy.

To address this, Udofia advocated a five-pillar strategy focused on stronger regulation and enforcement, science-based fisheries management, capacity building and technology, advanced maritime surveillance and community-based fisheries management.



President Bola Tinubu

Minister of Marine and Blue Economy, Adegboyega Oyetola

Report: Weak logistics, inefficient ports top maritime challenges

Stories by Adaku Onyenucheya

NIGERIA's maritime sector remains hamstrung by persistent deficits in port efficiency, financing, indigenous shipping capacity, multi-modal logistics, shipbuilding and repair, and blue economy development, critical gaps that continue to block the nation from converting its vast maritime resources into real economic productivity.

Also identified as areas that required urgent and sustained reforms are maritime governance, inland-waterway utilisation, human capital, maritime technology, fisheries and marine environmental management

• Sector faces growing regional port competition from Ghana, Togo, others

This is contained in the Sea Empowerment and Research Centre (SEREC) 2026 maritime sector scorecard and policy presentation.

The independent policy assessment, prepared by the Head of Research, Eugene Nweke, assessed the industry across strategic reform areas and constraints covering maritime governance and coordination, port infrastructure, trade facilitation and digitalisation, shipping and indigenous participation, logistics and multimodality, maritime security, human capital, technology, maritime industrialisation, the blue economy, maritime finance

and investment.

SEREC categorised port infrastructure as improving but still facing significant deficits, while digital trade reforms were considered transformative but vulnerable to implementation risks.

The research body identified maritime security as an area of significant progress that requires sustained attention, while human capital and technology remain underdeveloped.

SEREC assessment revealed that the blue economy has high potential but low economic conversion.

The research centre acknowledged improvements in port

infrastructure, especially in cargo activity and government-backed modernisation initiatives, which have led to a persistent rise in cargo throughput and container traffic.

SEREC, however, identified ageing infrastructure, inadequate specialised equipment, weak intermodal connectivity, congestion around port corridors, capacity constraints, uneven development of eastern ports and maintenance challenges as continuing impediments.

The Centre also identified cargo dwell time, vessel turnaround, multiple inspections, duplicated document

tation, cargo examination delays, poor port access roads, demurrage, storage charges and underdeveloped inland-waterway evacuation as persistent logistics challenges.

It stressed that maritime performance should not be measured merely by the number of projects announced, but by reductions in logistics costs and cargo-processing times, increased indigenous participation, higher investment, more employment, stronger export capacity and improved national productivity.

On maritime governance, SEREC said the sector remained characterised by

fragmented responsibilities among the Federal Ministry of Marine and Blue Economy, the Nigerian Maritime Administration and Safety Agency (NIMASA), Nigerian Ports Authority (NPA), Nigerian Ports Economic Regulatory Agency (NPERA), the National Inland Waterways Authority (NIWA), Nigeria Customs Service, the Navy, Marine Police, environmental agencies, fisheries authorities, state governments, terminal operators and other regulatory institutions.

SEREC warned that the agencies' overlapping mandates and weak coordination could undermine the effectiveness of reforms.



Area Commander of National Drug Law Enforcement Agent (NDLEA), Samuel Magaji (left); Managing Director, Dangote Ports Operations, Akin Omole; Assistant Area Commander, NDLEA, Shehu Mustapha; General Manager, Commercial Regulatory and Compliance, Dangote Ports Operations, Olusegun Oyename, at the Dangote Ports Operations Port city Festival 2.0 in celebration of the customer service week in Lagos.

Customs warns of prosecution after Pangolin trafficking bust in Ogun

THE Nigeria Customs Service (NCS), Federal Operations Unit (FOU) Zone A has warned that persons involved in the smuggling, possession, transportation or commercialisation of endangered species risk prosecution and severe penalties under applicable laws in the country.

The Acting Comptroller of the unit, Oladapo Afeni, stated this when officers intercepted three live pangolins during an anti-smuggling operation along the Oyo Dam in Igbo-Ora, Ogun State.

Afeni, who was represented by the Deputy Comptroller

in charge of Enforcement, Oluwaseun Oguntuase, said the seizure was effected on October 12, 2026.

The Acting Comptroller said officers of the unit acted on credible intelligence and intercepted a sack containing the endangered animals, concealed in a wire-mesh cage.

Afeni said upon sighting the Customs patrol team, the suspected traffickers abandoned the consignment and fled into the surrounding swamp, leaving behind the animals.

The Acting Comptroller described the interception

as a significant milestone in the Service's sustained campaign against wildlife trafficking, smuggling and other transnational organised crimes.

He stated that pangolins are protected under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), and their illegal trade remains a serious threat to wildlife conservation.

Afeni commended the operatives for their vigilance and prompt response, noting that the operation underscored the Unit's resolve to

protect Nigeria's biodiversity and disrupt criminal networks exploiting the country's borders and waterways.

To guarantee their safety and welfare, Afeni handed over the rescued pangolins to the Greenfingers Wildlife Initiative Centre for safekeeping, rehabilitation and appropriate management.

The Acting Comptroller warned smugglers and their collaborators that the FOU Zone A would continue to intensify patrols, intelligence-driven operations and inter-agency collaboration across its area of responsibility.

MOWCA, Indonesia partner to boost maritime skills in West, Central Africa

THE Maritime Organisation of West and Central Africa (MOWCA) has secured Indonesian government-sponsored training opportunities for seafarers, maritime education instructors, and administrative officers from its member states.

The programmes, announced in a circular letter, signed by the MOWCA Secretary-General, Dr Paul Adalikwu, and addressed to ministers in charge of maritime transport in member states, stated that the training was designed to strengthen maritime education, improve professional competence and enhance the training, assessment and certification of seafarers across West and Central Africa.

Adalikwu said the government of Indonesia is offering the scholarships within the

framework of MOWCA's cooperation with its international partners.

He said the initiative builds on Indonesia's commitment to supporting maritime capacity development among MOWCA member states through technical cooperation and knowledge sharing.

Adalikwu said the partnership is expected to strengthen professional skills, improve maritime training standards and promote cooperation between Indonesia and West and Central African countries in addressing shared maritime challenges.

Through the initiative, he said, MOWCA continues to pursue capacity-building opportunities to develop a more skilled maritime workforce and support the sustainable growth of the region's blue economy.

According to the circular, the programmes include Training of Trainers (ToT) based on the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) Model Course 6.09, which will focus on training maritime instructors to strengthen their teaching capabilities and improve the quality of maritime education.

He said the training for assessment, which includes examination and certification of seafarers, is based on IMO Model Course 3.12 and is designed for personnel from maritime administrations and training institutions responsible for seafarer certification, as well as officers involved in onboard assessments.

Adalikwu said the programme will be combined with an International Maritime Dangerous Goods

(IMDG) Code course.

According to the circular, the programmes provide opportunities for different categories of maritime professionals to acquire specialised knowledge and improve their contribution to maritime safety, training and regulatory compliance.

Adalikwu urged the ministers to disseminate the information to their respective maritime administrations and agencies to ensure that applications are submitted to the MOWCA Secretariat within the stipulated deadlines.

The Secretary-General also cautioned prospective participants about Indonesia's strict laws on drug-related offences, advising them to avoid the possession and consumption of drugs and to obtain travel insurance from their respective countries.

AMATO seeks justice over alleged assault on truckers

THE Association of Maritime Truck Owners (AMATO) has condemned all forms of racial discrimination, xenophobic hostility, intimidation and unlawful violence against maritime truck operators by foreign companies in Nigeria.

The association, in a statement made available by the National Secretary General, AMATO, Mohammed Bala, condemned the reported assault, molestation and degrading treatment of a maritime truck driver and his motor boy at the premises of an Indian company along the Lagos-Ibadan Expressway following a disagreement over demurrage compensation incurred at the port.

The association said the information, photographic and video evidence made available to it showed that the two transport workers were subjected to physical assault and intimidation by Indian nationals with the involvement of company staff and security personnel, following a disagreement over their request for demurrage compensation.

AMATO said it considered the incident, which occurred on October 10, 2026, a serious

matter that warrants an urgent police investigation.

The maritime truckers said disputes over demurrage must be resolved through lawful and peaceful channels, not through force, intimidation or degrading treatment.

The association argued that no commercial disagreement can justify violence, humiliation or the violation of another person's fundamental human rights.

The association cited Section 34(1)(a) of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999 (as amended), which guarantees every individual respect for the dignity of their person and prohibits torture and inhuman or degrading treatment.

"This constitutional protection applies to everyone in Nigeria, irrespective of nationality, occupation or social status.

"AMATO considers it unacceptable for any individual or corporate establishment to act as though Nigerian laws do not apply to them. Foreign nationals and corporate organisations operating in Nigeria are equally bound to respect the country's laws and the fundamental rights of its citizens," AMATO noted.

APMT rewards workers for driving digital operations, growth

APM Terminals Apapa has honoured its 60 pioneer employees for enabling the terminal's infrastructure development and supporting the movement of goods through the Lagos port, while playing an important role in facilitating trade and strengthening supply-chain connectivity.

The terminal management said that since commencing operations at the Lagos Port Complex, Apapa, in 2006, the terminal has undergone significant investment and transformation, evolving its infrastructure, technology and processes while developing the people at the heart of its operations.

The terminal, in recognition of two decades of dedication, resilience, and commitment to its growth, honoured the employees with cash gifts.

Speaking at the event, Chief Executive Officer, APM Terminals Nigeria, Koen De Backker, commended the employees for their role in

building the terminal's reputation and success.

He said many of the employees have spent their entire careers with the company, noting that the milestone offered an opportunity to reflect on the terminal's remarkable transformation from largely manual operations into a modern, digitally driven facility.

De Backker said he was particularly proud of how far APM Terminals Apapa had come, describing it as a flagship terminal whose name and reputation now extend beyond Nigeria.

Managing Director of APM Terminals Apapa, Kamal Alhraishat, described the 60 honourees as the foundation on which the terminal's achievements have been built.

He urged the employees to take pride in the transformation they had helped deliver, stressing that investment in technology and systems could only succeed because of the people behind them.

FG urged to align industrial policy with development agenda

By Victoria Nwachukwu

THE Federal Government has been urged to ensure Nigeria's industrial policy translates into productive capacity, investment, domestic value creation, competitive exports, and jobs, rather than remaining a mere policy document.

Former Director-General of the United Nations Industrial Development Organisation (UNIDO), Dr Kandeh Yumkella, said Nigeria has the essential foundations for an industrial

powerhouse, including its scale, resources, vibrant entrepreneurs, financial depth and strategic position within the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA).

Speaking at the 54th yearly general meeting of the Manufacturers Association of Nigeria (MAN) and the 6th Adeola Odutola Lecture in Lagos, he said the country has not converted its potential into cor-

responding industrial performance, noting that manufacturing remained at about seven to eight per cent of Gross Domestic Product (GDP), while manufacturing exports generated only about three per cent of export revenue.

Yumkella said the Nigerian Industrial Policy (NIP) must be judged by its implementation and the productive capacity it creates. He said government, particularly the ministries responsible for industry

and finance, should deliberately measure the policy's performance by tracking the number of new factories established, performance of existing factories, domestic value created and investment mobilised.

He said the government should also determine why factories are failing and what can be done to support them, stressing that successful industrialising countries measured performance and adjusted policies or deployed

public capital when targets were not being met.

Yumkella said the NIP recognised constraints limiting competitiveness, including infrastructure gaps, high production costs, limited access to finance and foreign exchange, and productivity challenges and provided a framework for diversifying the economy, strengthening domestic production, expanding value addition and enhancing Nigeria's position in regional and global markets. He said implementation would require coordination among relevant government institutions and closer alignment between industrial and fiscal policies.

Yumkella said the changing global economy also means Nigeria must consider emerging opportunities and pressures from reconfigured supply chains, technology, AI, climate change and geopolitics. He said countries are increasingly competing not only for markets but also for capital, technology, talent and productive capacity.

According to him, Nigeria must decide whether it is prepared to compete for the industries of tomorrow or will continue to compete primarily for today's markets, citing developments in the refinery, fertiliser, pharmaceutical, automotive, and solid minerals sectors as opportunities for Nigeria to deepen domestic production and value addition.

