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Guardian Nigeria GuardianNigeria 08136370421 Guardiannigeria N300



FG, NLC disagree over new minimum wage, June 2027 timeline

NEWS PAGE 7

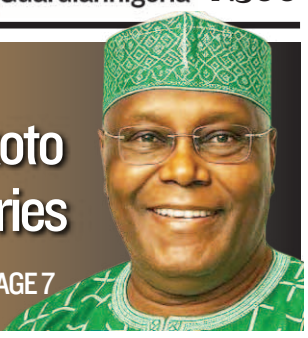


Hypertension, diabetes, cancer emerging Nigeria's greatest health challenges

NEWS PAGE 7

Atiku reopens 2012 Kabiru Sokoto arrest saga, queries Shettima

NEWS PAGE 7



How SIM recycling, systemic gaps expose Nigerians to cyber criminals

BIG STORY PAGES 4 & 5





Opposition challenges Tinubu to face voters as APC unveils campaign timetable

NEWS PAGE 6

FG, Soyinka decry non-compliance with court orders, interim reliefs abuse

NEWS PAGE 28



15 injured, several feared dead in Edo tanker explosion

METRO PAGE 8





Voter apathy: FG, Police, INEC assess threats, logistics plan

NEWS PAGE 6

Nigerians hopeful lower inflation reflects in household spending relief

BUSINESS PAGE 18

Panorama

www.guardian.ng Guardian Nigeria GuardianNigeria 08136370421 Guardiannigeria

Tinubu orders security chiefs to crush terrorist camps, rescue abductees

From **Terhemba Daka**, Abuja

PRESIDENT Bola Tinubu has directed security chiefs to intensify operations against terrorists and bandits, dismantle their camps across the country and rescue all Nigerians held in captivity, Minister of Defence, General Christopher Musa (retd.), has said.

Musa disclosed this at the State House, Abuja, after a meeting between the President and heads of security agencies, saying the directive underscored the administration's determination to confront insecurity and protect citizens from abductions, violence and other criminal activities.

He said the President had charged security agencies to ensure that no terrorist or bandit camp remained anywhere in Nigeria, while making the rescue of kidnapped and abducted persons a priority.

"The directive from the President is that all of us must go all out to fish out and rescue all those who have been abducted or kidnapped, wherever they are.

"There should not be any camp of terrorists or bandits anywhere in Nigeria," the minister said.

He disclosed that President Tinubu was expected to commission a new batch of military aircraft and helicopters, estimated at about 10, to enhance the operational capacity of the armed forces.

Social, political changes require collective action, says Osofisan

By **Olusegun Koiki**

PLAYWRIGHT and Professor of Theatre Arts, Femi Osofisan, has said that meaningful social and political changes in Nigeria require the collective action involving everyone, including the followers.

Osofisan who was a keynote lecturer at the 2026 Annual Reunion Public Lecture of the Government College Ibadan Old Boys' Association (GCIOBA), held in Lagos yesterday, challenged Nigerians to look beyond political systems and examine the character of those entrusted with power.

Speaking on the lecture titled: 'From the Nobel to the Thalia Prize: GCI and the Making of Modern African Theater,' declared that the country's leadership crisis was rooted in the people themselves.

The lecture preceded the association's main reunion scheduled for Saturday at Government College Ibadan, Oyo State.

Osofisan, a member of the school's 1959 set, said the end of military rule had failed to produce the leadership transformation many Nigerians had anticipated.

He said: "It is increasingly clear that the kind of people we are breeding on the continent, not just in Nigeria, are the problem. Not the system as well; it is the people themselves. What kind of people are we?

AUATON drivers suspend Lagos protest

By **Benjamin Alade**

THE Amalgamated Union of App-Based Transporters of Nigeria (AUATON), Lagos State Council, has called off its four-day industrial action by e-hailing drivers in Lagos, directing members to resume normal operations while urging them to uninstall the inDrive application.

The union's Lagos State Chairman, Jaiyesimi Azeez, popularly known as Makavelli, announced the suspension of the shutdown in a statement, describing the action as successful and thanking drivers for their solidarity.

He said the decision followed an assessment of the situation after four days of industrial action over concerns affecting drivers in the ride-hailing industry.

"Following our assessment of the situation, I hereby announce that the ongoing industrial action and shutdown are officially called off, effective immediately," Azeez said.

He directed drivers to resume their normal activities while remaining attentive to further communications from the union.

However, AUATON expressed disappointment with inDrive, alleging that the ride-hailing platform had not reached out to the union for meaningful engagement despite the industrial action and concerns raised by drivers.

The union said the alleged lack of engagement raised questions about the platform's willingness to address the grievances of drivers who provide its core services.

"Without drivers, there is no ride-hailing business. Our contributions deserve respect, dialogue and meaningful consideration," Azeez said.

... DAY 4555

OUR GIRLS STILL MISSING

Tope Templer Olaiya, News Editor

@TopeTempler



TODAY IN HISTORY

• World Food Day

• 2009 - USA
Pres. Barack Obama was awarded Nobel Peace Prize.

• 1984 - S'Africa
Bishop Desmond Tutu was awarded Nobel Peace Prize.

• 1978 - Poland
Cardinal Karol Wojtyła was elected to the papacy as Pope John Paul II, he became the first non-Italian pontiff since 1523 and served till his death in 2005 and was the third-longest-serving pope in history, after Pius IX and St. Peter.

• Wanda Rutkiewicz became the first person from Poland, and the first European woman, to climb to the top of Mount Everest.

• 1953 - Cuba
Cuban revolutionary Fidel Castro delivered his "History Will Absolve Me" speech, and was sentenced to 15 years' imprisonment by the Fulgencio Batista government for leading an attack on the Moncada Barracks. The speech later became the manifesto of his 26th of July Movement.

• 1923 - USA
Walt Disney and his brother, Roy, founded the Disney Brothers Cartoon Studio, today known as The Walt Disney Company.

• 1919 - Germany
Adolf Hitler delivered his first public address at a meeting of the German Workers' Party.

TODAY'S QUOTE

"Laughter is timeless. Imagination has no age. And dreams are forever.

The flower that blooms in adversity is the rarest and most beautiful of all.

WALT DISNEY

What is behind you is forgotten. You can't remember danger and difficulty when it is behind you.

WANDA RUTKIEWICZ

RANDOM FACTS

• Erotomania: A psychological disorder where a person thinks that somebody with a higher status (such as a celebrity) is in love with them.

• Laughing lowers stress hormones and strengthens immune system by releasing health-enhancing hormones.

• Didaskaleinophobia is the fear of going to school.

TheGuardian WEEKEND
Conscience, Nurtured by Truth
OCTOBER 17 - 18, 2026

SPECIAL FEATURE
Rising Poverty, Food Insecurity Push More Nigerians To The Brink



POLITICS
2027: APC Takes Tinubu's 'Victory' Dance **To El-Rufai's Political** Catacomb



INTERVIEW
Bola Matel-Okoh: Competence Open Doors, But Character, Credibility, Contact Determine How Far You Go



NEWSFEATURE



How OML 42's **Production Ambitions Test** Nigeria's Oil Revenue, Governance Prospects

SPOTLIGHT



The Long Wait Inside Nigeria's Cells... Why Authorised Judicial Officers Should Access Detention Facility Unhindered

WEEKENDBEATS



Audacious, Global, Unapologetic Sound Of **Yemi Alade**

IBRUCENTRE
Our Gracious Benefactor (1), By **Pastor W. F. Kumuyi**

Living For God Or Self, By **Pastor Lazarus Muoka**

The Cost And Crown Of Truth (1), By **The Venerable Stephen Wolemonwu**

Spouses Who Struggle To Apologise, By **Bishop Charles Ighele**



ARTS
Exploring Nuances Of Colours In Aderinsoye's *Voice In Pigment*

Navigating Life's Precarious Pathways In Chukwuonye's *Tranquility In Turbulence*

Mosadoluwa Explores Intersection Of Faith In New Show

Broadcast Content Across Borders

TALP X Returns With Stories Of Healing, Recovery In October Showcase

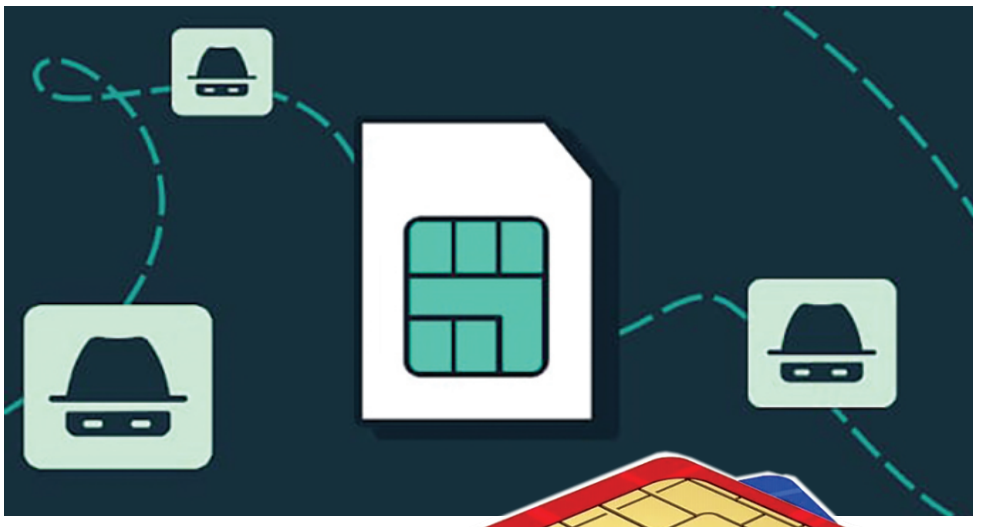


These and more in **The GuardianWeekend**. Grab your copy just for N500


Nine Months;
One Mission
What has the Armed Forces of Nigeria Delivered?
3,500 Civilians Rescued
1,773 Terrorists Neutralised
569 Terrorists Surrendered
Source: DHQ Directorate of Defense Media Operations (DDMO)
(January - September 2026 Military Operations)

How SIM recycling, systemic gaps expose

As mobile phone numbers become some of the most sensitive digital credentials Nigerians possess, the loss of over N12 billion to telecom-related fraud is a wake-up call to authorities, as the menace gradually erodes public trust in digital platforms and undermines identity systems. ***ADEYEMI ADEPETUN*** *reports that, with mobile numbers central to banking, identity verification and government services, criminals are ruthlessly exploiting this reliance to fleece millions of unsuspecting Nigerians, underscoring the need for strict enforcement of extant rules and regulations to curb Subscriber Identity Module (SIM) card infractions.*



IN April 2025, while observing the mandatory National Youth Service Corps programme in Akure, Ondo State, 24-year-old Mariam Titilayo Ibrahim bought a "new" Subscriber Identity Module (SIM) card.

Upon acquiring the Airtel SIM card from an authorised vendor, Ibrahim, as required by law, registered it using her National Identification Number (NIN). For six months, she used the line daily, unaware that the string of digits assigned to her carried a dark, hidden history.

On October 16, 2025, detectives from the Force Intelligence Department (FID), Abuja, tracked her to her location in Akure, where she was arrested. Her iPhone 12 Pro Max, an Itel mobile phone and her Wi-Fi router were seized.

During the investigation, Ibrahim was allegedly linked to a high-profile kidnapping and murder case that had occurred in January 2024, months before she purchased the SIM card.

The police revealed that the phone number now linked to Ibrahim's NIN was the same number used by a kidnapping syndicate to negotiate ransoms and coordinate the murder in January 2024.

Investigation, however, revealed that after a suspected criminal abandoned the SIM, it remained dormant for over 12 months. Following the Nigerian Communications Commission's (NCC) rules, Airtel deactivated the line and returned the number to the pool for reassignment.

Crucially, while the telco assigned the number to Ibrahim in 2025, the police tracking systems still had it flagged in connection with the 2024 crime. To the investigators' automated systems, the person currently holding the SIM was the person they had been hunting for nearly two years.

Ibrahim was forcibly moved to Abuja from Akure on November 20, 2025, to clear her name.