On pharmaceuticals, he said

domestic production should go beyond formulation and packaging to include more of the value chain, including active pharmaceutical ingredients, clinical research, quality assurance and exports. Touching on Nigeria's solid minerals policy on lithium, he noted that processing within the country can support the development of a battery and component-production industry.

He said Nigeria should not limit its industrial ambitions to the domestic market, but should manufacture for West Africa, the rest of Africa and the global market, citing Aba and Nnewi as examples of areas where small and medium-sized enterprises had developed manufacturing capabilities despite constraints.

He said the next step is to create an environment where more companies become regional and global champions, supported by regional markets, infrastructure, predictable rules, financing, skills and standards.

He, however, identified energy as one of the major constraints to Nigeria's industrial development. He said manufacturers spent about N1.3 trillion on self-generated power in 2025, with energy accounting for as much as 40 per cent of production costs. He lamented that the energy challenge had persisted for decades and continues to undermine the competitiveness of Nigerian manufacturers.



Minister of State, Federal Ministry of Industry, Trade and Investment, John Owan Enoh (left); Immediate past president, Manufacturers Association of Nigeria (MAN), Francis Meshioye, and Director-General, MAN, Segun Ajayi-Kadir, at the sixth Adeola Odutola Lecture during the association's 54th yearly general meeting held in Lagos...recently.

Business longevity: CioD warns firms against founder dependence, weak governance

By Isaac Chibuike

SPEAKERS at the third yearly Young Directors Forum (YDF) Conference of the Chartered Institute of Directors (CioD) Nigeria have urged corporate boards to build strong systems that can outlive founders, warning that rapid growth without sound governance could lead to business failure.

They also called for boards to strengthen oversight of cybersecurity, artificial intelligence (AI), talent retention and succession planning as businesses face growing operational and strategic risks.

Speaking at the conference in Lagos recently, Conference Chairman, Prof. Peter Obadare, said fewer than 10 Nigerian companies have existed for more than 100 years, compared with more than 21,000 in Japan, attributing the disparity partly to weak governance structures and overdependence on founders.

He said many Nigerian businesses struggle to survive when their founders die because they lack institutional systems capable of sustaining operations beyond individual leadership. Obadare said boards must ex-

pand their oversight responsibilities to include cybersecurity, noting that digital fraud could expose companies to losses far greater than those associated with traditional internal collusion.

He urged directors to look beyond profits and examine how sustainably they are generated, stressing the need to build businesses that can withstand leadership changes and emerging risks. He also called on CioD to introduce a "board as a service" model to enable start-ups to access experienced directors and strengthen their governance structures as they grow.

In his keynote address, former Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of Guinness Nigeria Plc, Seni Adetu, said businesses should aim to grow sustainable shareholder value through dividends and appreciation in share prices.

He identified global uncertainty, AI, changing consumer preferences and talent migration as major challenges that boards must address to keep their businesses competitive. On talent retention, Adetu cited the growing number of Nigerian professionals working remotely for foreign companies, describing the trend as "digital japa".

He said boards must provide strategic direction, oversee financial performance and ensure that risks are properly managed, while distinguishing their responsibilities from those of executive management.

Adetu warned boards against borrowing money to pay dividends merely to sustain a favourable image among shareholders, describing it as one of the worst decisions a board can make. He said former executives appointed to boards must recognise that their role had changed from running businesses to providing oversight. Directors, he said, should challenge management assumptions and hold executives accountable without interfering in day-to-day operations.

He added that compliance should support business performance rather than become an obstacle to growth. For boards to remain effective, Adetu called for stronger technological competence and diversity in age and thinking, recommending the inclusion of directors in their 30s, 50s and 70s to bring different perspectives to decision-making.

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

Okoye emerges 12th MAN president

THE Manufacturers Association of Nigeria (MAN) has elected Dr Ifeanyi Eric Okoye as its 12th President at its just-concluded 54th yearly general meeting held in Lagos recently, succeeding Francis Meshioye.

Okoye is the Chief Executive Officer of Juhel Nigeria Limited, a pharmaceutical manufacturing company headquartered in Enugu State.

Okoye holds a bachelor's degree in pharmacy from the University of Ife (now Obafemi Awolowo University) and an M.Sc. and PhD in Pharmaceutical Technology and Industrial Pharmacy from the University of Nigeria, Nsukka.

He established JUHEL Nigeria Limited in 1987 and, in 2001, expanded its facilities to include syrups and capsules. He is a Fellow of the Pharmaceutical Society of Nigeria and an alumnus of Harvard Business School in Boston, USA. He is also a member of the National Institute, having attended the National Institute for Policy and Strategic Studies in Kuru, Plateau State. In 2012, he was conferred the national honour of Officer of the Order of the Federal Republic (OFR).

Before he was elected president, Okoye served MAN in various capacities, including as Chairman of the Enugu, Anambra and Ebonyi States branches from 1998 to 2005 and as Vice President from 2006 to 2010.

Nigeria to address red tape affecting digital trade under AfCFTA

By Victoria Nwachukwu

NIGERIA is working with the World Bank Group to identify gaps in its digital trade regulations as it seeks to align a pending digital economy bill and a planned e-commerce policy with the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) Protocol on Digital Trade.

The regulatory gap analysis is part of efforts to ensure that the protocol, its annexes and Nigeria's domestic laws and policies work together, according to the National Coordinator and Chief Executive Officer of the Nigerian AfCFTA Coordination Office (NACO), Patience Okala.

Okala said Nigerian businesses had identified Ghana, Egypt, Rwanda, South Africa and Kenya as priority markets for expansion and regulators from the five countries were brought to Lagos to examine market-access requirements and identify areas where their processes could be aligned or mutually recognised.

Okala said the challenge, however, extends beyond aligning regulations. Businesses, she said, need reliable ways to verify trading partners, make and receive payments, transfer data securely and use digital systems that work across national borders.

She said Nigeria was one of three pilot countries selected for the Africa Digital Access and Public Infrastructure for Trade (ADAPT) initiative, run by the AfCFTA Secretariat and the Tony Blair Institute, alongside Egypt and Kenya. A team had been inaugurated in Nigeria to work on the initiative, which is intended to advance interoperability between digital systems and provide a basis for implementing the protocol.

Citing World Trade Organisation records, she said African exports of digitally delivered services grew by 15 per cent in 2024, which she described as the fastest growth recorded in any region. She said this growth underscored the need for appropriate regulatory arrangements, adding that the protocol's

provisions and annexes need to align with Nigeria's existing regulatory framework for it to be fully implemented.

Chief Executive Officer, *Better Than Cash Alliance*, Nshuti Mbabazi, said the implementation of the protocol must move beyond written agreements to practical testing of cross-border payment arrangements.

Responding to a question about how a Nigerian seller could receive payment for goods ordered from Kenya, Mbabazi said the framework must be tested through actual transactions to identify the barriers preventing businesses from completing payments reliably. She proposed identifying a small group of traders willing to buy and sell along the Nigeria-East Africa corridor and using their transactions to test the framework. The exercise, she said, would help establish the actual obstacles to trusted electronic payments.

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

Wike, Adeleke, Soludo named campaign coordinators in revised APC structure

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6
where political interests and alliances differ.

“If you see that word, PBAT/APC, it means those who are supporting the President who are not members of the party, together with the party, are working together to achieve that purpose,” he said. According to the minister, the arrangement recognises that support for Tinubu extends beyond APC membership and allows people from other political platforms to contribute to his re-election campaign. “The major thing is Mr President. Whatever we are going to do, whoever has any idea or anything to contribute is to the success of Mr President. That is the whole thing,” he added.

Wike dismissed suggestions that the coalition had unsettled APC governors or could trigger tensions within the ruling party, insisting that the initiative posed no problem. “I don’t know what concerns there are. As far as I am concerned, there is no problem,” he said.

The former Rivers State governor cited political arrangements in the FCT as an example of how the coalition could accommodate different interests while pursuing a common objective.

He recalled appealing to political stakeholders in the territory to support Tinubu and APC candidates for the National Assembly while allowing supporters of other parties to make their choices at other levels of the elections.

Wike said the arrangement reflected political realities across the country, where local interests might differ from the party affiliations of those supporting the President at the national level.

He argued that political leadership required persuading people with different loyalties to work towards a shared goal, rather than insisting that support for a presidential candidate must come exclusively from members of the candidate’s party.

Minister: It’s wrong time to impose new taxes on vulnerable, productive sectors

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

He also said debt sustainability remained a critical issue, arguing that countries must leverage borrowing to fund critical infrastructure and ensure that debt delivers value for future generations.

Responding to a question on the trade-off between debt and tax financing, he said people must remain at the heart of policy choices.

“This is the wrong time to impose new taxes or increase the burden of tax, particularly on the vulnerable population and productive sectors of the economy,” Oyedele said in response to questions about the cost of debt on households and businesses. “The measures will be first for every country to look inwards, looking inward to find areas of savings, areas of revenue mobilisation, but also bearing in mind this is the wrong time to impose new taxes or increase the burden of tax, particularly on the vulnerable population and productive sectors of the economy,” he added.

Oyedele said borrowing remained necessary for economic growth but should be directed towards job creation and inclusive development.

The Director of the G-24, Iyabo Masha, aligned with Oyedele, saying countries must achieve macroeconomic stability before pursuing structural growth.

Stop attacking Tinubu, present your manifestos, APC tells opposition

THE National Chairman of the All Progressives Congress, Nentawe Yilwatda, challenged opposition parties to present their manifestos and engage the ruling party in policy debates ahead of the 2027 general elections, rather than focus on personal attacks against President Bola Tinubu.

Yilwatda spoke in Abuja yesterday when the Savannah Centre for Diplomacy, Democracy and Development’s Council of the Wise, led by former Chief Justice of Nigeria, Justice Olukayode Ariwoola, visited the APC National Working Committee for an advocacy engagement on peaceful, free, fair and credible elections.

The APC chairman said political parties should focus on explaining how they intend to address Nigeria’s challenges instead of concentrating on insults and allegations against the President.

“If you have an opposition, place your roadmap. Place your plan before us. We have got to place our own work plan. What do we want to do for Nigeria?” he asked.

He said the APC was ready to engage opposition parties in intellectual discussions on competing policy proposals, adding that Nigerians deserved to assess political parties based on their plans for the country.

Earlier, Ariwoola urged the APC leadership to ensure that its candidates, officials and supporters complied with electoral laws, the party’s constitution and its code of conduct.

He warned against hate speech, inflammatory statements and other practices capable of provoking violence during political campaigns, stressing that the conduct of political parties would be critical to the credibility of the 2027 general elections.

Ariwoola expressed the hope that political parties would learn from past electoral chal-

lenges and work collectively to ensure that the 2027 elections were free, fair, transparent and peaceful.

Tompolo urges Lagos residents to back Tinubu’s re-election in 2027

LEADER of the PBAT Door-to-Door Movement, Government Ekpemupolo, has urged Lagos residents to prevent a repeat of the 2023 presidential election outcome in the state by voting massively for President Bola Tinubu in 2027.

He called on residents to take advantage of the ongoing continuous voter registration exercise by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) to register and obtain their Permanent Voter Cards (PVCs) ahead of the election.

Ekpemupolo, popularly known as Tompolo, spoke through his representative, Kestin Pondi, in Lagos yesterday during a campaign rally for Tinubu’s re-election, where he presented 57 campaign vehicles to state coordinators.

“What happened in 2023 must not be repeated. He must win convincingly in 2027,” he said.

He described Tinubu as a selfless and courageous leader who had continued to implement bold reforms despite the political implications for his re-election, adding that the measures were already yielding results for Nigerians.

Ekpemupolo said Lagos had become a model for other states because of the restructuring and reforms introduced by Tinubu during his tenure as governor between 1999 and 2007.

Also speaking, Lagos State Governor Babajide Sanwo-Olu said Nigeria was moving towards economic stability under the Tinubu administration.

Sanwo-Olu said Tinubu had overseen more road construction than previous administrations within three years, provided relief to students, increased the minimum wage and made funds available for pension payments.

ICC lauds Tinubu for appointing Adeleke as Osun coordinator, promises 1.5m votes

THE Imole Campaign Council (ICC) lauded President Tinubu for appointing Governor Ademola Adeleke as the Osun State Coordinator, PBAT Presidential Campaign Council.

It described the appointment as well deserved, pledging that the president’s confidence in Adeleke’s ability to deliver Osun in the forthcoming presidential election will not be misplaced.

A statement by the Director-General of ICC, Senator Olalere Oyewumi, assured that the trust reposed in the governor would be justified through unwavering commitment and a strong electoral performance.

While promising to deliver 1.5 million votes for Tinubu in Osun, the statement assured

that all the structures of Accord in Osun will work for his re-election.

The statement added: “Our message to the people of Osun State is to keep trusting and supporting Governor Adeleke as he continues to deliver on his campaign promises. A vote for President Tinubu is a support for Governor Adeleke.” Atiku’s aide challenges Wike to disclose cost of media chats

PAUL Ibe, media adviser to former Vice-President Atiku Abubakar, has challenged the Minister of the Federal Capital Territory, Nyesom Wike, to disclose how much public money is spent on his media chats. Ibe made the call in a post on X yesterday, shortly after Wike’s latest media chat was broadcast live by several television and radio stations.

He questioned the cost of the broadcasts, urging the minister to publish invoices showing payments to participating stations, the sources of funding and the relevant budget lines.

According to Ibe, at least eight broadcast outlets aired yesterday’s session, including Arise Television, Channels Television, TVC, News Central, AIT, JDK, Aso TV and Radio, and ADBN.

Estimating airtime costs at between N10 million and N20 million per station per hour, Ibe said a two-hour broadcast across eight stations could

cost between N160 million and N320 million.

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



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CHANGE OF OFFICE ADDRESS
This is to notify the investing public that beginning from 12th November, 2026, Core Securities Limited will now be located at 112A, Association Road, Dolphin Estate, Ikoyi Lagos.
Signed: Management

PUBLIC NOTICE
ASSOCIATION OF ELECTRIC VEHICLES TECHNICIANS - APPLICATION FOR REGISTRATION OF INCORPORATED TRUSTEES.
Notice is hereby given pursuant to Section 823 of CAMA 2020 that the above-named Association has applied to the Registrar-General, Corporate Affairs Commission, Abuja for registration as Incorporated Trustees.
Trustees:
1. Dr. Kennedy Onyeka Okonkwo
2. Mrs. Ichechi Chinharhu Okonkwo
Address: 5C, McGregor Road, Ikoyi, Eti-Osa LGA, Lagos.
Objectives: To promote and protect the professional interests of electric vehicle technicians in Nigeria; to set and enforce standards of competence, safety and workmanship in EV repair and maintenance; to provide training, certification and continuing professional development; to collaborate with government, institutions, manufacturers and stakeholders on EV policy and capacity building; and to undertake all other lawful non-profit activities incidental thereto.
Any objection to the registration should be forwarded to the Registrar-General, Corporate Affairs Commission, Plot 420, Tigris Crescent, Off Aguiyi Ironsi Street, Maitama, Abuja within 28 days of this publication.
Signed: Mrs. Ichechi Chinharhu Okonkwo, Secretary



NOTICE OF DORMANT/UNCLAIMED BALANCES - TRANSFER TO DORMANT REGISTER

In compliance with the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) Circular: **Guidelines on Management of Dormant Accounts, Unclaimed Balances and Other Financial Assets in Banks and Other Financial Institutions in Nigeria.**

Reference No: FPR/DIR/PUB/CIR/001/014
Dated - 12 March, 2026

We hereby publish the details of accounts classified as unclaimed and transferred to the Register of Dormant Accounts.

Affected accounts holders are advised to visit our nearest branch with valid identification and account details to reactivate their accounts

S/N	Account Name	Account Type	Bank Name	Branch Address
1	LIONEL MERENI AKOR	UNCLAIMED	Quest Merchant Bank Limited	2 Broad Street, Lagos Island, Lagos
2	19A ADEWOLU KUKU-IW19A	UNCLAIMED	Quest Merchant Bank Limited	2 Broad Street, Lagos Island, Lagos
3	BLESSING	UNCLAIMED	Quest Merchant Bank Limited	2 Broad Street, Lagos Island, Lagos
4	CHQ DEP WORKFORCE MGT CENTRE LTD	UNCLAIMED	Quest Merchant Bank Limited	2 Broad Street, Lagos Island, Lagos
5	ELPIZO CAPITAL LTD	UNCLAIMED	Quest Merchant Bank Limited	2 Broad Street, Lagos Island, Lagos
6	WMS/69741302	UNCLAIMED	Quest Merchant Bank Limited	2 Broad Street, Lagos Island, Lagos
7	UN-MIGRATED CUSTOMER BALANCE - 0000	UNCLAIMED	Quest Merchant Bank Limited	2 Broad Street, Lagos Island, Lagos

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‘S/West integration must go beyond politics to deliver economic growth’

Gubernatorial candidate of the Nigeria Democratic Congress (NDC) in Oyo State, Akim Adebola Yusuf, in this interview with ROTIMI AGBOLUAJE, speaks on unemployment, security, economic development and his plans to transform the Pace Setter State, if elected governor in 2027.

What is your assessment of Oyo State’s political, social and economic condition, and what are the major challenges you would address if elected governor?

OYO State has considerable human and natural resources, but much remains to be done to realise its potential. Youth unemployment is a major concern because prolonged joblessness can expose young people to substance abuse and other social problems, while placing additional pressure on healthcare and security services.

We need an integrated economic master plan linking education, skills development, investment and employment creation. Our agricultural land, mineral resources, industrial facilities and opportunities for power generation provide a foundation for economic growth.

My priorities would be education, industrial revival and agricultural development. I would begin by rehabilitating dilapidated public schools and improving learning environments. I would also explore partnerships with investors to revive moribund factories and production facilities, creating jobs and stimulating economic activity.

In agriculture, we would support smallholder farmers through improved access to mechanisation, irrigation, storage, transportation and markets. Agriculture must be treated as a complete value chain covering production, processing, storage and marketing.

We would also encourage graduates of agricultural science, engineering, horticulture and related disciplines to establish productive enterprises, supported by access to finance, equipment and markets. Larger agricultural investments and processing facilities near production areas would increase output, reduce post-harvest losses and create rural employment.

Reliable electricity and security are equally important. We would explore viable power solutions for agricultural and industrial clusters while strengthening security in vulnerable farming communities.

With your banking background, how would you apply your experience in financial management, investment and distressed assets to governing the state?

The government must deploy available resources efficiently to achieve the greatest public benefit. This requires financial discipline, careful planning and sound investment decisions.

My banking experience has exposed me to financial management, investment appraisal, project financing and the assessment of business opportunities. These skills would help me evaluate projects and determine how public resources can be used effectively.

Where appropriate, we would work with financial institutions, development finance organisations and private investors to support viable projects. Such arrangements must be carefully assessed to ensure that their costs and repayment obligations are sustainable.

Public investments should be judged by the value they deliver, including employment, improved public services and sustainable economic activity.

Government is different from banking. How would you ensure that a technocratic approach does not overlook Oyo State’s social and political realities?

My background extends beyond banking. My first degree is in Political Science, and I have received training in policy formulation and management. I have also served as an adviser on due process and policy implementation.

Banking involves engaging people from different social and economic backgrounds, but governing requires more than technical knowledge. It demands empathy, consultation and an understanding of local realities.

I would prioritise agriculture and its value chain, agro-allied processing, manufacturing and viable mineral development to generate employment. We would engage domestic and foreign investors, development finance institutions, chambers of commerce and other stakeholders to identify viable projects.

Funding would combine prudent public expenditure with private-sector investment and appropriate development finance. The government should concentrate its resources on essential infrastructure and projects that generate substantial public benefits. We would also support small and medium-sized enterprises by improving access to markets, infrastructure, skills and appropriate financing. Insecurity continues to affect farming, businesses and communities. What would be your strategy, particularly in rural areas?

Our strategy would combine stronger community-based security, improved coordination among security agencies and responsible use of modern technology.

We would review A m o t e k u n ’ s deployment to improve its presence in vulnerable rural, suburban and agricultural communities, working with the police and other relevant agencies.

Technology, including drone-assisted surveillance where appropriate, could help monitor vulnerable areas and support timely responses to threats. Such operations must have proper safeguards and trained personnel.

Community engagement is also essential. Residents can provide valuable information to help security agencies identify risks and prevent attacks. Safer communities would encourage farming, trading and transportation, making security an important foundation for economic development.

Would you support the establishment of state police, as being pursued by the administration of President Bola Tinubu, to address Nigeria’s security challenges?

I am totally in support of state police because the Nigeria Police Force, as presently constituted, faces enormous challenges in effectively policing the entire country. Given Nigeria’s population, geographical size and increasingly complex security challenges, a centralised police structure struggles to respond adequately to the needs of every community.

Effective policing requires an understanding of the local environment, its people, culture, language and peculiar security challenges. Officers familiar with the communities they serve are often better positioned to gather intelligence, identify threats and respond promptly.

However, adequate safeguards must be established to prevent abuse of power. There is a legitimate concern that state police could be used to intimidate political opponents, suppress dissent or victimise individuals who disagree with those in government.

The establishment of state police

must therefore go hand in hand with effective oversight, accountability and clear constitutional provisions. State police commands must operate professionally rather than become instruments of political control. Citizens must also have access to appropriate legal remedies when their rights are violated.

There should be effective coordination between state police commands and the Nigeria Police Force to prevent jurisdictional conflicts and facilitate intelligence sharing. Adequate funding, proper training, modern equipment and respect for human rights are equally important.

Ultimately, state police should bring policing closer to the people, improve crime prevention and make law enforcement more responsive to local needs. With the right safeguards, it could provide an important additional layer of security.

Which policies of the present administration would you retain, and which would you change if elected?

I would assess existing policies according to their objectives, implementation and results. Programmes that serve the public interest should be continued and improved, while ineffective ones should be reviewed.

One priority would be to institutionalise local government autonomy in accordance with the applicable constitutional and legal framework. I would also extend the rehabilitation of inner-city and township roads while prioritising economically important routes connecting major towns, agricultural areas, processing facilities and markets.

Education and healthcare would receive attention through improved infrastructure, essential equipment and support for professionals. My objective would be to build on what works, correct weaknesses and ensure that government policies produce measurable benefits.

Southwest governors have continued to advocate regional integration as a pathway to economic growth, improved security and sustainable development. If elected governor, what role would you play in advancing this agenda?

I strongly support regional integration because the Southwest shares common historical, cultural and economic interests that can be harnessed for collective development.

I would work closely with other governors to strengthen cooperation in agriculture, security, education, healthcare, transportation, tourism and industrial development.

Regional integration must go beyond political discussions to deliver practical benefits. We must develop joint infrastructure, promote trade, create employment and address security challenges collectively. My administration would support initiatives that advance regional prosperity while respecting the autonomy and interests of individual states.

As an Ibadan indigene, how would you convince voters in Oke-Ogun, Ogbomoso, Oyo and Ibarapa that your government would give their interests equal attention?

I believe in balanced and integrated development. Oyo State’s economic opportunities extend beyond Ibadan, particularly in agriculture, solid minerals and other areas where communities possess comparative advantages.

My approach would be to identify the strengths and needs of each zone and direct investments towards developing them. Agricultural production, processing facilities, infrastructure and essential public services should reflect local priorities.

Development must not be concentrated in the state capital. By investing across the state, we can expand economic opportunities, create jobs and promote a stronger sense of inclusion among our people.

You contested the 2023 governorship election under the Action Democratic Party (ADP). What did that experience teach you about Oyo politics and the electorate?

The experience gave me a deeper understanding of electoral politics in Oyo State and the factors influencing voters’ decisions. I realised that some people enter politics primarily for financial benefits rather than public service. I also learnt that poverty significantly influences how people respond to political messages and make electoral choices.