"They claimed the line was used for kidnapping, N50 million ransom was collected, and the victim eventually died. I told them I bought the SIM in April 2025, while the incident happened in January 2024," she stated.

"Even after records at the telco office confirmed that I bought the SIM card after it was put back in the market, the police still didn't believe me. They harassed me and almost sent me to prison for what I knew nothing about," Ibrahim lamented.

It took the intervention of her lawyer, assistance from activist Omoyele Sowore, and Airtel's eventual confirmation of the SIM's activation date for her to walk away free.

Nnenna Okorie (not her real name), who recently returned to the country from Dubai, where she was based, lamented how fraudsters drained over N3 million from her bank account after compromising her SIM card.

> "As of July 2026, Nigeria's telecoms sector had over 300 million connected lines, of which 195 million were active. However, as telecom operators routinely reassign old numbers to new users, some reassigned numbers retain links to financial services, social media accounts and government portals belonging to their previous owners. Fraudsters are exploiting this to impersonate previous users, resulting in identity theft and financial losses."

Her post, laden with grief and disbelief, highlighted the growing incidence of digital theft that has left countless Nigerians vulnerable, as SIM-swap fraud blossoms into a thriving racket, fuelled by weak safeguards within telecom networks and lax oversight in the banking sector. Fraudsters often collude with insiders at mobile service providers to gain unauthorised access to customers' phone numbers, which can then unlock bank accounts and confidential data.

Despite repeated warnings about the growing menace, regulatory agencies have struggled to enforce stricter controls, leaving ordinary citizens exposed to sophisticated schemes.

For victims like Okorie, the consequences of such incidents go beyond financial loss. The trauma of watching years of savings vanish in minutes is compounded by the slow, often indifferent response of institutions meant to protect them. Many are left battling depression, distrust and a sense of helplessness in a system that seems rigged against the average customer.

Okorie said: "They have taken my money, all my savings from 2022. I was supposed to have about N3 million in my Access Bank account, but when I came back from Dubai, UAE, to check, I couldn't find even N1,000. I was told my SIM card was given to someone else, and the person has been withdrawing N20,000 from the account since 2024."

She disclosed that when she took her case to the MTN office, she was informed that her SIM card had been resold because it had remained dormant, with no income-generating activity on the line for over a year.

Okorie was, however, lucky, as her cries attracted public sympathy and the attention of social media critic Martins Vincent Otse, popularly known as Very DarkMan (VDM). Earlier in September, it was learnt that while documentation was ongoing between VDM and Okorie, Access Bank returned the stolen money to her account.

Earlier, in 2020, a Delta State-based trader, Anthony Okolie, was detained by the Department of State Services (DSS) for 10 weeks. His offence was that he had innocently activated an MTN SIM card previously used by Hanan Buhari, daughter of the late former President Muhammadu Buhari.



Maida Adebayo

"I was labelled a criminal overnight," he told *Economic Confidential* in a 2025 retrospective.

The growing vulnerability of mobile numbers

ON the one hand, a mobile phone number is a unique sequence of digits assigned to a mobile phone or SIM card that enables the device to make calls, send text messages and connect to a mobile network. In reality, however, it does much more, especially as technology evolves rapidly. It serves as a digital identity, a gateway to banking and government services, and a key to everyday transactions. It has also become an important security tool.

As of July 2026, Nigeria's telecoms sector had over 300 million connected lines, of which 195 million were active. However, as telecom operators routinely reassign old numbers to new users, some reassigned numbers retain links to financial services, social media accounts and government portals belonging to their previous owners. Fraudsters are exploiting this to impersonate previous users, resulting in identity theft and financial losses.

Fraudulent SIM registrations also remain rampant. Using fake or stolen identities, criminals create digital personas that undermine Nigeria's national identification system and compromise the integrity of banking services. For victims, reclaiming stolen identities is often a long and difficult process.

The growing importance of mobile phone numbers can also be seen in the increasing range of attacks they face, from SIM-swap fraud and recycled numbers to fraudulent registrations. Increasingly, criminals are exploiting loopholes in telecoms and financial systems to siphon millions of naira from unsuspecting citizens.

Despite regulatory interventions, Nigerians continue to suffer devastating losses, while fraudsters "smile to the bank".

One of the most common forms of SIM-related fraud is SIM-swap fraud. Here, criminals trick telecoms staff or exploit weak verification processes to hijack victims' phone numbers. Once they successfully intercept one-time passwords (OTPs), they can gain access to bank accounts and drain available funds.

Another major menace is recycled numbers. This has become commonplace in Nigeria, as established earlier in this report.

Telecom fraud costs Nigeria N12.5 billion in four years

DESPITE investments, public enlightenment and various regulations aimed at curbing telecom-related fraud, the global community has suffered losses of over $38.95 billion in the last four years, confirming that the problem extends beyond Nigeria.

In Nigeria, data showed that telecom-related fraud cost the country N12.5 billion within the same period.

The figures were revealed by PwC, which cited the Nigerian Communications Commission for Nigeria's data. The firm called on telecom companies in Nigeria to invest in sophisticated anti-fraud tools that employ machine learning and artificial intelligence (AI) to enhance detection and response times, while conducting regular audits to ensure that their systems remain up-to-date and effective.

In a 16-page document on AI fraud in the telecoms sector, PwC noted the dual role of AI as both a threat and a shield, highlighting the need for Nigerian telecom operators to adopt the technology deliberately and strategically.



Some of the frauds listed by PwC include SIM-box fraud, SMS phishing, SIM-swap fraud, subscription fraud, scam calls and international revenue-share fraud.

According to PwC, the telecommunications industry faces diverse fraud threats, most of which are cyber-enabled. PwC's Global Crime Survey found that nearly two-thirds of technology, media and telecommunications companies had experienced fraud, the highest rate across all industries, with half of those incidents being cybercrimes.

The firm noted that the growing adoption of AI would likely reshape the fraud landscape, adding that its intersection with financial services amplifies the risks for telecom operators, which enable digital payments and banking partnerships.

Calling for a deeper understanding of how technological disruption is transforming fraud risks and how those risks may evolve, PwC said that in Nigeria, where 59 per cent of e-banking customers had fallen victim to scams, telecommunications providers could face mounting pressure as key infrastructure for digital financial services.

How SIM deactivation and recycling work

UNDER the Nigerian Communications Commission's Quality of Service Business Rules 2024, a prepaid mobile line that fails to generate revenue for a continuous period of six months must be deactivated. If the inactivity persists for another six months, bringing the total period of non-usage to 12 months, the line becomes eligible for recycling and subsequent reassignment to another user.

Revenue-Generating Events (RGEs) encompass various activities, including outgoing and incoming voice calls, SMS and MMS, mobile data usage and USSD transactions.

The NCC is currently consulting on a new proposal that would introduce a 12-month grace period, allowing subscribers to reclaim unused airtime or data from deactivated lines, provided they can furnish proof of ownership. The proposed rule seeks to balance consumer rights with the operational realities of telecom providers. It would also require telcos to audit all churned numbers and meticulously document any unclaimed and unutilised recharges, while explicitly stating that such credits cannot be monetised by operators.

While the NCC's proposed grace period for airtime reclamation represents a step towards greater consumer protection concerning telecom credit, it does not directly address the more serious financial fraud risks associated with recycled numbers linked to banking services. The proposal primarily focuses on the recovery of unused airtime or data. This could point to a regulatory

Nigerians to cyber criminals

gap or a phased approach in which the broader financial security implications of number recycling have yet to be fully integrated into telecom recycling policies.

Who owns a mobile number?

THE Nigerian Communications Act 2003 grants the NCC the authority to protect the rights and interests of both service providers and consumers in the telecommunications sector.

The SIM Card Registration Regulations 2022 define "subscriber" and "subscriber information" and provide for the establishment of a Central Database containing information on all registered subscribers. The database is explicitly designated as the property of the Government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, while licensees (MNOs) retain the right to utilise subscriber information on their networks.

Despite concerted efforts to enhance security and traceability through the mandatory linkage of National Identification Numbers to SIM cards, a dormant line remains eligible for recycling regardless of its NIN linkage status.

This situation reveals a fundamental gap in the management of digital identities across sectors. The government's ownership of the Central Database for SIM registration and the mandatory NIN-SIM linkage are intended to create a robust and traceable digital identity system, making effective coordination between the systems essential.

However, the fact that NIN linkage does not prevent SIM recycling, while MNOs are permitted to recycle numbers without explicit provisions for purging associated financial data, creates a significant disconnect. The system is designed to identify the current user of a number, but does not adequately ensure the complete dissociation of the previous user's digital footprint from a recycled number. Consequently, "ownership" of a number for telecommunications purposes does not automatically translate into secure management of the digital identity linked to sensitive financial services.

The Chairman of the Association of Licensed Telecom Operators of Nigeria (ALTON), Gbenga Adebayo, explained that mobile subscribers do not actually own the SIM cards they use, describing this as a global standard. He said operators bear both the procurement and recurring costs associated with every registered line.

According to him, telecom companies routinely recycle SIM cards to prevent number exhaustion and reduce the cost of producing and maintaining new ones. "SIM cards are reassigned to reduce dormant subscribers, as telcos are profit-oriented organisations," he stated.

How other countries manage SIM recycling

GLOBALLY, telephone numbers are finite public resources. To prevent telecom operators from holding on to numbers indefinitely, regulatory bodies enforce policies governing their reassignment.

In other countries, a SIM or mobile number with no revenue-generating activity, such as calls, texts or data usage, for a specified period may be classified as dormant. The period varies by jurisdiction, ranging from about 30 to 90 days in some cases in the United States and the United Kingdom, and extending to 180 to 360 days in some African countries.

A quarantine period may then apply. Once the dormancy period expires, regulators or telecom operators may require the number to be placed in "quarantine" for a specified cooling-off period, often ranging from 30 to 90 days. This is intended to reduce the risk of the previous user continuing to receive calls or messages and, where applicable, gives them a final opportunity to reclaim the number.

After the quarantine period, the number can be removed from the operator's active inventory and eventually reassigned to a new customer.

Why SIM fraudsters are still thriving

TELECOM expert Kehinde Aluko is of the view that, despite regulatory initiatives, fraudsters continue to thrive because of weak enforcement. He emphasised that telecom operators often fail to fully comply with regulations, leaving gaps for exploitation.

> "The growing importance of mobile phone numbers can also be seen in the increasing range of attacks they face, from SIM-swap fraud and recycled numbers to fraudulent registrations. Increasingly, criminals are exploiting loopholes in telecoms and financial systems to siphon millions of naira from unsuspecting citizens."

According to Aluko, a former NITEL staff member, the real issue is not when SIMs are recycled, but how they are recycled, stressing that it is the "how" that needs fixing.

He said that without coordinated delinking across telecom networks, financial institutions and digital platforms, a recycled number remains a gateway to legacy data.

In effect, Aluko said Nigeria risks simply delaying the problem rather than solving it. He stressed that, because of low consumer awareness, many Nigerians remain unaware of SIM-related risks, making them easy targets.

According to him, with mobile numbers central to banking, identity verification and government services, criminals are ruthlessly exploiting this reliance. He added that the impact of SIM infractions extends beyond financial losses, as it erodes trust in Nigeria's digital economy and undermines national development goals.

Sharing Aluko's views, the President of the National Association of Telecom Subscribers of Nigeria (NATCOMs), Deolu Ogunbanjo, placed more blame on MNOs and their agents, who, he said, often compromise SIM registration, with "some of them even using other people's photographs and passports for registrations."

According to him, subscribers also bear significant responsibility for the persistence of the problem because many prefer the convenience of roadside agents to the longer formal processes at accredited outlets with Central Equipment Identity Register (CEIR) facilities "to properly clear and authenticate a SIM," he stressed.

NCC, CBN step up fight against SIM fraud

WHILE the NCC is mandated to investigate and sanction regulatory breaches and violations of the terms of operators' licences, banks are required to identify unscrupulous staff who collude with fraudsters to perpetrate fraud and hand them over for prosecution.

Recognising the scale of the crisis, the NCC and the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) have stepped up efforts to combat SIM-related fraud and other identity risks.