Beyond this, I gained a better understanding of leadership selection, political alliances and the influence of respected elder statesmen on electoral outcomes. The experience reinforced my belief that success requires a credible vision, sustained engagement with the people and an understanding of their needs.

You are returning in 2027 under the NDC. What specifically will you do differently this time?

With the benefit of experience, I intend to be more strategic in building relationships and partnerships that can strengthen our political platform. We will engage stakeholders across different sectors and communities while communicating our development agenda more effectively.

Our approach will combine political engagement with practical proposals on governance, economic development and public welfare. We must demonstrate that we understand the people’s problems and have credible ideas for addressing them.

What gives you the confidence that the factors that prevented you from winning in 2023 will not also work against you in 2027?

We are building strategic partnerships and engaging people with influence in their communities and various professional and social spheres. These relationships can help broaden our acceptance and communicate our message more effectively.

Ultimately, electoral support must be earned through trust, persuasion and a convincing development programme. Our responsibility is to demonstrate that we understand the challenges facing Oyo State and can offer practical solutions.

The ruling APM under Governor Seyi Makinde, the All Progressives Congress (APC) and other established parties have strong political structures across the state. How do you intend to build a structure capable of competing across all 33 local government areas?

The people of Oyo State are the foundation of our political structure. We are taking our message directly to communities, listening to their concerns and explaining our proposed development agenda.



Yusuf

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Can mortals protect God, Ifowodo asks in *Why Does God Need a Gun?*

By Gregory Austin Nwakunor

ON Friday, October 9, the grand finale of 2026 Nigeria Prize for Literature held at the Eko Hotels and Suites, Lagos. At the event, the poet Ogaga Ifowodo won \$100,000 Literature Prize; filmmakers Peter Oke and Feranmi Abiola shared \$20,000 Creative Arts Prize.

Ifowodo won the prize for his collection, *Why Does God Need a Gun?*. The collection was selected from 223 entries.

Announcing the Literature winner, Chairman of the Advisory Board for The Nigeria Prize for Literature, Professor Akachi Adimora-Ezeigbo, described *Why Does God Need a Gun?* as a sensitive portrayal of religious and political violence in Nigeria, told through the voice of an imagined victim.

She commended the three shortlisted collections for their technical skill, confidence and mature use of language, noting the powerful conversation across the works.

"Equally compelling is the conversation that unfolds across the three books. Though distinct in voice and style, they engage with related concerns: questions of identity and belonging; the promises and disappointments of nationhood; the consequences of extremism and displacement; and the enduring impact of conflict on individuals and communities. These are works deeply rooted in the Nigerian experience, yet they reach far beyond our borders," she says.

In the inaugural edition of The Nigeria Prize for Creative Arts, *Beyond Tarkwa Bay* by Oke and *Mara Mania* by Abiola emerged joint winners from 98 submissions, sharing the \$20,000 prize. In his remarks, Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of NLNG, Adeleye Falade, said The Nigeria Prizes were established to acknowledge outstanding achievement and encourage scientific innovation and literary excellence that enrich society and improve lives.

He noted that the Science and Innovation prize has recognised groundbreaking contributions across critical fields including health, agriculture, engineering, energy, technology, climate resilience and sustainable development.

On The Nigeria Prize for Literature, Falade said it has grown to become one of Africa's most prestigious literary honours, providing a platform for some of the continent's finest literary voices.

"Through this prize, Nigerian writers have demonstrated that our stories are far more than accounts of where we come from. They contribute meaningfully to global conversations about identity, resilience and our shared humanity," he said.

"Together, The Nigeria Prizes have become enduring national institutions and powerful reminders of what is possible when excellence is recognised, rewarded and encouraged," Falade reveals.

He commended the finalists and winners, noting that every finalist represents discipline and dedication, while every winner represents the triumph of perseverance.

"As we honour this year's laureates, we also hope to inspire the next generation of scientists, writers and creatives whose ideas will solve tomorrow's challenges, tell tomorrow's stories and shape tomorrow's future," he adds.

Ifowodo's entry, *Why Does God Need a Gun?*, is principally conceived in paradox consummated by religious imperatives. The poet questions morality of those thinking they can protect God. The first part of this collection, a series of 26 poems, titled, *From the Forest of a Million Demon*, answers the existential question. This part reflects on everything from vulnerability to God, etc. "It's about: God, are you even still there at all? Why do you allow human beings to take your name in vain?"

Ifowodo affirms, "*Leah Sharibu Lives is a celebration of that.*" Sharibu, one of the schoolgirls kidnapped from the Government Girls Science and Technical College, Dapchi, Yobe State, in 2018 is the persona through which the poems are interrogated.

"Leah Sharibu becomes a composite figure for all the victims of the scourge of religious terrorism that we are witnessing. And the whole idea of the terrorists' action is to erase the other, is to deny agency to the other, is to turn, in particular, the girl child and women into non-beings. They actually boasted a b o u t making her a slave for the rest of her life," Ifowodo says.

He notes, "So, the question is: why would God Almighty—the Omnipotent, Omniscient, Omnipresent—why would things made out of clayHe made think they need to

protect Him? That is a preoccupation in the collection. Thinking about all the recent activities, especially in the post-Al-Qaeda 9/11 events that are terrorising the world. So, that's where the question comes from."

He adds, "initially, they gave Sharibu the option of renouncing her faith. We have not heard a single word from her ever since she was captured. Nobody has seen her. But for those girls who were released, some of them gave the testimony that she refused to renounce her faith."

Renowned for delivering well crafted poetry, he affirms without hesitation that craft is essential for him. "As a writer, the message is secondary, because there's nothing that we're going to write about today—wars, intolerance, love, grief, whatever it is—that has not been there from the beginning of existence. So, it is the how; that's where the art comes in, even if you are working with wood as a sculptor. So, art is first and foremost. The medium disciplines the message," Ifowodo says.

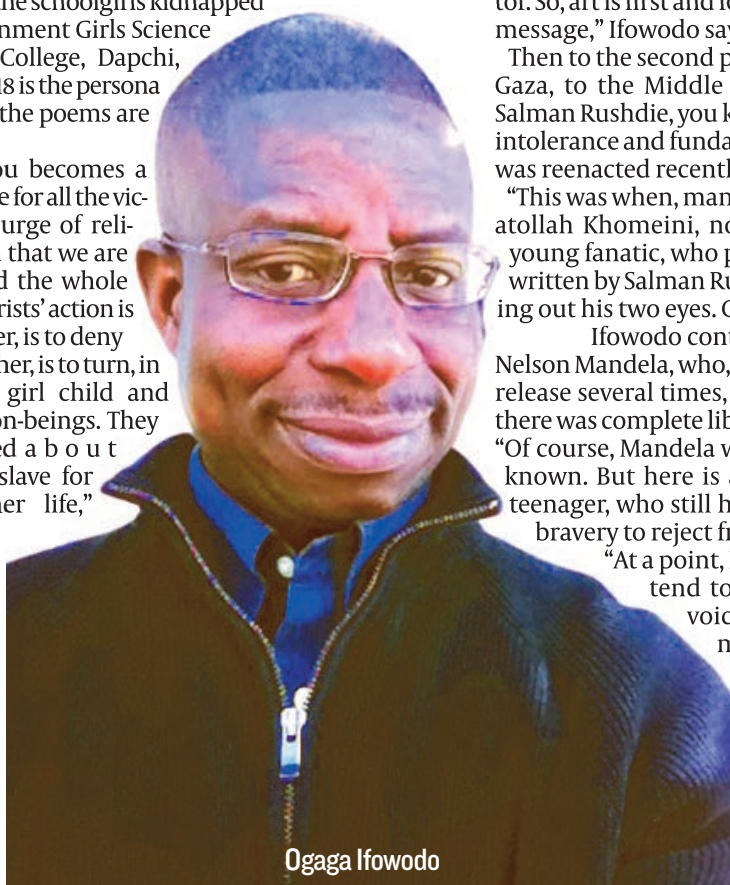
Then to the second part, where it goes beyond Nigeria, to Gaza, to the Middle East, to the fatwa pronounced on Salman Rushdie, you know, in another instance of religious intolerance and fundamentalism, of fanaticism, and which was reenacted recently.

"This was when, many years after the original fatwa by Ayatollah Khomeini, now in New York, another fanatic, a young fanatic, who probably has not even read anything written by Salman Rushdie, sought to blind him by plucking out his two eyes. Got one eye," he quips.

Ifowodo continues, "this reminds me so much of Nelson Mandela, who, as you know, was offered conditional release several times, and each time turned it down until there was complete liberation for the whole of South Africa. "Of course, Mandela was a full-grown man, already world-known. But here is a little girl, a little girl in school, a teenager, who still had the courage and the astonishing bravery to reject freedom in defence of her belief."

"At a point, I said that this person whom they intend to turn into a slave must be given a voice; must be made to speak; must be made to speak in a book. They forbid the book. Her testimony, her personhood, her womanhood."

By now she's a woman, but she must be celebrated by way of commemorating her in poetry." Ifowodo says, "in all my works—this is my sixth collection—the message is secondary".



Ogaga Ifowodo

Richard Henderson arrives Lagos for *Ofala*

REVERE Dauthor of *The King in Every Man: Evolutionary Trends in Onitsha Ibo Society and Culture* (1972) returns after 64 years of leaving the country as special guest of Agbogidi, Obi of Onitsha, for *Ofala* 2026 scheduled to hold on October 16 and 17. Henderson arrived on Monday at Murtala Muhammed International Airport, Lagos, from Tucson, Arizona. He was accompanied by his son, Michael Henderson.

Professor Henderson, who lived among Ndi-Onicha from 1960 to 62, is that rare *onyeocha* (Whiteman) who truly listened — learning the language and institu-

tions from within, and giving the world the most authoritative account of what it means to be Onitsha: that kingship, *eze*, *ozo*, *umunna*, *ogbe*, and the spirit of aniane not relics, but a living system where every man carries the dignity of a king. His book remains not only foundational in Onitsha — respected in palaces and homes —but is also considered a primer on African anthropology. His continuing archive at amightytree.org, with Helen Henderson, preserves photographs, shrines, *iba*, *okpukpu*, and oral histories that might otherwise have been lost.

La Campagne Tropicana opens applications for art residency in Lagos

LA CAMPAGNE Tropicana Resort has opened applications for the first edition of its Art Residency, a two-month programme for Nigerian artists and artisans. The residency runs from February 5 to April 4, 2027 at the resort in Ibeju-Lekki, Lagos, and applications close on November 30, 2026.

The programme will bring practitioners together to make new work, trade ideas and examine how art, culture, place and tourism relate to one another. Residents are encouraged to draw on the resort and its surroundings while following their own creative interests.

The call is open to practitioners in the visual and applied arts, traditional crafts, design and related fields.

Applicants must live in Nigeria, be at least 20 years old when the residency begins, and be able to take part for the full period.

Residents will have time to work on an agreed project and to engage with fellow participants, and the programme will close with a presentation or sharing of work and ideas. Applicants may propose research, experimentation or the development of new work, and a finished artwork is not required unless agreed as part of an individual project.

The residency committee will provide accommodation and meals, travel and local transport support, materials and production support, a stipend, and insurance and healthcare arrangements. Selected applicants will receive the amounts, coverage and practical details in writing before they are asked to accept a place. Applicants with accessibility or other support needs are encouraged to contact the committee so suitable arrangements can be discussed.

Applications will be assessed on the quality of the applicant's practice, the strength and feasibility of the pro-

posal, and its relevance to the residency. Applicants should send a short biography or CV, a portfolio or examples of recent work, a brief proposal for what they wish to explore or develop, their location and contact details, and confirmation that they are available for the full programme dates.

Those selected will receive a detailed programme and a written residency agreement covering support, facilities, participation expectations, and the ownership, display and use of work created during the residency. A place will be confirmed only once these terms have been agreed.

Odigbose: The Play for premiere, reopens Africa's slave trade history

THE gripping story of *Odigbose: The Play* has never been seen before will be on stage this weekend, as the history of the obnoxious slave trade takes centre stage at the Agip Hall, MUSON Centre, Onikan, Lagos, on Saturday, October 17, 2026 by 7:00pm.