In March this year, the NCC launched the Telecom Identity Risk Management System (TIRMS), a platform that allows banks, fintechs and regulators to verify SIM status in real time. It flags suspicious numbers, blocks fraudulent devices and helps prevent the misuse of churned or recycled SIMs.

The following month, April 2026, the NCC and the CBN signed a Memorandum of Understanding to strengthen coordination in responding to fraud. The pact introduced a Telecom Identity Risk Management portal and established joint committees on consumer protection and payment integrity.

The Executive Vice Chairman of the NCC, Dr Aminu Maida, warned that fraudulent SIM use is "eroding public trust in digital platforms and undermining identity systems painstakingly built over the years."

He emphasised that without decisive action, Nigeria's digital economy ambitions could be derailed.

The CBN Governor, Olayemi Cardoso, described the NCC-CBN pact as "a practical statement of national interest", stressing that collaboration is imperative to protect consumers and safeguard financial integrity.

Lawmakers seek 18-month wait before number reassignment

WORRIED by the litany of problems affecting Nigerians through this route, the House of Representatives has urged the NCC to extend the waiting period before inactive phone numbers are reassigned to new users to one year and six months (18 months).

The lawmakers said the move would strengthen compliance with the Data Protection Act 2023 and protect Nigerians from fraud, identity theft and wrongful criminal allegations linked to reassigned phone numbers.

The resolution followed the adoption of a motion sponsored by the member representing Orhionmwon/Uhunmwode Federal Constituency of Edo State, Billy Osawaru, during plenary.

Osawaru proposed that the additional six months should allow inactive numbers due for reassignment to be publicly announced in national newspapers and reported to the police once or twice a year.

He said the measure would improve transparency and make it easier to resolve criminal or fraudulent cases arising from the reassignment of phone numbers.

The House further observed that the NCC's Telecom Identity Risk Management Policy allows network operators to deactivate and recycle inactive numbers after a defined dormancy period, a policy operators defended as necessary for operational and financial sustainability.

Experts seek real-time safeguards for reassigned numbers

FOR the Chief Digital Officer of Lotus Bank, Akin Adegoke, reallocated SIMs must be de-linked from previous users to curb fraud, even as he maintains that the solution to the menace lies in coordination, rather than more customer warnings.

Banks and telcos, he said, should establish a secure, real-time notification system through which any SIM swap or number reassignment automatically triggers a status update to the linked bank.

Adegoke said that before authorising sensitive transactions, the bank should be able to confirm whether the SIM has recently been recycled. "If it has, the system can temporarily step up authentication or restrict high-risk activity. This does not require reinventing infrastructure. It requires agreed standards, shared responsibility and regulatory backing to make real-time information exchange mandatory rather than optional," he stated.

Further, he said: "If a SIM card is reassigned without the previous owner de-linking their Bank Verification Number (BVN), the bank's system should automatically treat that number as high-risk the moment its status changes. Digital banking cores can trigger a temporary freeze on high-value Unstructured Supplementary Service Data (USSD) transfers, block profile changes, and require stronger re-verification before any sensitive transaction is approved. This should be automatic, not customer-driven. Once a SIM tenure is reset or a swap is detected, risk controls must activate immediately to protect the account until identity is properly confirmed."


Cardosso

From his perspective, fintech specialist Goke Adekanmbi said that to curb the losses, Nigeria must evolve its digital public infrastructure (DPI) from a collection of static databases into a network of interoperable systems.

He said the "handshake" must become mandatory and instantaneous. According to him, the moment a SIM swap is initiated, a DPI-enabled signal should automatically trigger a 24-hour "Financial Deep Freeze" on that number across all Nigerian banks.

Adekanmbi said that, instead of a telco agent simply looking at a NIN slip, the swap should require a real-time biometric match against the user's BVN record. He said if the fingerprints did not match the bank's record, the swap should be denied.

"Banks should be required to query the NCC registry before processing any USSD transaction above a certain threshold (e.g., N50,000) to ensure the SIM hasn't been swapped in the last 48 hours … Also, before any SIM is reassigned, telecom operators should be required to trigger a system-wide delinking process, cutting off the number from banking systems, government databases, and digital services," he stated.

On his part, Chief Corporate Services and Sustainability Officer of MTN Nigeria, Tobechukwu Okigbo, said the risk inherent in slipshod SIM card management extends beyond telecommunications. Operators, he said, have zero tolerance for non-compliance and work only with NCC-licensed entities, stressing that numbers are federally owned and recycled in line with guidelines.

According to him, the convergence of telecommunications and financial services has transformed phone numbers into some of the most sensitive digital credentials Nigerians possess. "The phone number has effectively become part of the password," he said.

Okigbo admitted that one of the biggest vulnerabilities lies in what happens after phone numbers are recycled.

He explained that although telecom operators may legitimately reassign inactive numbers, many banks, fintech companies, merchant platforms and online services continue to retain the previous owner's phone number in their systems.

"Even if the original user changes their number, not all systems update instantly. Some banking records, fintech profiles and merchant services may still hold the old number," he said.

He therefore advocated stronger collaboration between telecom operators and financial institutions so that whenever numbers are recycled, financial institutions receive immediate notifications and can automatically de-link old accounts before fraud occurs.


Ogunbanjo
Adegoke
Emoekpere

Opposition challenges Tinubu to face voters as APC unveils campaign timetable

From **Leo Sobechi, John Akubo** (Abuja), **Joy Dennis** (Yola) and **Rotimi Agboluaje** (Ibadan)

- Adebayo accuses Tinubu of avoiding voters over performance fears
- Obi group says surrogates can't replace presidential accountability
- Makinde/Daura group urges Tinubu to campaign nationwide or quit race
- APC unveils nationwide rally timetable, Tinubu to lead in 12 states
- Supporters rally in Yola as campaign group touts Tinubu's northern backing
- APC accuses Makinde of insulting 32 govs over campaign council
- Party vows to deliver S'West for Tinubu in 2027

PRESIDENT Bola Tinubu's participation in the 2027 presidential campaign has become a point of political contention, with opposition figures challenging him to defend his administration's record before voters, while the All Progressives Congress (APC) has unveiled a nationwide rally schedule that includes appearances by the President in several states.

The Social Democratic Party's presidential candidate, Adewole Adebayo, the Peter Obi Media Reach and the Makinde/Daura Presidential Campaign Organisation have questioned reports that Tinubu may limit his participation in the nationwide campaign, arguing that he should personally account for his policies and performance rather than rely on political allies.

The APC, however, has pressed ahead with preparations for the re-election campaign, releasing a timetable covering the 36 states and the Federal Capital Territory, while supporters staged a rally in Yola, Adamawa State, to demonstrate backing for the President.

Adebayo accused Tinubu of avoiding the 2027 campaign trail out of fear of public anger over his administration's performance.

In an exclusive interview with *The Guardian*, he argued that Tinubu's decision to limit his involvement in the re-election campaign was an attempt to avoid confronting Nigerians over unmet expectations.

He said the President might have reviewed his performance in the past three years and realised that he had fallen short of the expectations of ordinary Nigerians, particularly those who credited him with transforming Lagos State into a centre of excellence.

Tinubu had explained, while inaugurating the revised Presidential Campaign Committee and the APC Presidential Campaign Council, that pressing governance responsibilities might prevent him from participating in the nationwide campaign trail.

In August, the Chairman of the Progressive Governors Forum, Hope Uzodimma, said Tinubu did not necessarily need to campaign, arguing that his achievements and reforms would speak for him.

However, Adebayo dismissed that position, recalling a statement by the late Tony Momoh, an APC founding member, who urged Nigerians to hold the party's leaders accountable if they failed to deliver on their manifesto.

The SDP candidate argued that Tinubu was staying away from campaign activities because he feared public backlash rather than because his administration had a record of achievements to showcase.

"All I can tell you is that Tinubu is unqualified to campaign, because the person who has written a bounced cheque cannot write another one again. Dud cheque," he said.

He added: "You can only write a dud cheque once. You write a cheque and bounce it; the next person you give a cheque to will say, sorry, go and clear the one you wrote before."

Referring to Momoh's remarks, Adebayo also recalled Tinubu's reported pledge on electricity supply, saying the President had challenged Nigerians not to vote for him again if he failed to provide electricity for a year.



Representative of the Inspector General of Police, Abayomi Shogunle (left); INEC Chairman, Prof. Joash Amupitan and INEC National Commissioner/ Chairman, Election Logistics Committee (E-LOC), Rear Admiral Jamila Abubakar-Sadiq (rtd.) during the opening ceremony of the inaugural meeting of the Election Logistics Committee in Abuja, yesterday. PHOTO: LUCY LADIDI ATEKO

Obi group challenges Tinubu to defend record ahead of polls

THE Peter Obi Media Reach (POMR) challenged Tinubu to personally defend his administration's record ahead of the 2027 presidential election, insisting that political surrogates cannot replace accountability.

In a statement yesterday, POMR spokesman, Idris Zekeri Jnr, argued that the President could not delegate the responsibility of defending his policies while expecting Nigerians to renew his mandate.

"You cannot govern by proxy, campaign through surrogates, and expect votes from Nigerians," the group said.

POMR acknowledged that party chieftains and political allies could campaign for Tinubu but maintained that they could not answer for the consequences of his administration's decisions.

"Surrogates can speak for the President, but they cannot answer for his failures. They can repeat his promises, but they cannot make those promises a reality," the statement said.

The group challenged Tinubu to explain how his economic policies had improved the lives of Nigerians grappling with the rising costs of food, transportation, electricity, housing and other essentials.

"If the economy is improving, let him explain how that improvement is reflected in the cost of food, transportation, electricity, housing, and necessities," it said.

POMR added that if the administration believed its policies were working, the President should personally explain their benefits to citizens seeking answers to persistent economic hardship.

It accused the administration of risking a campaign in which political allies would promote its achievements without the President directly addressing questions about his performance.

The group insisted that Nigerians were being asked to assess Tinubu's leadership, policies and promises rather than those of the political figures campaigning on his behalf.

"Nigerians are not being asked to elect your surrogates. They are being asked to assess you, your policies, your promises, and your performance," the statement added.

POMR maintained that a president seeking re-election must be prepared to face voters and defend his record, regardless of the demands of the campaign.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 27

Voter apathy: FG, Police, INEC assess threats, logistics plan

From **Terhemba Daka, Sodiq Omolaoye** and **Johnson Eyiangho** (Abuja)

- Musa: Come out, vote for whoever you want
- Ariwoola urges early response to threats
- INEC targets difficult terrain, security hotspots in election logistics plan
- Amupitan: INEC has completed 10 of 14 activities for 2027 polls

WITH 90 days to go, the Nigeria Police Force (NPF) has commenced security assessments and threat analysis to identify potential flashpoints and emerging threats ahead of the 2027 general elections, as part of efforts to prevent electoral violence and reduce political tensions. The Force said the ongoing exercise would help determine areas requiring additional personnel and operational attention before, during and after the polls.

Deputy Inspector-General of Police in charge of Operations, DIG Shehu Nadada, disclosed this on Thursday when the Savannah Centre for Diplomacy, Democracy and Development's Council of the Wise paid a courtesy visit to the police leadership in Abuja.

Nadada, who was represented by the Assistant Inspector-General of Police in charge of Counter-Terrorism Operations at the Force Headquarters, AIG Ako Gabriel, said the police were implementing measures to strengthen election security, including personnel training, threat assessment and engagement with political actors and other stakeholders.

Earlier, Chairman of the Council of the Wise and former Chief Justice of Nigeria, Justice Olukayode Ariwoola, urged the police to strengthen its early warning systems and response mechanisms to prevent electoral violence.

Ariwoola, who was represented by a council member, Shuaibu Oba AbdulRaheem, said the police should monitor candidates' utterances during campaigns at all levels and promptly caution those making inflammatory statements capable of inciting violence.

He urged the Inspector-General of Police to ensure adequate deployment of personnel to protect voters, polling centres, electoral materials and INEC officials. The council chairman stressed that police officers deployed for election duties must remain neutral and professional throughout the electoral process.

Ariwoola said the council was concerned about the violence that had characterised some previous elections, recalling that the 2011 general elections were followed by killings and destruction of property, particularly in northern Nigeria.

AS the campaigns get heated three months to the election, the Minister of Defence, General Christopher Musa (retd.), has assured Nigerians of safety and the neutrality of the nation's security agencies in the forthcoming 2027 general elections.

Musa, who stated this while addressing journalists shortly after a meeting with President Bola Tinubu at the State House in Abuja on Thursday, also said that the President would soon inaugurate a set of new aircraft to show Nigerians that the issue of security is on the front burner.

He explained that the meeting with the President was to brief him on the security situation within the country in view of the coming elections. Musa, who was accompanied by heads of security agencies, said that Tinubu made it very clear he wanted free, fair, and credible elections.

"We are determined to ensure that we provide safety and security for all Nigerians. Everyone should come out and vote, vote for whoever they want." He assured voters that they will not be intimidated.

The presidential and National Assembly elections are scheduled to be held on January 16, while the governorship and House of Assembly elections will be conducted on February 6.

He assured political parties, particularly those in the opposition, that security personnel would remain professional and politically neutral in the discharge of their duties. "Nobody is going to intimidate them for whatever reasons. We are all professionals, and we are fully committed," he said.

The assurance comes amid continuing concerns over insecurity in several parts of the country and the need to prevent violence and criminal activities from undermining preparations for the 2027 general elections.

MEANWHILE, INEC has commenced moves to address logistical challenges in difficult terrain and security-threatened areas ahead of the 2027 general elections. With plans to strengthen the transportation and security of election materials across the country, the commission on Thursday inaugurated a logistics committee to develop strategies for the safe and timely movement of sensitive and non-sensitive election materials through road, air and maritime channels.

The commission appointed National Commissioner, Retired Rear Admiral Jamila Abubakar-Sadiq, as chairperson of the committee. INEC Chairman, Amupitan, who inaugurated the committee in Abuja, said effective logistics was critical to the success of elections, stressing that essential materials must reach polling units at the appointed time.

He said the committee would adopt a multi-agency approach, bringing together military and paramilitary institutions, security agencies and transport organisations to improve coordination and operational efficiency.

Amupitan said the committee's responsibilities included assessing the logistical requirements for the 2027 elections, developing plans for the storage, distribution, deployment and retrieval of election materials, and auditing the readiness of warehouses, vehicles, airports, seaports and other transport facilities. The committee is also expected to identify logistical gaps, monitor compliance with approved schedules and develop strategies to address trans-

CONTINUED ON PAGE 27

News

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FG, NLC disagree over new minimum wage, June 2027 timeline

By **Gloria Nwafor**

- Labour demands immediate negotiations, petrol price cuts
- Govt insists early review violates three-year wage cycle

THE Federal Government and the Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC) have clashed over the timing of negotiations for a new national minimum wage, with labour demanding the immediate commencement of the process and economic relief for workers, while the government insists that a review before June 2027 would be premature and inconsistent with the law.

The disagreement centres on the interpretation of the National Minimum Wage Act, 2019, as amended in 2024, and the worsening cost-of-living crisis, which the NLC said eroded the purchasing power of workers earning the N70,000 minimum wage.

While the government maintains that the existing wage is due for review on June 1, 2027, the congress argues that preparations for negotiations should begin immediately to allow sufficient time for discussions and prevent delays in implementing a new wage.

In a letter dated October 13, 2026, addressed to the Minister of Labour and Employment, Muhammad Dingyadi, and signed by its president, Joe Ajaero, NLC demanded the immediate commencement of the renegotiation process, including the call for nominations and inauguration of a tripartite committee.

The congress said, statutorily, negotiations should commence by October 17, 2026.

The demand followed the minister's letter of October 12, 2026, rejecting labour's call for an early review and arguing that commencing negotiations barely two years into the implementation of the present wage would be premature, inconsistent with the law and disruptive to the industrial relations system.

The October 12 letter by the NLC to the minister was the communiqué of its recent National Executive Council (NEC), where it made its demands to the Federal Government on the plight of Nigerian workers and the need for the government to take action.

Responding, the minister said the National Minimum Wage Act provided for a review every three years, adding that the N70,000 minimum wage would become due for review on June 1, 2027.

He noted that President Bola Tinubu assented to the present wage on July 29, 2024, following negotiations involving the Federal Government, organised labour and the organised private sector, resulting in an increase of more than 133 per cent from the previous N30,000.

The government also cited efforts to secure compliance with the existing wage by state governments and private employers, alongside interventions under the Presidential Compressed Natural Gas Initiative, food security measures and other social support programmes, as part of measures to address workers' economic difficulties.

Read the remaining story on www.guardian.ng

Hypertension, diabetes, cancer emerging Nigeria's greatest health challenges

FG renovates 3,526 PHCs, trains 78,000 health workers

From **Nkechi Onyedika-Ugoeze**, Abuja

MINISTER of Health and Social Welfare, Prof. Muhammad Ali Pate, has warned that non-communicable diseases (NCDs), including hypertension, diabetes, cancer and stroke, are becoming Nigeria's fastest-growing health challenges, and has urged state governments to increase investment in healthcare to strengthen the country's capacity to respond.

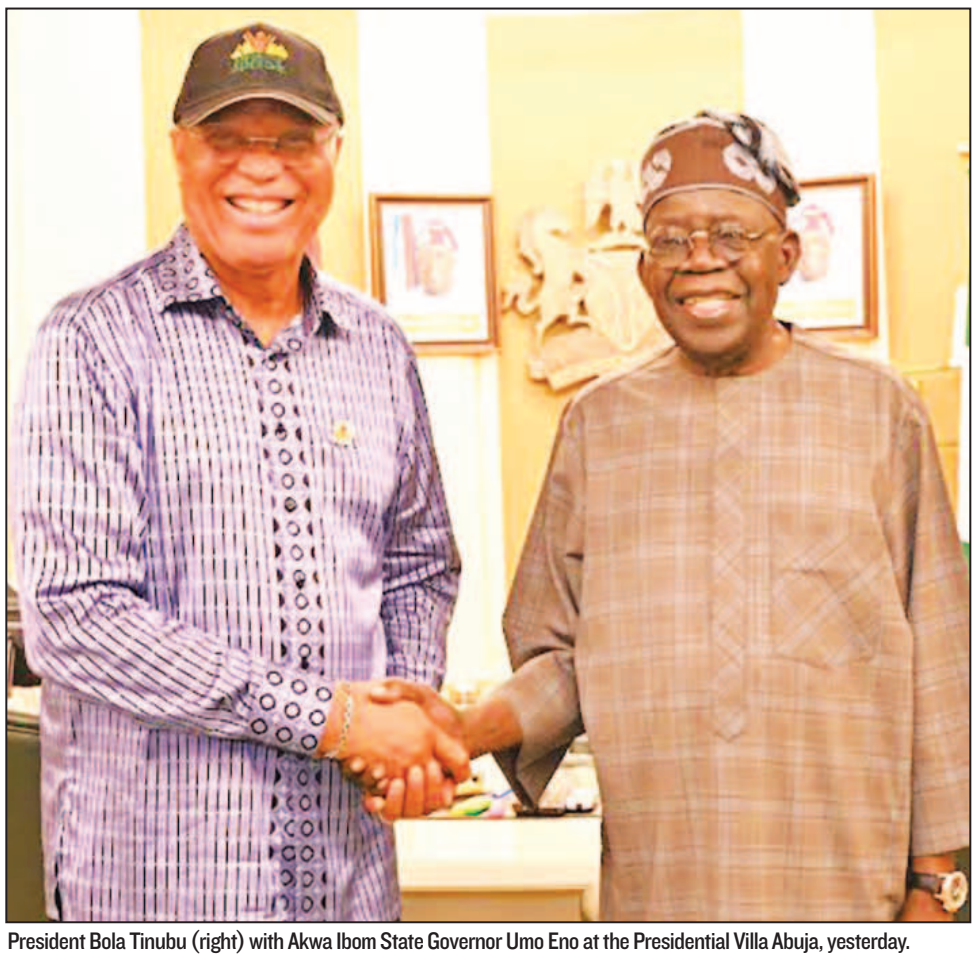
This was as the Federal Government renovated and commissioned 3,526 primary healthcare centres (PHCs) across the country, while work is nearing completion on an additional 91 facilities, as part of efforts to expand access to quality and affordable healthcare for Nigerians.

Pate, who spoke at the unveiling of the two-volume publication, *A Review of Non-Communicable Diseases in Nigeria*, produced by the Health Sector Reform Foundation of Nigeria (HERFON), said the country's health system must urgently prepare for a growing burden of chronic diseases as life expectancy improves and the population ages.

He acknowledged progress in tackling infectious diseases, maternal and child mortality, but cautioned that NCDs were emerging as a major public health concern requiring sustained funding, improved diagnosis, affordable treatment and coordinated action across all levels of government.

According to him, while malaria, tuberculosis (TB), human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) and maternal health challenges remain important, the growing prevalence of chronic illnesses presents a different set of demands because many affected patients require lifelong medical care.

Read the remaining story on www.guardian.ng



President Bola Tinubu (right) with Akwa Ibom State Governor Umo Eno at the Presidential Villa Abuja, yesterday.

Tinubu urges greater investment in rural women farmers

Don advocates 30% budget for agriculture in states, LGs

From **Terhemba Daka** (Abuja) and **Innocent Anoruo** (Lagos)

WIFE of the President, Oluremi Tinubu, has called for increased investment in rural women, urging stakeholders to expand their access to land, finance, modern agricultural tools, training and markets to strengthen food security and accelerate economic growth.

Similarly, to enhance food production in the country, agricultural economist Prof. Philips Nto advocated increasing the budgetary allocation for agriculture in states and local councils to 30 per cent.

Mrs Tinubu made the call in a message to commemorate the 2026 International Day of Rural Women (IDRW), in which she celebrated the resilience, dedication and contributions of rural women to agriculture, food production, household welfare and community development.

She noted that this year's observance was particularly significant as it coincided with the International Year of the Woman Farmer (IYWF), providing an opportunity to draw greater attention to the critical role women play in sustaining food systems, strengthening rural economies and supporting national development.

According to her, rural women remain indispensable to agricultural productivity and food security, contributing significantly to farming, food processing, preservation, distribution and other activities that sustain livelihoods across communities.

Despite their contributions, many continue to face barriers to accessing productive resources, including land, credit facilities, modern farming equipment, extension services, and profitable markets.

The First Lady stressed the need to address these challenges through deliberate investments and policies that would enable rural women to improve their productivity, expand their businesses and derive greater economic benefits from their labour.

Read the remaining story on www.guardian.ng

Atiku reopens 2012 Kabiru Sokoto arrest saga, queries Shettima

From **Nnamdi Akpa**, Abakaliki

- Launches portal for Nigerians to scrutinise record, 2027 plans
- Group tasks EFCC on impartial probe of Atiku's alleged financial misconduct

THE 2012 arrest of convicted Boko Haram member, Kabiru Sokoto, at the Borno State Governor's Lodge in Abuja has been exhumed by the political camp of African Democratic Congress (ADC) presidential candidate, former Vice President Atiku Abubakar.

Expecting a backlash from his political enemies, the camp also launched a new online platform through which Nigerians can question its principal's public service record, challenge his policies and seek clarification on his plans for the country ahead of the 2027 general election.

However, a group, Ndigbo for Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu 2027 Forum (NDI-ABAT), yesterday, backed the review of corruption allegations against Atiku, urging the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) to conduct a thorough, impartial and transparent investigation into allegations of financial misconduct.

Paul Ibe, media aide to Atiku, raised the Sokoto issue yesterday, a day after VP Shettima criticised Atiku during the inauguration of the All Progressives Congress (APC) Presidential Campaign Council (PCC) in Abuja.

Shettima had taken a swipe at Atiku over his repeated attempts to become president and his references to President Bola Tinubu by his first name.

In response, Ibe drew attention to an incident from Shettima's time as governor of Borno State, questioning how a man later convicted over the deadly 2011 Christmas Day bombing in Madalla gained access to the governor's official residence.

In his post on *X*, Ibe wrote: "Shettima cannot escape questions about an extraordinary incident that occurred while he governed Borno between 2011 and 2019."