Written by Otunba Wanle Akinboboye, the much-anticipated piece is a recast of the slave trade history. Told from the African perspective, Akinboboye, arenowned in-

vestor and promoter of tourism across the world, is, through this historic and dramatic creation, inviting the world to feast on his innate creative ferment beyond the immersive experience that people savour from his promotion of authentic African-theme resorts. *Odigbose* is not just a play. It is a pilgrimage into the past.

For centuries, the story of the transatlantic slave trade has been told by others. In *Odigbose*, Africa reclaims its voice. Africa tells its

own story, in its own rhythm, with its own tears, truth and with its author, director, cast and crew within it hallowed soil.

The production promises a deeply moving, visually arresting and emotionally riveting theatrical experience that will transport audiences into the heart of one of Africa's most painful chapters.

Through powerful dramatic performances, haunting chants, soul-stirring music, dance and storytelling, the play will

portray the enslavement and captivating and profound inhuman treatment by a set of humanity — Europeans; to another set of humanity — Africans.

A production of Atunda Entertainment, an outfit of Akinboboye dedicated to musical and theatre productions, the, production will employ the full African theatrical elements: dance, music, choreography and colours as well as profound oratory, to tell the story.



CHANGE OF NAME

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ADDITION OF NAME: I, formerly known as Suleiman Abdulrauf now wish to be addressed as Suleiman Abdulrauf Onimisi. All former documents remain valid. General public take note

ADDITION OF NAME: I, formerly known as Adesina Ayokunle now wish to be addressed as Adesina Ayokunle Ebenezer. All former documents remain valid. General public take note

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ARRANGEMENT OF NAME: I Kalu Blessing Chiamaka as it appears on my Jamb and other documents, and I Kalu Blessing as it appears on my WAEC certificate are one and the same persons. All former documents remain valid. JAMB, WAEC, Nigerian and international universities, Gregory University, Uturu specifically and the general public should take note.

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CONFIRMATION OF NAME: I, formerly known as Nnaoma-Gabriel Rosemary Amarachi now wish to be addressed as Nnaoma-Gabriel Amarachi Rosemary. All former documents remain valid. General public take note

CONFIRMATION OF NAME: I, formerly known as Oluwaseyi Bodurin Robert Akinyemi now wish to be addressed as Oluwaseyi Robert Akinyemi. All former documents remain valid. General public take note

CONFIRMATION OF NAME: I, Obi Egwim Francisca Mary, hereby update my First Bank account name to Egwim Francisca Oluebube. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

CONFIRMATION OF NAME: That Samuel Omo and Samuel Omo J., is one and same person now wish to be addressed as, Samuel Omo Judith. All former documents remains valid public note

CONFIRMATION OF NAME: That, Irete Godfrey Desmond and Ireje Godfrey is same person now wish to be addressed as Irete Godfrey. My DOB is 29-12-2003 not 23-22-2000. Public note

CORRECTION OF NAME: I, formerly known as Uchenna Clever O. Godwin, now wish to be addressed as Uchenna Clever Godwin Omereji. All former documents remain valid. General public take note

CORRECTION OF NAME: I, formerly known as Johnwillie Ekpo now wish to be addressed as John Willie Ekpo. All former documents remain valid. General public take note

CORRECTION OF NAME: I, formerly known as Ojo Abosede Funmilayo now wish to be addressed as Afolabi Abosede Funmilayo. All former documents remain valid. General public take note

CORRECTION OF NAME: I, formerly known as Umeh Chinwe Magret now wish to be addressed as Umeh Chinwedu Margret. All former documents remain valid. General public take note

CORRECTION OF NAME: I, formerly known as Ibiloye Hameed Adeyemi now wish to be addressed as Ibiloye Hamed Adeyemi. All former documents remain valid. General public take note

CORRECTION OF NAME: I, formerly known as Onyeji, Evelyn Chinoye now wish to be addressed as Onyeji, Evelyn Chinoye. All former documents remain valid. General public take note

CORRECTION OF NAME: My name was wrongly captured in my NIN as Vincent Queen Genesis Instead of my correct name Vincent Queen Chikamnele. All former documents remain valid. General public note

CORRECTION OF NAME: I, formerly known as Augustine Catherine Oluebere and now wish to be addressed as Augustine Catherine. All former documents remain valid. General public take note

CORRECTION OF NAME: My name was wrongly captured on BVN as Oke Ibiyemi Esther instead of Oluwatobi Damilola Mariam Ajibode. Former documents remain valid. Public note.

CORRECTION OF NAME: My name was wrongly captured in my BVN as Orereh Kingsley instead of Orereh Emakpo Kingsley All former documents remain valid. General public take note

DECLARATION OF AGE: I, Rabiul Adibayo Abdul-Malik, declare as follows: I received information from my parents, that I was born on the 2/04/ 1936 in Kwara state. General public take note.

EDEKI: I, formerly known as Alfred Edeki Helen now wish to be addressed as Alfred Taiye Helen. All former documents remain valid. General public, take note.

ERENJE: I, formerly known as Ugor Maryjane Ogonye now wish to be addressed as Maryjane Ogonye Erenje. All former documents remain valid. General public take note

ESEKHILE: I formerly known as Miss. Esekhi Charity now wish to be addressed as Mrs. Aigbiremolen Charity Esekhi. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

EYIOLORUNFE: I, formerly known as Raphael Ajayi Eyiolorunfe now wish to be addressed as Raphael Ajayi George. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

EZEKIEL: I, formerly known as Ezekiel Linah Henry now wish to be addressed as Linah Nabo Koko. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

IBANGA: I, formerly known as Miss Victoria Henry Ibanga now wished to be addressed as Mrs. George Victoria Eka. All former documents remain valid, General public take note

IKEAGWU: I, formerly known as Ifeoma Francisca Okpala now wish to be addressed as Ifeoma Francisca Ikeagwu. All former documents remain valid. General public take note

IKEKELE: I, formerly known as Ikekele Ogagaoghenekome now wish to be addressed as Ikekele Gabriel Ogagaoghenekome. All former documents remain valid. General public take note

IYAGBA: I, formerly known as Gift Idawarifaka Iyagba now wish to be addressed as Gift Nwabugo Iyagba. All former documents remain valid. General public take note

JOHNSON: I, formerly known as Okorodudu Aninoritsela Temitomi now wish to be addressed as Johnson Aninoritsela Temitomi. All former documents remain valid. General public take

MAJID: I, formerly known as Mohammad Abdulmajid Shettima now wish to be addressed as Majid Alhaji Bandu. All former documents remain valid. General public take note

MAMAH: I, formerly known as Urama Emmanuel Onyedika now wish to be addressed as Mamah Emmanuel Onyedika. All former documents remain valid. General public take

MARTINS: I, formerly known as Oleghe Ohiohoje Martins now wish to be addressed as Oleghe Ohiohoje, All former documents remains valid, General public take note.

MUZAN: I, formerly known as Miss Muzan Bomini Eunice now wish to be addressed as Mrs. Umesi Bomini Eunice. All former documents remain valid. General public take note

NIKKI: I, formerly known as Ikwuala Chinwenmeri Nikki now wish to be addressed as Ikechukwu Chinwenmeri Nikki. All former documents remain valid. General public take note

NWAMAKA: I, formerly known as Nwamaka Ekene Orji Kessler-El-liott now wish to be addressed as Nwamaka Chimezie. Former documents remain valid General public take note

ODEH: I, formerly known as Abah, Margaret Annel now wish to be addressed as Odeh, Margaret Annel. All former documents remain valid. General public take note

OGU: I, formerly known as Okenwa Amarachi Lorah Now wish to be addressed as Ogu Amarachi Lorah. All former documents remain valid. General public take note

OGUWUMEMI: I, formerly known as Emmanuel K Oguwumemi now wish to be known as Kingdom Emmanuel Oguwumemin. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

OKAFOR: I, formerly known as Okafor Chizaram Immaculate, now wish to be known as Onyeka Chizaram Immaculate. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

OKE: I, formerly known as Adekunle Bolanle Comfort now wish to be addressed as Oke Bolanle Comfort. All former documents remain valid. General public take note

OKOROEGO: I, formerly known as Okoroego Makuachukwu Esther now wish to be addressed as Akalugwu Esther Makuachukwu. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

OLADIMEJI: I, formerly known as Oladimeji Zainab Folashade now wish to be addressed as Oladimeji Zainab Iyabo. All former documents remain valid. General public take note

OLAREWAJU: I, formerly known as Julianah Olarewaju now wish to be addressed as Julianah Moronmubo Olanrewaju. All former documents remain valid. General public take note

OMIYALE: I formerly known as Miss kikelomo Taiwo Omojaro now wish to be known as Mrs. Kike Taiwo Omiyale. All former documents remain valid. Public take note.

OMIYALE: I formerly known as Miss Omojaro Kikelomo Taiwo now wish to be known as Mrs. Omiyale Kikelomo Taiwo. All former documents remain valid. Public take note.

OMOKHODION: I, formerly known as Omokhodion Godsent now wish to be addressed as Oseghale Godsent. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

ONUOHA: I, formerly known as Ozoemena Faustina Oluchi now wish to be addressed as Onuoha Faustina Oluchi. All former documents remain valid. General public take note

ONYEANUSI: I, formerly Miss Onyeausi Stella-Maris Ifunanyachukwu now to be known as Mrs. Eterigho Stella-Maris Ifunanyachukwu. Former documents remain valid. General public take note.

PAUL: I, formerly known as Adeleke Paul Oluwafemi now wish to be addressed as Adeleke Hattrick Oluwafemi. All former documents remain valid. General public and banks take note.

SALAMY: I, formerly known as Salamy Rainot Remilekun now wish to be addressed as Salamy Rihanat Remilekun. All former documents remain valid. General public take note

SALAU: I, formerly known as Salau Oluwaseyi Yewande now wish to be addressed as Omonhinmin Oluwaseyi Yewande. All former documents remain valid. General public take note

TOLU-ODUTOLA: I, formerly Abisola Olaitan Tolu-Odutola now wish to be addressed as Abisola Olaitan Oladapo-Asher. All former documents remain valid. General public take note

UCHE: I, formerly known as Miss Uche Kate Wisdom, now to be addressed as Mrs Maji Catherine Wisdom. Former documents remain valid. General public note.

Science & Health

Religious group raises alarm over hypertension, self-medication

By Ijeoma Nwanosike

LAGOS-based religious organisation, The Old Path Revival Commission, has raised concerns over the prevalence of hypertension and self-medication, urging residents to prioritise regular health checks and seek professional medical care.

The concern was raised during a free medical outreach organised by the church as part of activities marking its 2026 Annual Women's Convention. Some beneficiaries recorded high blood pressure readings and were referred for further assessment and treatment.

Speaking during the programme, General Physician

at Isolo General Hospital, Dr Roseline Nwanebu, urged residents, particularly women, to prioritise their health through regular checks, healthy lifestyles, early detection and prompt treatment.

Nwanebu cautioned against assuming one was healthy simply because hypertension had never been diagnosed, stressing the importance of regular blood pressure monitoring.

She encouraged those who could afford it to have reliable blood pressure monitors at home, while advising others to visit health facilities periodically for checks.

How Nigeria can close revenue gap, channel \$6.25b into healthcare

By Ijeoma Nwanosike

NIGERIAN business management professional and diplomat, Adeyinka Asekun, has said Nigeria could generate up to \$6.25 billion yearly for healthcare by closing a quarter of its estimated revenue gap and investing the proceeds in the sector.

Asekun, a former Nigerian High Commissioner to Canada, said Nigeria had strong healthcare demand but lacked a system capable of turning it into dependable services and investable opportunities.

He said government could not achieve universal healthcare alone, stressing the need for increased public financing, private investment and stronger coordina-

tion among providers, insurers, manufacturers, pharmacies, technology firms, banks and investors.

According to him, Nigeria could draw lessons from the telecommunications revolution, where government created credible rules, licensed operators and built investor confidence rather than providing the infrastructure itself.