Sokoto was arrested at the Borno Governor's Lodge in Asokoro, Abuja, in January 2012, following investigations into the bombing of St. Theresa's Catholic Church in Madalla, Niger State, on December 25, 2011. The attack killed at least 37 people and injured dozens of others. Sokoto was convicted over the bombing in December 2013 and sentenced to life.

Highlighting the circumstances of the arrest, Ibe wrote: "Read that again. A man subsequently convicted for his involvement in one of Nigeria's most horrifying terrorist attacks was arrested at the official lodge of the governor of the state that was the epicentre of Boko Haram's bloody insurgency."

The Borno government denied knowing that Sokoto was at the lodge, describing his presence as a serious security breach.

However, Ibe argued that the explanation did not remove the need for further questions about how the incident happened and what followed.

"An official denial does not eliminate the legitimate questions arising from such an extraordinary incident," he wrote.

Addressing the VP directly, Ibe added: "Mr Vice President, public office does not confer immunity from difficult questions."

THE portal, called 'Ask AA', was scheduled to go live at 8:30 p.m. on October 15, 2026, according to a statement by the ADC PCC.

The platform will allow citizens to ask questions on the economy, security, technology, job creation and measures to reduce the cost of living.

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15 injured, several feared dead in Edo tanker explosion

From **Joseph Kanjo**, Benin

AT least 15 people have reportedly sustained burn injuries, while an unknown number are feared dead following a fuel tanker explosion along the Benin-Lagos Expressway near Oluku, Benin City, Edo State.

The number of fatalities had yet to be officially confirmed as firefighters battled the blaze and emergency personnel attended to the injured.

A source said some bodies had been deposited at the mortuary of the University of Benin Teaching Hospital (UBTH), where the injured were also receiving treatment.

The explosion occurred at about 1:00 p.m., hours after the tanker reportedly fell at about 7:45 a.m., attracting residents who rushed to scoop fuel from the fallen vehicle.

The fire engulfed nearby shops, vehicles and parts of the surrounding area, forcing people to flee for safety.

At least 15 people who sustained burn injuries, including pregnant women and a military officer reportedly involved in rescue efforts, were rushed to UBTH for emergency treatment.

One eyewitness recounted how she narrowly escaped the explosion. The woman, who admitted that she had joined others in scooping fuel from the tanker, said she left the scene shortly before the explosion after a soldier warned her of the danger.

"I was also among those scooping the fuel. I escaped by a whisker. It was a soldier who called me and drew my attention to the fact that it was sunny and that the way people rushed to scoop the fuel could lead to a fire.

"As I looked back after he spoke to me, the tanker burst into flames, and people around the area ran for their lives. I thank the soldier; otherwise, I would have been burnt by now," she said.

She added that two men from northern Nigeria who were directly beneath the tanker suffered severe burns, while the fire also consumed shops built along a drainage channel.

Some motorists reportedly drove against traffic amid the confusion, worsening the chaos as people scrambled to escape. The extent of the damage to property had yet to be established.

The cause of the explosion was also unknown as of the time of filing this report. Although some eyewitnesses speculated that the hot weather might have contributed to the incident, there was no official confirmation of what triggered the fire.

At UBTH, medical personnel worked to stabilise the injured.



Scene of the incident.

Police arrest four over barber shop killing, corpse mutilation in Osun

From **Timothy Agbor** and **Oluwole Ige**, Osogbo

THE Osun State Police Command has arrested four suspects in two separate cases involving the alleged killing of a man at a barbing salon in Ikire and the exhumation and mutilation of a young woman's corpse in Iwo.

In the Ikire incident, three suspects were arrested over the alleged murder of Seun Ajayi, who was reportedly attacked and macheted to death while having his hair cut at a salon in the Oja-Ale area of the town.

The suspects were identified as Nurudeen Ademakinwa, 30, also known as Igboya Ayenuru; Agboluaje Usman, 23; and Awoniran Toheeb, 20.

The police spokesperson, DSP Abiodun Ojelabi, disclosed this in a statement, saying the incident occurred on October 3, 2026.

One of the suspects

According to the statement, the complainant reported at the Ikire Divisional Police Headquarters at about 7.30 p.m. that he and Ajayi were at the salon at about 6:00p.m. when a group of hoodlums, allegedly led by Ademakinwa, attacked them with dangerous weapons.

While Ajayi was allegedly macheted to death, his friend managed to escape.

The police said an intelligence-led operation led to the arrest of the three suspects on October 5.

An axe, two double-edged knives and three Android phones were recovered from them.

LSPWC steps up road reconstruction in Oshodi-Isolo, others

By **Bertram Nwannekanma**

THE Lagos State Public Works Corporation (LSPWC) has intensified road reconstruction and rehabilitation, with major projects underway in Oshodi-Isolo and other areas as improved weather conditions create opportunities for more extensive repairs.

The corporation's General Manager, Tokunbo Ajanaku, gave the assurance yesterday during an inspection of ongoing road projects in Oshodi-Isolo Local Government Area and other locations across Lagos.

Ajanaku said the reconstruction of Godwin Omonuwa Road, Taiwo Street, Salamotu Street, Peter Agah Street and Ibeh Street in Oshodi-Isolo was being carried out on the directive of Governor Babajide Sanwo-Olu to address infrastructure gaps and improve connectivity within communities.

He said the projects, upon completion, would ease traffic movement, reduce travel time and improve access to residential and commercial areas, with positive effects on businesses and residents.

According to him, improved roads would also make it easier for residents to access schools, healthcare facilities and other essential services while supporting economic activities within the benefiting communities.

The general manager explained that although heavy rainfall often limits permanent repairs, particularly asphalt laying, the corporation had continued to maintain roads throughout the rainy season through emergency interventions, temporary repairs and routine maintenance.

He added that the corporation conducts a significant proportion of its road maintenance work at night to minimise disruption to traffic and commercial activities.

Lawyers petition IGP over disappearance of two Jaza Energy workers

By **Gloria Nwafor**

A LAW firm, Abope Chambers, has petitioned the Inspector-General of Police over the disappearance of two employees of Jaza Energy, who have reportedly been missing since September 9 while on official assignments in Edo and Imo states.

In an open petition dated October 12, 2026, the lawyers urged the police to conduct a thorough investigation into the whereabouts of Oluwagbenga Akinluyi and Samuel Adesanya Bilewomo, both site validators attached to the company's Ibadan branch.

The firm, acting on behalf of the missing workers' families, also called on Jaza Energy's management, including its Managing Director, Adeboye Fowora, to provide information that could help establish the circumstances surrounding their disappearance and aid efforts to locate them.

According to the petition, the two employees were deployed to Edo State on August 31 before proceeding to Imo State.

Their families reportedly last communicated with them by telephone or WhatsApp on September 9, after which repeated attempts to reach them proved unsuccessful.

Akinluyi was last contacted at about noon, while Bilewomo's last communication was reportedly at approximately 12.40 p.m. on the same day.

Niger Delta communities raise alarm over gas leaks, unexplained deaths

From **Ann Godwin** and **Godfrey Gabriel**, Port Harcourt

RESIDENTS of Niger Delta communities have raised the alarm over persistent gas leaks and oil pollution, alleging a rise in unexplained deaths and health problems linked to environmental degradation.

Community leaders, activists and residents voiced their concerns at the second session of the People's Environmental Assembly in Port Harcourt, warning that decades of unresolved hydrocarbon pollution had threatened the health and livelihoods of host communities.

The gathering, organised by We the People, a human and ecological rights organisation, was held under the theme, "The Niger Delta on the Road to Recovery: Shifting Power and Building Solidarity for Ecological Justice."

The Vice-President of the Bille Youth Federation in Degema Local Government Area of Rivers State, Timothy Agunbiade, said communities around major oil facilities, including OML 18, Krakrama and Awoba flow stations, had experienced persistent gas seepage for nearly a year.

He alleged that the situation had coincided with an alarming number of deaths, particularly among young and middle-aged residents, many of whom died without formal medical diagnoses.

Society of Engineers probes building collapse in Enugu

From **Lawrence Njoku**, Enugu

THE Nigerian Society of Engineers (NSE) has launched a probe into the collapse of a four-storey, 100-room hotel under construction at Independence Layout, Enugu, which killed one worker and left several others seriously injured.

The investigation will examine possible design flaws, construction defects, the quality of materials used and other factors that may have contributed to the incident.

A 15-member Project Investigation, Failure and Collapse Analysis (PIFCA) Committee, constituted by the NSE Enugu State Council and led by Dr Victor Chiwuzie, visited the site yesterday to assess the collapsed structure and begin its investigation.

Chiwuzie, who spoke after conducting members round the site, said the committee would establish what went wrong, determine responsibility and recommend measures to prevent similar incidents.

He said the investigation would also determine whether the project was handled by competent professionals and whether construction work complied with approved designs and engineering standards.

"We want to find out whether the failure was caused by the design or a construction problem. We need to understand exactly what went wrong so that such lapses can be prevented in the future," he said.

Chiwuzie expressed concern over reports that the contractor and those supervising the project had fled, insisting that the committee would make efforts to locate them and obtain relevant information about the construction process.

Members of the NSE committee during their inspection of the collapsed building site.

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Households lament as sachet water hits N500 per bag in Lagos

By **Glory Sunday**

FOR residents who rely on sachet water for their daily drinking needs, the rising cost of the commodity is becoming another strain on already stretched household budgets, with a bag now selling for as much as N500 in parts of Lagos.

In Oshodi and Abule Aja, residents, retailers and producers have reported increases in prices, although the amount charged varies from one seller to another. While some retailers still sell a bag for N400 or N450, others have raised their prices to N500.

For consumers who buy water in smaller quantities, the increase is equally noticeable. What used to be three sachets for N100 has, in some places, become two sachets for the same amount.

A resident of Oshodi, Esther Pelumi, said she previously bought a bag of sachet water for N350 but was surprised to find that the price had risen to N500 this week.

Another resident, Noble Ojeh, said the price had increased from N300 to N400 before rising again to N500 last week.

For Chinenye Matthew, another Oshodi resident, the change became apparent during a routine purchase outside her home.

Although her family usually buys water in bulk, she said she had previously been able to buy one sachet for N15 or three for N100. This week, however, sellers no longer offered the three-sachet deal, leaving her with only two sachets for N100.



Sachet water in production centre

The changes mean that residents must either spend more to maintain their usual consumption or adjust how much water they buy at a time.

For households that depend on sachet water every day, the increase adds another expense to the cost of meeting basic needs.

Retailers say they are also grappling with higher purchase prices, leaving them with little room to maintain previous selling rates.

A sachet water seller in Oshodi, Taiwo Afolabi, said the price of a bag had risen from N350 to N450. She also said a previous arrangement under which customers who bought 10 bags received an additional bag had been discontinued. Under the new arrangement, customers receive only the 10 bags they pay for.

Another retailer, Mrs Susan Olagunji, said she previously bought five bags for N1,700 but now paid N2,000 for the same quantity. According to her, the increase took effect nearly two weeks before the interview.

Mrs Ajoke Fatoyi, another seller, who spoke through Sunday Akinyemi during the interview, reportedly raised her selling price from N400 to N500 per bag.

The different prices reflect variations in supply arrangements and retailers' costs, but they also show how increases at the wholesale level can eventually affect consumers.

At the production end, the manager of Spectrum Pure Water in Abule Aja, who identified himself simply as Seun, said the price of a bag had recently increased from N480 to N500.

He attributed the adjustment to a decision by the association representing sachet water producers in Lagos to adopt N500 as the standard selling price, adding that the change took effect this week.

Group, family seek N40m to save 21-year-old with kidney failure

By **Adelowo Adebumiti**

A 21-year-old woman, Udochi Chimezie, is in urgent need of N40 million for a kidney transplant after being diagnosed with bilateral kidney failure, prompting her family and a non-governmental organisation, Akoli Imenyi Ambassadors, to appeal for public assistance.

Udochi, a native of Akoli Imenyi in Bende Local Council of Abia State, is receiving treatment at Asaba Specialist Hospital in Delta State, where doctors have recommended an urgent kidney transplant.

She was diagnosed with bilateral kidney failure in January 2026 and immediately commenced dialysis.