"Capital moves when rules are credible, demand is organised and payment is dependable," he said, identifying pharmaceutical manufacturing, diagnostics, primary healthcare, supply chains, facility power and digital health as major investment opportunities.

However, he said many opportunities remained concepts rather than investable projects because investors

lacked clarity on operating models, revenue sources, regulation, risks, returns and payment security.

Asekun said strengthening the healthcare market should begin with domestic resource mobilisation. Citing AfriCatalyst research, he said Nigeria forfeited between \$12.5 billion and \$25 billion in revenue annually, with the compliance gap larger than the policy gap.

He urged government to focus on collecting revenue already legally due, reducing leakages, simplifying compliance and strengthening digital administration, rather than imposing additional taxes on households already burdened by inflation.

2027: Okorie warns against violence in South-East

From Lawrence Njoku, Enugu

FFOUNDING National Chairman of the All Progressives Grand Alliance (APGA), Chekwas Okorie, has asked South-East governors not to allow the zone to slide into “a theatre of war” as a result of the quest for political power in the 2027 elections.

He called on the Chairman of the South-East Governors Forum (SEGF), Hope Uzodimma, to convene an emergency and extraordinary meeting of the forum to nip in the bud the rapidly deteriorating security situation in the region.

Okorie, who was reacting to reports of attacks on opposition party members in the region, said they would be held responsible should the region be turned into a war zone.

“No matter how the Federal Government of Nigeria may downplay the situation in the North, the painful truth is that wars are raging in the North-West and North-East sectors. Despite the assistance of the United States of America, the

Mbah orders probe into Enugu political violence

wars have not abated.

“Our current South-East governors will be held accountable if Igboland becomes another war zone. 56 years after the end of the fratricidal war in the former Eastern Region, the scars and destruction of that war are still festering and unaddressed,” he said.

Okorie lamented what he described as a “dangerous trend in a desperate struggle for political power through conquest instead of the ballot

box in line with the tenets of democracy and the laws of Nigeria in the build-up to the 2027 general elections in Igboland.”

MEANWHILE, the Enugu State Governor, Peter Mbah, has called for a thor-

ough and impartial police investigation into the recent violence at a political gathering in the state, assuring that anyone found responsible would face the law regardless of political affiliation.

Mbah, in an address to the people of Enugu State yesterday, expressed concern over

reports of violence, particularly a shooting incident that left a citizen injured.

The governor said his immediate concern was the welfare of those injured, residents who experienced fear during the incident, and families affected by the violence.

He assured the victims and affected residents that their safety and well-being remained a priority for his administration.



Deputy Inspector General of Police in charge of the Department of Logistics and Supply/ Coordinating DIG, South-East, Kenechukwu Onwuemeli (left); retired Deputy IGP, Frank Mba, and Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ambassador Bianca Odumegwu-Ojukwu, at the birthday celebration of Mba and the unveiling of his law firm, Frank Mba Legal, held at Frank Mba Legal office, Wuse 2, Abuja.

Okorocha denies arrest as Police probe alleged forgery, conspiracy

From Leo Sobechi, Abuja

THE Nigeria Police Force (NPF) said it has released former Imo State Governor, Rochas Okorocha, on administrative bail after interrogating him for about one hour over allegations of criminal conspiracy, forgery, and impersonation.

The Force Public Relations Officer, CSP Anietie Iniedu, who confirmed his release yesterday, explained that the former Senator representing Imo West Senatorial District was released on bail following brief questioning on Monday night but was directed to return to the Force Headquarters in Abuja yesterday for further interrogation as investigations into the alleged crimes continue.

Police operatives reportedly arrested the former governor on Monday night, October 12, 2026, at the REIZ Continental Hotel in the Central Business District of Abuja. The arrest was executed after Okorocha allegedly failed to honour voluntary invitations extended to him on several occasions by police authorities in connection with ongoing criminal investigations.

According to police sources, Okorocha was initially invited on September 2, 2026. However, the meeting was rescheduled to September 8, 2026, at the instance of his legal team.

The former governor subsequently failed to show up on the agreed date, prompting law enforcement officers to track him down at the Abuja hotel and enforce a court-ordered arrest.

BAECC wins as court strikes out Benin-Asaba expressway project suit

By Opeyemi Babalola

THE Federal High Court in Abuja has struck out a suit filed by the Society of Public Interest Lawyers in Nigeria (SPI-LAW) over the condition of the Benin-Asaba Expressway after the Benin-Asaba Expressway Concession Company Limited (BAECC) carried out remedial works.

Justice Inyang Ekwo struck out the suit, marked FHC/ABJ/CS/2171/2026, after SPI-LAW informed the court that the Concessionaire had commenced remedial works on the strategic highway and that the initial traffic congestion had

subsequently eased.

The Benin-Asaba Expressway Concession Company Limited (BAECC) rejected claims that it failed to carry out remedial works on the Benin-Asaba Expressway. Sources from the company maintained that it has continued palliative interventions on critical sections of the highway.

According to the Concessionaire, those measures reduced congestion and improved vehicular movement through some of the sections most affected by the congestion.

Following the ruling, BAECC

will continue with the ongoing construction work along the Benin-Asaba corridor.

At the proceedings, counsel to SPI-LAW, J. O. Aikpokpo-Martins, informed the court that the plaintiff had filed a notice of discontinuance dated October 12, 2026, in view of the development.

The plaintiff subsequently urged the court to strike out the suit, an application that was not opposed by counsel to the other parties, being the Attorney General of the Federation, the Minister of Works, and the Concessionaire.

The Attorney-General of the

Federation and the Minister of Works, listed as the second and third defendants, were represented by A. A. Raji. The legal team representing the Concessionaire was led by Wole Olanipekun.

SPI-LAW instituted the action on September 11, 2026, seeking judicial intervention over the condition of the expressway. Among the reliefs sought were the cancellation or termination of the expressway's concession agreement, an order directing the Federal Government to take appropriate control of the road, and urgent rehabilitation of damaged sections.

Shell to sell Nigerian gas distribution business to Vaaris

By Waliat Musa

SHELL Petroleum B.V. has agreed to sell its entire interest in Shell Nigeria Gas Group to Nigerian energy company, Vaaris Energy Limited, as the energy major continues to streamline its portfolio and concentrate investment on deepwater and integrated gas operations.

The transaction, which is sub-

ject to regulatory conditions and approvals, covers a domestic gas distribution business with more than 130 connected commercial and industrial customers across Ogun, Abia and Rivers states.

Established in 1998, Shell Nigeria Gas Limited operates about 170 kilometres of pipeline infrastructure supplying natural gas to industri-

al and commercial customers.

Shell's Country Chair in Nigeria, Elohor Aiboni, said the business had served customers in the country for more than 25 years.

“Shell Nigeria Gas has served industrial and commercial customers in Nigeria for more than 25 years, supported by the commitment and expertise of its people. We believe this

agreement provides a much stronger platform for the business' next chapter under new ownership. Shell continues to focus on strategic Deepwater and Integrated Gas positions in Nigeria,” Aiboni said.

The transaction includes Shell Nigeria Gas Holding B.V., established in 2019, which holds all but one of the shares in Shell Nigeria Gas Limited.

Fubara urges security operatives to resist undue influence, extols Disu

From Ann Godwin (Port Harcourt) and Lawrence Njoku (Enugu)

RIVERS State Governor, Rsiminalayi Fubara, has urged security operatives to remain impartial, resist undue influence and uphold professionalism in the discharge of their constitutional duties, citing the Inspector-General of Police (IGP), Olatunji Rilwan Disu, as a worthy example.

Fubara said Disu demonstrated professionalism, balance and commitment to duty

IGP lauds Mbah's commitment to public safety, security

while serving in Rivers State during a period of intense political crisis, urging other security personnel to emulate his conduct.

The governor stated this yesterday when the IGP paid a courtesy visit to the Government House, Port Harcourt. The IGP was in Port Harcourt for a book launch on the ‘Origins of Police in Nigeria.’

Fubara said he was particularly pleased to receive Disu in his

new capacity as the nation's police chief, recalling that he had served in Rivers State during one of its most difficult periods.

He urged security personnel to remain focused on their constitutional responsibilities, regardless of political pressures or other external influences.

MEANWHILE, the IGP, Disu, has commended Enugu State Governor, Peter Mbah, for his commitment to public

safety and security.

He lauded Mbah for sponsoring the refurbishment and repair of twelve operational vehicles, which were previously in deplorable condition, and for his continued efforts at improving security infrastructure in the state.

“This intervention represents a practical demonstration of visionary leadership, prudent resource utilisation and a genuine commitment to strengthening the operational capacity of the Nigeria Police Force, particularly in Enugu State.

College old boys invest in human capital development

From Owede Agbajileke, Abuja

SSECONDARY school students have been urged to build character, competence and discipline early, with stakeholders warning that leadership begins long before individuals assume positions of authority.

The call was made at the 2026 Future Leaders Conference organised by the Government College Ughelli Old Boys Association (GCUO-BA), Class of '88, which brought together students, educators, professionals and entrepreneurs to discuss leadership, artificial intelligence, financial literacy, substance abuse prevention and the future of work.

Held at the school hall, the conference featured 210 students and 42 teachers from 21 invited secondary schools, alongside students of Government College Ughelli and other participants.

Glowcheck boss secures grant for digital STI verification platform

THE Founder of Glowcheck, Ifeanyi Umezulike, has secured grant funding from Hatch to advance the United Kingdom (UK)-based sexual health verification platform and support its next phase of research, product development, and partner discovery.

The idea for Glowcheck began with a personal experience that exposed a wider problem around disclosure and trust. After seeing a close friend's lifelong Sexually Transmitted Infections (STI) diagnosis minimised by a partner, Ifeanyi began questioning why important sexual health conversations still rely heavily on verbal reassurance when so much of modern life can be verified digitally.

That question became the foundation for Glowcheck: a platform designed to help people keep a portable record of their sexual health testing, understand results more clearly and, where they choose, share verified information with a partner.

The model is intended to work with partnered clinics and laboratories to ensure results are reliable.

AHF-Nigeria urges Girls Act model adoption

A GROUP, AIDS Healthcare Foundation (AHF), has urged governments, women and adolescent girls to adopt the Girls Act model on HIV prevention and management to enable the next generation of Nigerian girls to grow up informed, independent, and free of HIV.

Citing the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), it noted that women have a higher infection record and face a roughly two-fold higher biological acquisition risk per unprotected heterosexual act due to larger mucosal surface area and longer exposure to seminal fluids, among others. Against the foregoing, it said the Girls Act - an AHF global, girl-led programme built on the principle of "For Girls, By Girls," aims to prevent HIV and STI transmission, support infected girls to stay on treatment, reduce unplanned pregnancies and keep girls in school.

Listing financial independence among the strongest protections against the poverty that exposes girls to HIV, AHF said it empowers the younger women by supporting girls who want to return to school.

It also trains others in life skills and helps them to set up, with those in Abuja and Benue learning tie-and-dye, bead-making, and tote-bag production, among others.

FG tasks youths on job creation

THE Federal Government has urged Nigerian youths to become job creators instead of seeing themselves only as applicants for government employment.

The Chairman, Federal Civil Service Commission (FCSC), Prof. Tunji Olaopa, made the call yesterday in Abuja in a commendation letter to the promoters of AFRIKARS Inc on the launch of the new company in the automobile sector of the economy.

Noting the federal government's efforts to open up opportunities in the public sector for the employed youths, Olaopa said, however, that it was imperative for youths to draw inspiration from the promoters of AFRIKARS as entrepreneurs. He stated that while an effective, professional and competent civil service requires qualified, committed and capable Nigerians for national development, the nation's population size and scale of economic aspirations make it imperative to broaden the understanding of employment, productivity and wealth creation.

Therefore, "our young people must increasingly see themselves not only as applicants for available jobs but also as potential creators of enterprises.

Falana urges govs to utilise N267b basic education funds

By Yetunde Ayobami Ojo

HUMAN rights lawyer, Femi Falana, SAN, has urged all the governors and the Minister of the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) to utilise the released N267 billion intervention funds and access over N65 billion in the available counterpart funding for basic education.