According to her mother, Chinyere Chimezie, she underwent dialysis twice in the first week following the diagnosis but has since required treatment once a week.

Financial difficulties have, however, sometimes forced the family to postpone sessions until every two weeks. Each dialysis session costs N70,000, an amount her mother said they can no longer afford consistently.

Chinyere disclosed that the family missed a scheduled dialysis session in the week before she recounted their ordeal because they had run out of money. She added that doctors recommended a kidney transplant in January 2026 and advised that it be carried out before January 2027.



Udochi

Recounting their experience, Chinyere, who has been raising her four children largely on her own since separating from her husband, broke down in tears as she appealed for help.

"They told us that both of her kidneys are no longer functioning and that she urgently needs a transplant, which will cost millions."

nations to the account designated by the organisation: **Account name:** Akoli Imenyi Ambassadors. Account number: 2048691848. Bank: First Bank Plc.

Further enquiries can be made through Chinyere Chimezie on 09016660824.

Ogun Assembly approves harmonised tickets for quarry truck drivers over alleged extortion

From **Segun Ayinde**, Abeokuta

OGUN State House of Assembly has approved a harmonised ticketing system for truck drivers engaged in haulage across the state following allegations of extortion, criminal intimidation, multiple taxations and other illegal activities by toll collectors at quarries.

The Assembly also warned unauthorised agents issuing illegal tickets at quarry sites to stop the practice immediately.

It directed the deployment of a task force to quarries across the state to enforce compliance with the directive.

Under the arrangement, truck drivers transporting sand, gravel, granite and other quarry materials are to purchase only tickets issued by the state's Ministry of Finance, the Ogun State Internal Revenue Service and recognised associations or unions.

The decision followed a meeting convened by the Assembly's joint committees on Industry, Trade and Investment, and Transportation, chaired by Oluseun Adesanya and Wasiu Ayodele, respectively.

The meeting was prompted by a petition submitted by the Union of Tipper Suppliers and Quarry Employers of Nigeria to the Assembly at Oke-Mosan, Abeokuta.

In the petition, the union raised concerns over alleged extortion, criminal intimidation, forceful issuance of unauthorised tickets, multiple taxations and the unlawful seizure of trucks by toll collectors.

Following deliberations, the committees directed that all fees collected outside those approved by the relevant government agencies and recognised associations be stopped immediately.

The committees said a thorough investigation would be conducted to establish the legality of the various tickets and charges imposed on truck drivers operating at quarry sites across the state.

As part of the investigation, the Assembly invited the permanent secretaries of the Ministries of Industry, Trade and Investment; Transportation and Environment, alongside a senior director from the Ministry of Finance, to appear before it on October 20.

The officials are expected to provide explanations on the ticketing arrangements and the legal basis for the charges collected from truck drivers at quarries.

The Assembly's intervention aimed at addressing the complaints raised by haulage operators and establishing a transparent ticketing system that prevents unauthorised collections and protects drivers from multiple charges.

DSS, Army foil terrorists' attack in Riyom through drone, CCTV surveillance

From **Isa Abdulsalami Ahovi**, Jos

OPERATIVES of the Department of State Services (DSS), supported by the Nigerian Army (NA), have foiled a planned attack on Ganchung Village, near the Primary Health Care Centre in Rim, Riyom Local Council of Plateau State.

The operation was aided by drone and CCTV surveillance, which reportedly detected armed men carrying AK-47 rifles and K2 rifles among cattle herders as they allegedly attempted to coordinate an attack on the community.

Following the surveillance alert, security forces traced the suspects, mobilised rapidly and pursued them into the hinterlands around Mahanga. The assailants reportedly fled into mountain hideouts.

The DSS has deployed technology-driven security camps across Riyom, Mangu and Barkin Ladi, with plans to extend the initiative to Bokkos.

Governor Caleb Mutfwang, while speaking during a recent lecture at the National Institute for Policy and Strategic Studies (NIPSS), assured residents of improved cooperation between the state government and security agencies.

He reaffirmed that although Plateau remains open to peace-loving residents, criminals would be hunted down.

Meanwhile, high-tech surveillance cameras are currently monitoring the hinterlands of Plateau State.

Police to arraign three suspected armed robbers in Abia

By **Ayonote Clement**

THE Abia State Police Command has said that three men arrested over alleged armed robbery and theft of armoured cables will be charged to court after the conclusion of investigations.

The suspects, identified as Chinweoke Friday, 23; Nmesoma Eze, 20; and Nnaemeka Nwaolisa, 19, were arrested on October 7 by operatives of the Osisioma Police Divisional Headquarters in collaboration with community security vigilantes.

The Command, in a statement signed yesterday by its Spokesperson, DSP Maureen Chioma Chinaka, said the arrests followed actionable intelligence on the activities of a suspected criminal gang accused of targeting tricycle operators and dispossessing residents of their belongings.



Suspects

A locally made pistol and a black bag containing chains, charms, a power bank, purses, an ATM card and spanners were recovered during the operation.

According to the police, the suspects allegedly confessed during interrogation to their involvement in the theft of armoured cables belonging to Planet Company, located along the Enugu-Aba Expressway in Osisioma.

The Command said video recordings of their confessional statements had been made, while investigations were ongoing to track down other suspected members of the gang.

The Commissioner of Police, Abia State Command, Wilfred Olutokunbo Afolabi, reiterated the Command's commitment to combating armed robbery and other criminal activities across the state.

He, therefore, urged residents to provide timely and credible information to the police to support efforts to safeguard lives and property.

The Command also pledged to sustain intelligence-led policing and strengthen collaboration with community vigilantes and other stakeholders to improve security across Abia State.

CDHR seeks six-month extension for Abule Egba motor spare parts, scrap dealers to relocate

By **Bertram Nwannekanma**

THE Committee for the Defence of Human Rights (CDHR), Lagos State branch, has urged the Lagos State House of Assembly to secure a six-month extension for motor spare parts and scrap dealers facing relocation from Ogunrinde Street, Super Bus Stop, Abule Egba, Lagos.

The organisation said the traders needed more time to prepare their proposed new market at Ayetobi, Amikanle, warning that forcing them to vacate their existing business premises before the alternative site is ready could disrupt their livelihoods and cause avoidable economic hardship.

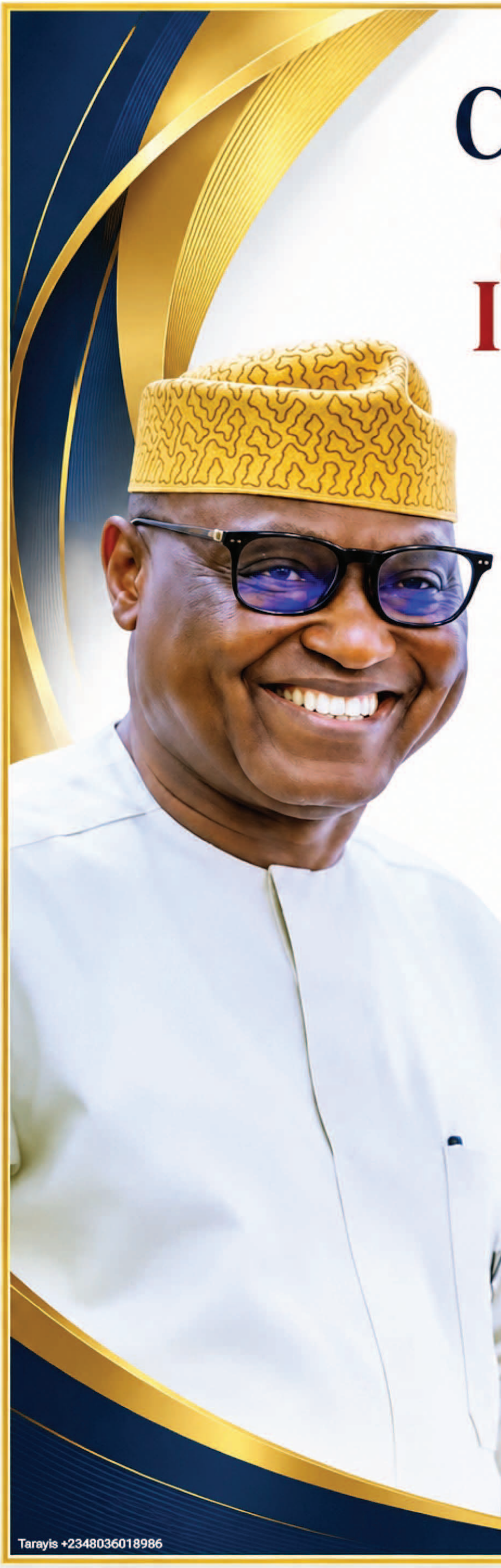
In a petition to the Speaker of the House, the CDHR said the affected traders, members of the United Brothers Motor Spare Parts Dealers Association and the Scrap Dealers Association of Nigeria (NASWADEN), had been directed by the Agbado-Oke-Odo Local Council Development Area (LCDA) to leave their current locations on or before October 16, 2026.

The petition, signed by the CDHR Lagos State Branch Chairman, Adewale Ojo, acknowledged the intervention of the LCDA Chairman, Abiodun Jimoh Ishola, popularly known as Ejigbadero, who led representatives of the two associations to Ayetobi on October 3 and allocated approximately three acres of land for their relocation.

According to the CDHR, the intervention initially raised hopes of an amicable resolution after the organisation called for meaningful consultation, adequate notice and consideration for the traders' businesses.

It said the traders had begun preparing the new site by engaging the services of a grader to clear the grass and level the ground, demonstrating their willingness to cooperate with the authorities.

However, the organisation said the October 16 deadline was impracticable because the land still requires substantial preparation and construction before it could accommodate the businesses.



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His Excellency,

BIODUN ABAYOMI OYEBANJI

The Executive Governor of Ekiti State

Your Excellency, I heartily congratulate you on your inauguration today for a second term in office as the Executive Governor of Ekiti State.

Your re-election is a renewed opportunity to consolidate your achievements, deepen good governance, and advance the peace, prosperity, and sustainable development of Ekiti State.

As you embark on this new chapter of service, I wish you divine wisdom, sound health, strength, and greater accomplishments in the discharge of your responsibilities. May your second term usher in greater progress for Ekiti State and bring lasting benefits to its people.

Please accept my warm congratulations and best wishes for a successful and impactful second term.

Congratulations, Your Excellency Sir!

Signed:

Mr. Abiodun Ariyibi, FCA

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Editorial

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Africa deserves permanent seat at UN Security Council

RENEWED demand by some world leaders for Africa to secure permanent representation on the UN Security Council is a timely reminder that the world's foremost multilateral institution is long overdue for fundamental reform. After eight decades of the UN's existence, the time has come to end the continent's marginalisation in global decision-making and align the United Nations with contemporary geopolitical realities.

The renewed demand by President Bola Tinubu, United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres, and Kenyan President, William Ruto, is a clear indication that the United Nations cannot credibly claim to represent the international community fairly while an entire continent of more than 1.4 billion people remains excluded from permanent membership of its most powerful decision-making organ.

Speaking through Vice President Kashim Shettima at the 81st United Nations General Assembly in New York, Tinubu argued that the world of 2026 could no longer be governed by the power distribution that prevailed in 1945. His position is both reasonable and compelling. The international order has changed profoundly since the end of the Second World War, yet the structure of the Security Council continues to reflect the political and military realities of that era.

When the UN was founded in 1945, its principal objective was to prevent another global conflict and establish a framework for international cooperation. The five permanent members of the Security Council – the United States, Russia, China, Britain and France – were accorded privileged positions in recognition of the post-war balance of power. The veto granted to each of them was intended to secure participation of the major powers in the new international system.

However, what might have appeared politically expedient at the time has become increasingly difficult to defend in a world where the consequences of decisions taken by these five countries extend far beyond their own territories. Africa, Asia and Latin America have experienced enormous demographic, economic and political changes, but the composition of the Council has failed to reflect these transformations.

Africa's exclusion is particularly indefensible. The continent accounts for 54 internationally recognised sovereign states, constitutes a substantial proportion of UN membership and remains central to discussions on peacekeeping, conflict resolution, climate change, migration, food security and international development. Yet its countries have no permanent seat at the table where some of the most consequential decisions on international peace and security are made.

Guterres has rightly described this absence as unjust and indefensible, while Ruto has insisted that Africa cannot continue to be shut out. Their positions reinforce the argument that reform is no longer a favour that established powers may choose to grant. It is a question of institutional legitimacy, political fairness and the credibility of multilateralism itself.

The inadequacy of the present arrangement is evident in the operation of the veto. In June 2025, the United States blocked a Security Council resolution calling for an immediate and permanent ceasefire in Gaza, despite 14 votes in favour. The episode demonstrated how a single permanent member can frustrate the collective position of the other Council members. It also illustrated the limits of an arrangement that allows the national interests of one powerful state to prevail over an overwhelming majority.

Such instances have strengthened the case for a more representative and accountable Security Council. Although the veto was designed to prevent the major powers from being compelled to make decisions they opposed, its continued unrestricted use has often undermined the Council's capacity to respond decisively to international crises.

Tinubu's demand for at least two permanent African seats, with full rights and responsibilities, including veto power, alongside five non-permanent seats, therefore deserves serious consideration. Anything less risks producing a cosmetic reform that changes the Council's appearance without correcting its underlying imbalance.

Nevertheless, securing permanent African representation will require more than forceful speeches at the General Assembly. The reform process is politically difficult because any meaningful restructuring must overcome the resistance of countries that benefit from the existing arrangement. Changes to the UN Charter require approval by two-thirds of the General Assembly and ratification by two-thirds of UN member states, including all five permanent members of the Security Council. This gives the very countries whose privileges are being challenged considerable influence over the reform process.

Consequently, Nigeria and other African countries must combine diplomatic pressure with a coherent negotiating strategy. The African Union's common position on Security Council reform provides an important foundation, but continental leaders must sustain their unity over the number of seats, the selection of representatives, regional rotation and the question of veto powers. Internal disagreements could weaken Africa's bargaining position and give opponents of reform an excuse to delay actions indefinitely.

Nigeria, given its population, diplomatic history, economic potential and contributions to peacekeeping, has a legitimate interest in shaping this campaign. However, its leadership must be exercised through sustained engagement with other African states rather than an assumption that the country's size alone entitles it to represent the continent. The objective should be effective African representation, not merely the elevation of one country.

Nigeria's prospective support for the next UN Secretary-General is also significant. Equity, justice, fairness, multilateralism and reform of global governance should inform the country's decision, while establishing an appropriate framework for evaluating candidates.

Nigeria should, however, ensure that the question of African representation remains a substantive consideration in its engagement with all candidates. The next Secretary-General will need to demonstrate not only an understanding of Africa's concerns but also the political courage to advance meaningful reform, even when doing so challenges entrenched interests.

Ultimately, the campaign for permanent African representation is not merely about prestige or diplomatic status. It is about ensuring that decisions affecting African lives, economies and security are not made through a system in which the continent has no permanent voice. Africa should not be expected to shoulder a disproportionate share of the consequences of international instability while remaining marginal to the institutions responsible for addressing it.

The United Nations was established to serve succeeding generations, not to preserve indefinitely the privileges negotiated by the victors of a war that ended more than 80 years ago. Its continued relevance depends on its ability to adapt to contemporary realities.

Tinubu, Guterres and Ruto have articulated a demand that is ripe. The challenge now is to transform their declarations into a sustained, coordinated and ultimately successful campaign for reform. The international community must recognise that a Security Council without permanent African representation is neither sufficiently representative nor fully equipped to command universal confidence.

LETTER

When Lagos disrespects federal policy on lecturers' salaries

SIR: While attempting to strengthen the education reform, the federal government through the Ministry of Education realised the imperative need of sealing the 2025 labour agreement it had with the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU).

As part of the Renewed Hope Agenda for Nigerian universities, the president thought of repositioning the public university system and entrench lasting industrial harmony in the education sector.

To celebrate the historic milestone, key stakeholders from the executive, legislature, labour, NUC, TETFund and the academic community at the federal were brought together as witnesses to national commitment to dialogue, stability, and sustainable development in higher education in Nigeria.

Speaking at the event, Minister of Education, Dr. Maruf Tunji Alausa, emphasised that the agreement would lay a solid foundation against recurring strikes and prolonged academic disruptions. A key component of the agreement is the 40 per cent upward review of the emoluments of university academic staff, with effect from January 1, 2026.

After the sealing of the agreement, the FG and ASUU issued a communique and they urged all the state governments to fully embrace and domesticate the contents in their respective states. Without wasting time at all, some of the state governments such as Abia, Ekiti, Osun and Enugu have responded promptly by implementing the agreement in their universities.

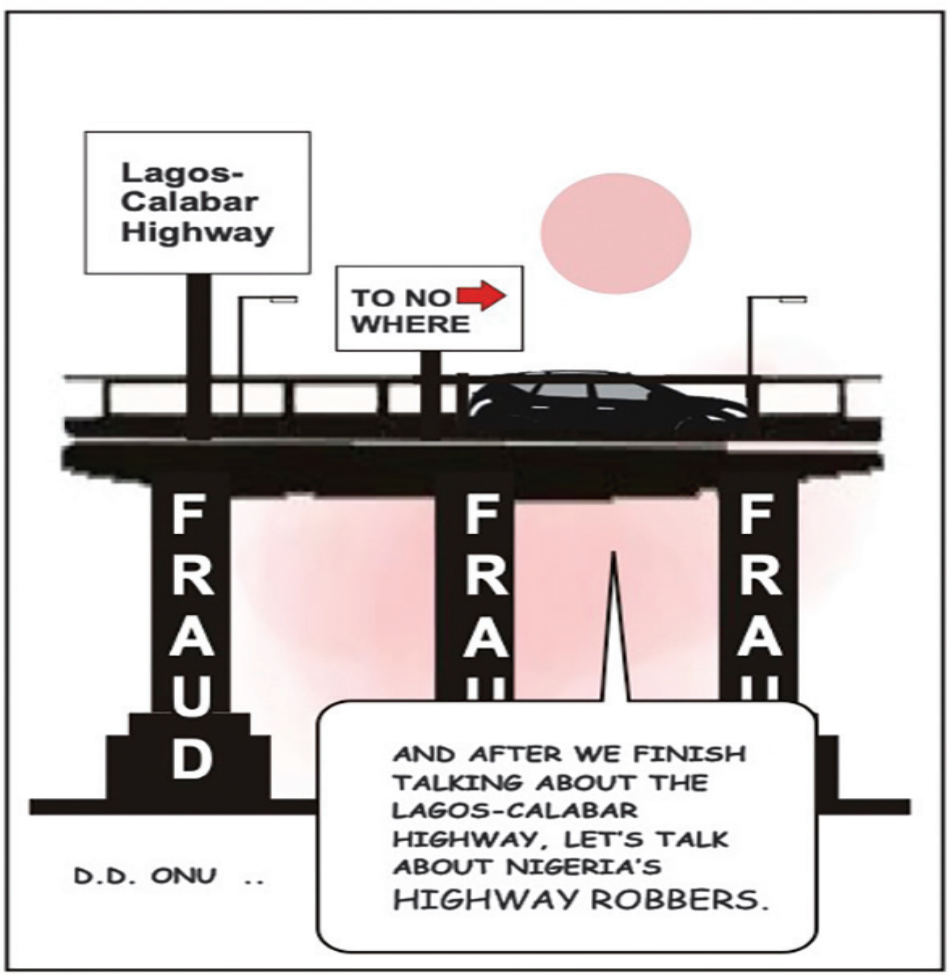
It is however a sad irony that Lagos State that often presents itself as the Centre of Excellence and a supposed standard template of good governance system in Nigeria is now becoming an embarrassment and a bad example of how not to implement a forward-looking policy and renewed partnership between government and academia.

Almost nine months after the agreement had been signed between Federal Government and ASUU, and other financially less-buoyant states have started paying the new salaries to their university workers, it is fundamentally troubling that Lagos State has continued to demonstrate its unwillingness to pay the new salary structure.

Going by the governor's eight-month silence about the issue and his open declaration at the last Lagos State University convocation in August that the coming administration will see to the welfare of the lecturers, there is no other interpretation to that outburst than a clear sabotage and a direct attempt at undermining Tinubu's Renewed Hope Agenda especially, as it affects rescuing public university education.

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

Dr. Olugbenga Owolabi lives in Ogba, Ikeja, Lagos.



Opinion

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Why energy interventions may outlive 2027 election

By **Lekan Olayiwola**

AS the political crossfire over Nigeria's fuel relief intensifies, one question is getting less attention than it deserves: how does it end? Every temporary price measure comes with a clear start date and a blurred exit route. Whoever wins the election inherits the exit problem, and quite possibly the bill that ordinary Nigerians may ultimately have to settle.

Any government that cuts the cost of an essential good confronts the same difficulty: starting relief is easier than withdrawing it. The dispute over who proposed what first matters less than whether the intervention is affordable, reaches the people who need it and can be withdrawn without triggering another price shock.

Thirty days, hidden gaps and deferred bills

Finance Minister, Taiwo Oyedele, announced a 30-day petrol discount at NNPC stations, with priority for public transporters. NNPC then clarified that its own discount began on 1 October as an Independence Day initiative and ends on 31 October. These appear to leave two end dates for one policy. However, a calendar date says when a measure should end, not whether the pressures behind it will have.

NNPC forgoes margin, while a proposed N1,350-per-litre ceiling on landing cost would have refiners and importers carry shortfalls and recover them later. Neither is automatically a charge on taxpayers, but both create exposure. In August 2024, NNPC's chief financial officer said it was selling petrol at about N600 a litre against a landing cost near N1,200, and by early September the company linked shortages to roughly $6 billion owed to suppliers. Deferred costs remain obligations.

Two clocks: The ballot and the barrel

The electoral clock is visible; Nigeria votes in January amid mounting cost-of-living pressure. The external clock answers to conflict, shipping routes, refining capacity and exchange rates. The Iran war began on 28 February and Brent briefly topped $126; by August it was near $92, with Hormuz shipping still slowed. On 9 October, President Trump announced Russian diesel supplies of more than 300,000 tonnes, with larger volumes promised.

Yet one Columbia analyst noted that refined products remain barely half of pre-war levels, and a CSIS strategist doubted prices would fall materially. Diesel is not petrol, but global market stress can outlast individual supply deals and political assurances. If it outlasts the election, the next government may face pressure to renew relief; if prices ease, the ceiling may never bind. These are possibilities, not certainties. The policy should be designed for both.

Dependency, and who pays twice

Every intervention creates interests around its continuation. Transporters adjust fares around a discount, households budget around prevailing prices, and suppliers carrying deferred losses expect repayment. Once they adapt, withdrawal brings concentrated, immediate losses, though continuation's costs are widely spread. That is how temporary measures outlive their circumstances. Need and political convenience can both explain resistance; neither proves affordability.

The IMF's June 2026 assessment put poverty at 63 per cent on the national line and estimated that 27 million Nigerians faced food insecurity in late 2025. Inflation rose to 15.4 per cent in March 2026 as global fuel and food prices fed through.

A discount confined to NNPC stations helps mainly those who buy there. Others feel the shock through fares, food and diesel-dependent small businesses, and may pay again if deferred costs return as higher prices. The IMF has advised against reintroducing the petrol subsidy. Relief should reach the vulnerable, and its cost and results should be public.

The production subsidy: What the headline leaves out

Atiku Abubakar proposes a capped, budgeted production subsidy for fuel refined in Nigeria, with safeguards, he says, to ensure the benefit reaches consumers through lower pump prices. He has criticised the government's temporary discount and asked what happens when it ends. Fair questions, but his own proposal needs answers too.

A producer subsidy lowers pump prices only if its design forces the saving through, and with production concentrated among a few large refiners, competition cannot be assumed to do so. Nigerians need the subsidy rate, eligible output, funding source, annual ceiling and retail-pricne formula, and what happens if the cap runs out mid-year.

Supporting domestic refining as industrial policy is not the same as relieving households, and output support does not insulate refiners from crude prices or the exchange rate. It also needs an exit plan because any such scheme builds its own constituency of producers, workers and consumers. Rather than making it bad policy, this reality makes fiscal limits and withdrawal rules indispensable.