Falana, who is the chairman of the Alliance on Surviving Covid-19 and Beyond (ASCAB), said the funds should be used to ensure that Nigerian children have access to free, compulsory and universal basic education, in line with the law.

He spoke in reaction to a disclosure by the Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC) that about N267 billion in released intervention funds remained unutilised as of August, while states were yet to access over N65 billion in counterpart funding.

The Federal High Court had ruled on November 28, 2025, that the federal and 36 state governments and the FCT have a binding obligation to provide free, compulsory and universal basic education for every Nigerian child of primary and junior secondary school age.

Consequently, Falana urged

the authorities to fulfil their statutory obligations on the right of every Nigerian child to free and compulsory basic education, as guaranteed by the Free, Compulsory Universal Basic Education Act.

He also called on the fed-

eral government to provide at least one meal daily for schoolchildren to improve school enrolment and nutrition, in line with the National Social Investment Programme Agency Act.

Meanwhile, with political campaigns ongoing, the AS-

CAB chairman urged the mass media to challenge all registered political parties and their candidates to make public their programmes for implementing free and compulsory basic education and school feeding.

Falana further called for the removal of school-age children from the streets across the federation without further delay, using the country's enormous resources to ensure basic education for every child of school age.



Group Managing Director/Chief Executive Officer of the United Bank for Africa (UBA) Plc, Oliver Alawuba, signing the condolence register during his visit to the Nigerian Air Force (NAF) Headquarters in Abuja to commiserate with the service over the NAF 931 crash. Standing at his back is the Principal Staff Officer of the Mission, NAF, Group Capt. F. O. Olanrewaju.

Appeal Court quashes case against Saraki as abuse of process

By Yetunde Ayobami Ojo

IN a unanimous decision, the Court of Appeal has dismissed the Kwara State Government's criminal defamation and cyberbullying case against the former Senate President, Dr Bukola Saraki, declaring that the charge and the evidence produced disclosed no offence by the appellant.

In a judgment read by Justice Ridwan Abdullahi on behalf of himself and Justices Gabriel Kolawole and Abdu Dogo, the court held that Saraki's statement has nothing about which Governor

Abdulrahman Abdulrazaq complained could incite violence in any part of Kwara, or cause the breakdown of law and order.

The judges noted that all the evidence and witnesses' statements supplied in support of the charge did not disclose that Saraki's statement led to any breach of the peace in the state but merely showed that those who testified felt dissatisfied with the statement.

They further stressed that the Administration of Criminal Justice Act, the Penal Code Law of Kwara State, and the Cybercrime and Cyber-

bullying Law were not enacted for the purpose of protecting individuals against statements that they were uncomfortable with.

Also, the court held that, while a state attorney-general and that of the federation have wide powers to institute criminal cases, such powers cannot be exercised in a manner prejudicial and oppressive to any individual, or to violate the fundamental human rights of citizens.

Consequently, the judges ordered that the case instituted at the Kwara State High Court against Saraki over his allegation that Abdulrazaq

did not complete secondary education, and that his level of education was affecting his judgement, cannot be sustained.

Reacting to the judgement, Saraki said he has once again been vindicated that nobody can successfully muffle the voice of dissent, particularly when those in government fail in their responsibility to the people.

He insisted that if the need arises, he will reiterate his position on Abdulrazaq's level of education, adding that he would not keep quiet when issues of public interest deserve his comment.

Nigerian, Ugandan youth innovators power Abuja IDP camp, aid farmers

By Waliat Musa

NIGERIAN youth innovator and founder of LightEd, Stanley Anigbogu, has converted 600kg of discarded plastics into a solar-powered energy hub for internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Abuja.

The 2025 Commonwealth Young Person of the Year established the Lighthouse for Peace project at Durumi IDP camp, where 30 solar streetlights and 20 floodlights provide lighting, while the energy hub charges over 250 devices weekly.

The project transformed almost 30,000 discarded plastic bottles of about 600kg into a community energy hub, providing lighting for children to study after sunset

and creating opportunities for young volunteers to acquire green skills.

In Uganda, an entrepreneur and the 2026 Commonwealth Young Person of the Year, Shifra Ainomugisha, is also deploying solar technology and artificial intelligence (AI) to help farmers reduce post-harvest losses.

She is using solar-powered cold storage, irrigation and AI to help smallholder farmers preserve produce, improve productivity and increase their earnings.

Anigbogu serves on the 23-member International Taskforce shaping the 2026 Commonwealth Youth Forum, scheduled for November 2 to 4 in Antigua and Barbuda, alongside the Com-

monwealth Heads of Government Meeting.

Both are expected to share their experiences of developing solar-powered and AI-enabled solutions, with recommendations, at the forum.

Speaking on his initiative, Anigbogu, who founded LightEd in 2020, drawing from his childhood experience of unreliable electricity to develop solutions that address energy challenges in underserved communities, said he wants to "ensure that darkness never limits another child's ambition."

He also founded Artechubs Nigeria to address educational challenges through technology, as well as Re-

build Inc., a hardware research, development and engineering studio working to close Africa's infrastructure gap.

Similarly, Ainomugisha co-founded and leads Solafam Uganda Ltd - a women-led social enterprise that emerged from her experience on her family's tomato farm in western Uganda, where she witnessed produce spoil before reaching the market.

Solafam uses solar-powered cold rooms to preserve produce, solar irrigation systems to support farmers during dry spells and LYN AI, a WhatsApp-based adviser that guides planting, pest control, irrigation, harvesting and market decisions.

PCC resolves 716,688 of 1.28m complaints in two years

From Sodiql Omolaoye, Abuja

THE Public Complaints Commission (PCC) said it received 1,281,984 complaints since September 2024 and resolved 716,688 cases, leaving 562,296 cases pending, as its reforms target service improvement and curtailing maladministration across public institutions.

PCC Chief Commissioner, Bashir Abubakar, disclosed this to newsmen in Abuja yesterday while presenting an account of his stewardship since assuming office on September 24, 2024. He noted that complaint index statistics and data have surged in recent times.

Abubakar said the leadership of the National Assembly had charged them with repositioning the commission for more efficient performance and effective service delivery.

He listed the commission's administrative and operational reforms to include improvement in staff welfare, increased funding proposals, nationwide staff verification, capacity development.

Farotimi parts ways with Afenifere, leadership

By Kehinde Olatunji

POLITICAL activist and human rights lawyer, Dele Farotimi, said he has formally withdrawn from the Yoruba socio-political organisation, Afenifere, ending an association that began in 1998.

In a statement titled "My Exit from Afenifere," Farotimi declared yesterday that he has severed all ties with the organisation and its leadership, stressing that Afenifere's leadership would no longer represent his views.

Recalling that his association with the group began in 1998, when he served as the pioneer chairman of Binukonu, Farotimi described his involvement with Afenifere as an important part of his public engagement and contribution to the country's political and social aspirations.

Against this background, he expressed gratitude for the experiences, opportunities and the platform it provided him to contribute to collective aspirations.

However, he said he had decided to end the relationship, stressing that Afenifere's leadership would no longer represent his views.

2027 Africa Cup of Nations Qualifying Series

NFF: Super Eagles not considering relocating to Lagos for home games

By Christian Okpara

FOLLOWING the Super Eagles' disastrous outing in Bissau, where the team lost 0-3 to Guinea-Bissau in their second game of the 2027 Africa Cup of Nations qualifying series, the Nigeria Football Federation has started preparations to ensure that the team does not suffer such a fate again in the series.

The NFF is considering hosting the first leg of the tie in Uyo on November 11, while the return leg has been tentatively fixed for November 15 in Zanzibar.

But there have also been reports that the NFF is considering the newly renovated Teslim Balogun Stadium in Lagos, pending CAF's approval, for the Nigerian leg of the tie.

However, a top official of the NFF, who pleaded anonymity, told The Guardian yesterday that the federation is not in a hurry to take the Eagles to Lagos or any other venue for the qualifiers.

He said that taking the players away from Uyo now could be counter-productive as the team would be forced to adjust to any venue in a competitive game, "which could

Availability to determine choice of players for clash with Taifa Stars

backfire."

He said: "Lagos is under consideration, but Uyo remains the venue for our games. Before we take any match to Teslim Balogun Stadium, we must first of all sound out the players and know how they feel about that. After that, we may start with friendly games to feel the vibes from fans and test other parameters before taking any qualifier to Lagos.

"The players have been playing in Uyo for up to a decade, and it would be unwise for us to move them to Lagos just like that. Besides, Teslim Balogun Stadium is not yet ready to host any game. When Lagos State completes the work on the stadium, our inspectors will go to see it and advise the NFF on what to do.

"That would take some time, and the match is less than a month away."

The Godswill Akpabio Stadium hosted Nigeria's first match in a 2-2 draw against South Africa in an AFCON qualifier on November 19, 2014, and has since staged numerous important fixtures involving the national team.

However, the Super Eagles have also played

competitive home matches elsewhere, including in Lagos and Abuja, demonstrating that alternative venues remain possible.

The source said that the NFF and the Super Eagles' technical crew have started monitoring the players in Coach Eric Chelle's pool to decide who among them are available for the game before sending out invitations to the chosen ones.



Super Eagles

NBBF Crisis: Presidential candidates petition Tinubu over alleged election manipulation

From Ernest Nzor, Abuja

CONCERNED stakeholders and presidential candidates in the forthcoming Nigeria Basketball Federation (NBBF) elections, on Tuesday, petitioned President Bola Ahmed Tinubu over alleged grave irregularities and constitutional breaches in the electoral process for the 2026-2030 term.

In a petition dated 12th October, 2026, addressed to the President and copied to the President of the Senate, Sen-

ator Godswill Akpabio, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, Rt. Hon. Abbas Tajudeen, and the Secretary to the Government of the Federation, Senator George Akume, the stakeholders accused the outgoing President of the NBBF, Engr. Ahmadu Musa Kida, who is also the Chairman of NNPC Ltd, of compromising the process.

The petition was jointly signed by three presidential aspirants - Mr Igoche Mark, P r e s i d e n t i a l

Candidate/North Central Rep, Mr Olumide Oyediji, Presidential Candidate/NBBF Member/South West Rep, and Mr Ejike Ugboaja, Presidential Candidate/South East Rep.

According to the petitioners, they are deeply worried about the direction of the elections.

Helios Sports backs \$20 billion Africa's sports economy growth by 2035

By Christian Okpara

HELIOS Sports and Entertainment Group has backed the projection that Africa's sports economy will grow to \$35 billion by 2035, which it said Nigeria must be ready to benefit from.

The outfit affirms that Nigeria's sports economy is entering a period of increased commercial activity, with more than N50 billion in private-sector investment attracted into the sector in 2025 as growing global demand for African sports and entertainment converges with a young, digitally connected consumer base and an increasingly prominent pool of athletic talent.

In a document made available to The Guardian, the

outfit said: "Across Africa, the underlying opportunity is becoming increasingly significant. Africa's sports economy is projected to reach \$20 billion by 2035 (Simpson T, Calvey P: How Africa's Sporting Appetite Could Spark Economic Growth. 2024).

"From a modest growth of 2.8 per cent in 2023, the market is expected to more than double by 2028, making it one of the top three regions in the world, according to PwC's Global Sports Survey. At the same time, a growing youth population and rising demand for diverse sports and entertainment content are creating favourable conditions for long-term industry development in the region."

Infantino in fresh controversy over \$1.76m 'compensation' payment

FIFA President Gianni Infantino allegedly received an additional \$1.76 million in compensation in 2024 that was not publicly disclosed by football's world governing body, potentially violating its own statutes, The Times of London reported yesterday, as per aa.com.tr.

According to the British newspaper, Infantino received two separate salaries: one from FIFA in Switzerland, disclosed in its yearly report, and an-

other from FWC2026 US Inc., the company established to organise the 2026 World Cup. FIFA's 2024 yearly report listed Infantino's compensation at 4.274 million Swiss francs (\$5.13 million), while a filing with the U.S. Internal Revenue Service showed he received an additional \$1.76 million from the organising company that year.

FIFA's former governance committee chairman, Miguel Maduro, described the failure to disclose the payments as "a clear violation of FIFA's statutes" and called for an independent investigation.

Dangote Cement to host 2026 Unity Cup for inter-community peace

From Ernest Nzor, Abuja

DANGOTE Cement Plc, Obajana Plant, yesterday, disclosed that it is set to host the 2026 Unity Football Tournament, an inter-community sporting competition designed to promote peace, unity, mutual under

standing, healthy competition, youth development, and sustainable relationships among its host and catchment communities.

The inter-community sporting competition is designed to strengthen relationships among the participating communities while promoting healthy competition, social inclusion and sustainable community relations.

Group Head, Social Performance, Dangote Cement Plc, Mr Wakeel Olayiwola, disclosed this in a statement, describing the tournament as an important platform for deepening engagement between the company and its host communities through sports and youth participation.

UEFA Champions League

Luis Enrique targets record-equalling third straight title with PSG

• Maresca: 'City need the perfect game to overcome defending champions'

PARIS Saint-Germain coach Luis Enrique has set his sights on his team equalling Real Madrid's feat of three straight Champions League titles this season, reports espn.com.

Madrid accomplished that when it beat Liverpool in the final in 2018. Luis Enrique has guided PSG to back-to-back Champions League trophies and three Ligue 1 titles since taking the helm in July 2023.

"We've won it (Champions League) twice in a row, but that's no reason to stop," the Spanish coach said.

"We're built to play in the Champions League. We have an extra incentive: to try and achieve something that only Real Madrid has managed to do so far. It's a special goal."

PSG opened their European campaign with a 6-1 demolition of Slovan Bratislava last month. They play at Manchester City today and host Luis Enrique's former club Barcelona on Oct. 20, whom he guided to Champions League glory in

2015.

"These (Man City and Barcelona) are two teams that love winning the Champions League, who have already won it and who are among the favourites," Luis Enrique said. "There are six, seven or eight teams capable of winning this Champions League. We're one of them, but it'll be tough, and we're not the clear favourites."

Meanwhile, Man City Manager Enzo Maresca says City will need the perfect game to overcome PSG at the Etihad this night.

Today's latest UEFA Champions League clash at the Etihad promises to be one of the most eagerly awaited contests of the season to date. It pits Maresca's men - who have made a perfect start to the season - against Luis Enrique's back-to-back European champions.



PSG defeated Arsenal via penalties to win the UEFA Champions League last season.

Solution

M	A	K	A	R	F	I	L	S	D
A	A	A	A	A	L	O	L	A	U
R	O	R	A	B	I	R	A	M	T
W	M	I	R	A	M	A	C	E	
A	L	A	B	A	M	A	A	C	E
E	M	I	D	O					
N	T	A	J	A	L	I	N	G	O
E	L	E	A	I	G				
M	O	U	S	B	I	B	O		
B	K	I	N	R	G	D			
E	G	O	T	R	A	P	E	Z	E

Oluwafemi Adekoya



NFF:
Super Eagles
not considering
relocating to
Lagos for
home games

/31



Discount or subsidy, Nigerians need a breather

THE arguments for Nigeria's reforms are unending and justifiable, but necessity cannot become an excuse for endless pain. Nearly three and a half years after the removal of the petrol subsidy and the unification of the exchange-rate regime, millions of households are still paying the price for decisions taken in the name of fiscal discipline. The question out there is simply: when will the fiscal gains end everyday pain? With less than 100 days to the 2027 elections, Nigerians are still being asked to endure the pains for the "reform gains." Will these gains deliver a visible, predictable and inclusive relief system for ordinary Nigerians?

On Monday, a new report by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative (OPHI) showed that an additional 17.9 million Nigerians fell into multidimensional poverty between 2021 and 2024, the highest increase recorded by any country globally. "In absolute terms, the largest increase in the number of poor people is seen in Nigeria, where although poverty had decreased in the previous period (2018-2021), in the recent period (2021-2024), 17.9 million people became multidimensionally poor, followed by 5.3 million in Afghanistan," the report stated.

The findings place Nigeria among five countries that recorded increases in multidimensional poverty during their respective assessment periods, alongside Afghanistan, the Central African Republic, Guinea and Kyrgyzstan. Nigeria has no reason to be ranked among these countries. The development highlights the scale of Nigeria's poverty challenge, particularly as rising living costs, food insecurity and inadequate access to essential services continue to put pressure on households.

The debate over the recent petrol discount at NNPC Retail stations has reopened an old argument: should government offer a discount, restore a subsidy, or do neither? The more honest question is different. How does a government that has freed up substantial fiscal space protect citizens whose purchasing power has collapsed? A temporary pump discount, useful as it may be, is not a social policy. Nigeria needs a comprehensive cushioning framework—cash support, transport relief, food security, energy access and wage protection—designed before the next shock, not improvised after public anger becomes impossible to ignore.

The burden is real

Since May 2023, the removal of the petrol subsidy has transformed the cost of living. Petrol is not merely a fuel; in Nigeria, it is the lifeblood of transportation, food distribution, small businesses, generators, artisans and public services. When its price rises, the effect travels quickly from the filling station to the market, the classroom, the clinic and the family table. NBS-based reporting shows average petrol prices rising fivefold, from about N238 per litre in May 2023 to roughly N1,350 per litre in 2026.

The World Bank warned early that the reforms would be painful: the end of the petrol subsidy and the move to a market-reflective exchange rate increased retail petrol prices by an average of 163 per cent, while inflation reached 27.3 per cent year-on-year in October 2023. Those figures were not abstract statistics. They meant parents postponing medical care, traders reducing stock, workers spending more of their wages on transport, and families eating fewer, less nutritious meals. Today, many Nigerians have to make difficult choices about necessities.

The government argues that the reforms have raised revenue, stabilised the economy and created room for investment. Even if one accepts that



Coordinating Minister of the Economy, Taiwo Oyedele

macroeconomic argument, it does not answer the immediate question facing a civil servant, a commercial driver, a market woman or a pensioner: how do they survive until the promised gains reach them? An economy can record growth, higher reserves and improved revenue while its people grow poorer in real terms. That is precisely the political and moral danger Nigeria now faces.

Relief must be targeted, not blanket

The government is right to resist a return to the old blanket petrol subsidy. But rejecting a subsidy is not the same as rejecting relief. The current petrol discount, expected to be seen as a short-term stabiliser, is not a substitute for a credible social compact. One month will make no difference in the lives of many Nigerians already struggling to live.

The sparing discount is limited to NNPC Retail stations and has been extended until the end of October, while the government insists it is not a return to a universal subsidy. That limitation matters: a discount available only through selected stations, apps, or digital channels risks excluding rural dwellers, informal workers, and people without smartphones or reliable Internet access.

Relief must therefore be designed around access, not announcements. A household in a rural community should not need an app to eat. A commercial driver should not have to queue for hours to benefit from a policy meant to reduce transport costs. The government's own critics have made this point: access hurdles around the petrol discount have been raised by motorists, while civil-society groups have called for transparent cash transfers, transport support and lower food costs.

What a serious relief plan looks like

Nigeria needs a time-bound National Cost-of-Living Relief Programme, coordinated across federal and state governments, with clear eligibility criteria, public dashboards, and independent audits. It should include six practical components.

First, expand and regularise cash transfers. The government says targeted transfers have reached more than 10 million households, and an IMF assessment reportedly found that 9.2 million households were enrolled, against a target of 15 million, with beneficiaries receiving at most three payments of N25,000 since 2023. That is not enough. Payments must be frequent, predictable

and adjusted for inflation. A one-off N25,000 payment cannot offset years of rising transport, food and energy costs.

Second, protect low-income workers and small businesses. The new tax laws, which took effect in January 2026, include a zero VAT rate on essential goods, exemptions for small businesses earning under N100 million, and rent relief for eligible taxpayers. These measures can help, but their benefits must be communicated clearly and enforced in markets. Traders should not use tax reform as cover to raise prices. The government should publish a simple list of zero-rated essentials and monitor retail compliance. The FCCPC is overwhelmed by complaints about price gouging, but its intervention is limited by its own challenges (staff capacity and presence in all states).

Third, invest directly in affordable mass transportation. CNG buses, rail expansion and subsidised student and worker transport schemes would deliver relief every working day. The administration has highlighted CNG deployment as part of its cost-of-living response. But the latest data, as published by *The Guardian*, reveal less than 15 per cent penetration almost four years later.

Fourth, make food security a national emergency priority. Food inflation hits poor households hardest because they spend a large share of income on necessities. Fifth, support household energy. Petrol discounts help motorists, but many families depend on cooking gas, kerosene, electricity or solar alternatives.

Sixth, protect wages and pensions. Public-sector wage adjustments must keep pace with inflation, and states should not be left behind simply because they receive lower allocations (this has changed for States but not for their workers). Pensioners, who cannot easily return to work, deserve protection. The cost of healthcare in old age is a reality that cannot be ignored. Many pensioners can hardly survive on their pension or get medical care.

Other countries chose their citizens

Nigeria is not the first country to face a global cost-of-living shock. The difference is that many governments treated household protection as an

The choice before policymakers is not "discount or subsidy." It is between a relief system that reaches the vulnerable and a political strategy that merely manages anger until votes are counted. Nigerians have endured fuel-price shocks, naira depreciation, food inflation and rising rents. They have been asked to be patient while reforms mature. Patience, however, is not infinite—and it should never be the only social policy available to the poor.

urgent duty, not an afterthought. When energy prices surged after Russia invaded Ukraine, the United Kingdom introduced an Energy Price Guarantee that limited the unit price households paid for gas and electricity. A typical household was protected at around £2,500 per year, with an estimated saving of £1,000 annually; a separate £400 Energy Bill Support Scheme was applied automatically through electricity bills.

The policy was expensive, and its design was later debated, but it gave families certainty during a period of extreme uncertainty. The United Kingdom's support was also broad and automatic. Most households did not need to apply; the discount appeared directly on bills. That is an important lesson for Nigeria: relief works best when administrative barriers are low, and beneficiaries do not have to navigate opaque portals or patronage networks.

In 2023, the Government of Canada implemented a combination of direct household subsidies, anti-trust competition overhauls, and localised infrastructure investments to lower consumer costs and stabilise the food supply chain. Brazil offers another lesson. Its Bolsa Familia programme, one of the world's largest conditional cash-transfer schemes, was designed to provide immediate poverty alleviation and reduce hunger. During a later iteration, Auxílio Brasil, the minimum benefit was set at R\$400 per beneficiary family, and coverage rose sharply from 14.5 million families at the end of 2021 to 21 million in 2022. Brazil's experience shows that cash transfers can be scaled quickly when governments treat social protection as core economic infrastructure.

These examples do not suggest that Nigeria should blindly copy foreign policies. Britain and Canada are wealthier, and Brazil's fiscal context differs. But they demonstrate a principle: when citizens face an external or policy-induced shock, the state has a duty to deliberately, transparently, and at scale cushion them.

Elections should not distort relief

There is a legitimate worry that relief introduced close to elections could become political patronage. If citizens see relief only during campaign season, they will reasonably conclude that it is electoral inducement rather than economic justice. If, however, government builds a durable system now—one that continues regardless of political cycles—it will strengthen both social stability and democratic trust.

A breather, not a retreat

Nigeria does not need a return to the wasteful subsidy regime of the past. But it does need a breather from a reform process whose benefits remain too distant from the people bearing its costs. If the state can find resources to temporarily reduce pump prices, it can find resources to protect food, transport, health, and household incomes more systematically.

The choice before policymakers is not "discount or subsidy." It is between a relief system that reaches the vulnerable and a political strategy that merely manages anger until votes are counted. Nigerians have endured fuel-price shocks, naira depreciation, food inflation and rising rents. They have been asked to be patient while reforms mature. Patience, however, is not infinite—and it should never be the only social policy available to the poor.

A government confident in its reforms should be worried about an economy that stabilises on paper while ordinary people fall apart in real life. Nigeria's reforms will only be legitimate when the market woman, the teacher, the driver, the farmer and the pensioner can feel that the state sees their suffering—and acts.

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