The minister's warning and the missing savings

Oyedele has argued that restoring a conventional petrol subsidy could push pump prices to N2,000 a litre and the exchange rate to as much as N3,000 to the dollar. These are the minister's projections of a possible chain of consequences, which should be tested against the assumptions behind them.

The government's own record argues for transparency. The IMF put full-year savings from ending implicit fuel subsidies, which it dates to October 2024, at about 2 per cent of GDP and urged that they accrue to the budget.

Commentary on its 2026 review suggests they have yet to show up clearly in public investment. The IMF did not say the money had vanished; the issue is fiscal visibility. If reform reduces the state's subsidy exposure, citizens should see where the gains go. If new relief is introduced, they should see its costs too. Otherwise Nigerians accept painful adjustment without being able to trace either the savings or the new obligations.

Write the exit before announcing the relief

Whichever party forms the next government, a credible intervention needs transparent rules from the outset. Government should publish the cost per litre, identify who bears it and disclose any deferred liabilities.

Any cap should have a defined fiscal ceiling, independently audited accounts and a clear rule for what happens when that ceiling is reached. Reviews should respond to measurable conditions, including global prices, exchange-rate movements and the state of public finances rather than relying on a calendar date alone.

If the objective is to protect vulnerable households, support should be assessed by whether it reduces their actual transport, food and energy burdens, not merely by how much the pump price falls at selected stations. Producer support should be conditional on verifiable domestic output and transparent pass-through to consumers. Any extension should be justified publicly, and any withdrawal should be accompanied by credible protection for households unable to absorb another shock.

Elections end. Bills do not

The honest question for every candidate is not whether relief is justified; for many Nigerians facing high transport and food costs, the need is plain. It is whether the proposed relief will reach them, who will pay for it, how long the country can sustain it and what prevents its eventual withdrawal from creating another crisis.

A policy can be temporary on paper yet endure through global instability, commercial expectations and political pressure. That is why the test of an energy intervention is not simply whether it brings down today's price. It is whether it leaves Nigeria better equipped to protect its citizens when the next shock arrives and when the relief must end.

Olayiwola is a peace and conflict researcher/policy analyst. He can be reached via:lekanolayiwola@gmail.com

Can people turn time saved by AI into value?

By **Dilys Sillah**

EVERY conversation about artificial intelligence eventually arrives at the same promise: it will save time. Tasks that once took hours can be completed in minutes, routine work can be automated and employees can be released to concentrate on activity of greater value. It is an attractive proposition, particularly for organisations under pressure to reduce costs, improve productivity and do more with fewer resources. Yet beneath that promise sits a question that is receiving far less attention: once AI has saved the time, what determines whether people can turn that time into meaningful value?

The assumption appears to be that the answer is self-evident. If an employee has eight hours returned to them, the organisation has gained eight hours of productive capacity. If AI removes a repetitive task, the person who previously performed it can simply move on to more complex, creative or strategic work. On paper, the arithmetic is compelling. Human beings, however, do not operate like entries on a spreadsheet, and time made available is not the same as human capacity restored.

This is where an important distinction needs to be made between released capacity and human capacity. Released capacity is the operational space that AI appears to create. It may be expressed as hours saved, tasks removed, faster output or a reduced requirement for human labour. It is visible, countable and relatively easy to place inside a business case. Human capacity is something different. It is the changing condition that determines whether a person can deploy the knowledge, skills and experience they already possess effectively, consistently and sustainably.

A person may be highly capable and still have limited capacity. They may understand the technology, have completed the training and be entirely willing to adapt, while also being cognitively overloaded, emotionally depleted, unclear about what is expected of them or working within a culture that makes experimentation feel unsafe. Their capability has not disappeared, but their ability to use it well has been affected. Giving that person an AI tool, or returning several hours to their week, does not automatically address the conditions that are constraining their performance.

My work through The Glass Framework™ begins from the understanding that capacity cannot be separated from the condition of the human being. It considers depletion, presence and wholeness because what people are able to bring to their work is shaped by far more than their technical competence.

Human capacity is not a fixed container that is either full or empty, nor is it simply another word for skill. It can expand, contract and become obstructed by the conditions in which a person is expected to perform. This matters in any programme of change, but it becomes particularly important when organisations introduce technology that alters not only how work is completed, but also what remains for people to do.

AI does not always remove pressure. In many cases, it changes the nature of the pressure. An employee may spend less time producing a first draft, yet more time checking whether the information is accurate. A manager may receive faster analysis, yet face a greater volume of decisions. A team may automate routine processes, only to find that the work left behind requires more judgement, concentration and accountability. Roles can quietly expand before job descriptions, authority and support arrangements catch up. What looks like released capacity from the organisation's perspective can therefore be experienced as increased complexity by the person doing the work.

The emerging evidence reflects this tension. Boston Consulting Group reported in 2026 that 42 per cent of regular frontline AI users were saving at least one working day each week, yet 66 per cent received limited or no guidance about what to do with the time saved. The same research found that 41 per cent experienced increased cognitive load. BearingPoint subsequently reported that almost three-quarters of organisations implementing AI could identify measurable financial value, while only 13 per cent had scaled their initiatives in line with the original business case. It also found that many organisations were already reporting workforce overcapacity created by AI, while still struggling to decide how that capacity should be redeployed.

These findings do not suggest that AI is failing. They suggest that organisations are measuring one part of the transformation and assuming the rest will follow. Time saved is being treated as an outcome when it is only an input. The real outcome depends on what happens next: whether roles are redesigned intelligently, whether leaders provide direction, whether employees understand how their contribution is changing and whether the organisation has created the conditions in which people can absorb greater complexity without becoming depleted by it.

The distinction also changes how we should think about AI readiness. Readiness is often discussed in terms of infrastructure, data, governance, technical skills and access to tools. All of these are essential, but they do not tell us whether the people inside an organisation are in a condition to adopt, adapt and use AI effectively.

Training can increase capability. It cannot, by itself, resolve exhaustion, mistrust, role ambiguity, poor management or the cumulative effects of constant organisational change. If those conditions remain invisible, leaders may interpret inconsistent use as resistance or a skills deficit when the deeper problem is depleted human capacity.

This is especially relevant across Africa, where the urgency to participate in the AI economy is understandable and necessary. Governments and businesses are being encouraged to invest in infrastructure, digital skills and locally relevant technology. Yet effective adoption will not be secured by importing tools and training people to operate them. Organisations must also understand the cultural, institutional and human conditions into which those tools are being introduced. The question is not simply whether people can use AI. It is whether they can use it with judgement, confidence and sufficient presence to produce outcomes that are valuable in their own context.

For leaders, this requires a different set of questions. It is no longer enough to ask how many employees have received licences, how many have completed training or how many hours a system claims to have saved.

Leaders must ask what new work has replaced the work that disappeared, whether decision-making and verification demands have increased, whether people know how to use the time released and whether managers are equipped to lead teams whose roles are changing faster than organisational structures.

They must also resist the temptation to interpret every difficulty as reluctance to change. A capable employee who is not using AI consistently may not be unwilling or unable. They may be signalling that the surrounding conditions are not yet sufficient for effective utilisation. That is why human capacity must be diagnosed rather than assumed. Without that understanding, organisations risk investing repeatedly in tools, training and process redesign while leaving the condition that determines effective deployment untouched.

The organisations that gain the greatest value from AI will not necessarily be those that introduce the most technology or calculate the largest number of hours saved. They will be those that understand the difference between making capacity available and enabling human beings to use their capability well. AI can release time, remove tasks and widen what is technically possible. It cannot, on its own, restore a depleted workforce, create clarity, build trust or make people whole.

That work remains a leadership responsibility. Until organisations recognise it, the gap between AI deployment and effective utilisation will persist, and the productivity they expected to gain may continue to exist largely on paper. AI can release operational capacity. Whether that becomes sustainable value will depend on the human capacity available to receive it.

Sillah is a human development practitioner, communication specialist and executive leadership coach. She is the creator of The Glass Framework™.

Opinion

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What Japan's centenarians teach Nigeria about future-building

By **Ebuka Ukoh**

JAPAN has just crossed an extraordinary threshold. As of September 1, the country had 107,677 people aged 100 or older, the first time its centenarian population has exceeded 100,000. In 1963, Japan counted only 153 centenarians. The number has now risen for 56 consecutive years. Women account for nearly 88 per cent of the total today.

One hundred and seven thousand, six hundred and seventy-seven people have lived for at least a century. I read that number and marvelled. Then, as a Nigerian, another thought entered my mind. Who will build the health systems that will enable our own people to grow old?

Not merely hospitals. Systems. Because perhaps one of the greatest differences between nations is not whether their citizens dream of longevity. We all do. It is whether their institutions make long life more possible.

Longevity isn't an accident

We should be careful not to romanticise Japan. Its extraordinary longevity isn't due to hospitals alone. Diet, genetics, sanitation, education, income, social conditions, public health, lifestyle and community all matter. An ag(e)ing population also presents Japan with enormous challenges, including rising healthcare needs, pension pressures, and a shrinking workforce.

But 107,677 centenarians do not emerge from nowhere. Somewhere along the journey from birth to 100, a society has to work. Children must survive infancy.

Mothers must survive childbirth. Vaccines must reach people. Clean water must flow. Diseases must be detected. Doctors must be trained. Nurses must be retained. Medicines must be available. Emergency services must function. And when people grow old, a system must still be able to care for them.

Longevity is therefore not simply a biological achievement. It is partly an institutional achievement. That is what Nigeria should think about.

We have the young people

Nigeria has something many ageing societies increasingly wish they had: youth. Most of our population is young. That is routinely described as our demographic advantage. And it can be. But a young population is not automatically a demographic dividend. It is only potentially so.

The dividend arrives when young people are educated, healthy, productive, skilled, and able to build institutions stronger than those they inherited. Otherwise, an unplanned demographic dividend can be disappointing. The question, therefore, is not simply how many young Nigerians we have.

It is: What are we preparing them to build? Who among today's children will become the epidemiologists who stop the next outbreak? Who will become the nurses who transform maternal care? Who will design our emergency-response systems? Who will build diagnostic laboratories in communities where people currently travel hours for basic tests? Who will develop Nigerian medical technologies? Who will modernise primary healthcare? Who will research diseases that disproportionately affect Africans? Who will build the hospitals in which Nigerians will one day turn 100?

They are probably already here. Some are sitting in overcrowded classrooms. Some are studying by generators. Some are brilliant children whose parents cannot afford university fees. Some are medical students wondering whether the future they want exists in Nigeria. And some of the doctors and nurses we have already trained are preparing to leave our shores for greener pastures.

We cannot keep training other people's health systems

Nigeria's health workforce problem should trouble us.

The WHO's 2025 health-system profile says Nigeria's supply of doctors, nurses, and midwives remains below recommended levels, with shortages compounded by uneven distribution, poor working conditions and the movement of health professionals abroad.

This is painfully ironic. Nigeria can educate a child from primary school. Subsidise parts of that child's education. Train that child to become a doctor or nurse. Then create working conditions so frustrating that another country receives the mature product of that investment.

The Nigerian professional is not wrong for seeking a better life. People have families. They have ambitions. They want functioning equipment, professional development, reasonable compensation, and environments where doing their jobs doesn't require daily heroism.

So perhaps the better question is not: Why are they leaving?

It is: What have we built that should persuade them to stay? Patriotism cannot substitute indefinitely for functioning institutions. A surgeon cannot operate with patriotism. A laboratory cannot run on patriotism. An ambulance cannot be fuelled with patriotism. And a nurse cannot feed a family with applause.

A hospital is built long before brick and mortar arrive

When politicians speak about healthcare infrastructure, we often see buildings. A new hospital is commissioned. There are cameras. There is a ribbon. There are speeches. But a health system is neither concrete nor brick and mortar. A beautiful building without nurses is architecture.

An intensive-care unit without working equipment is just a room. An ambulance without an emergency network is a mere vehicle. A medical school without research investment is an incomplete promise. A hospital's most important infrastructure is ultimately human.

That human infrastructure takes decades to build. The consultant physician of 2050 may be sitting in a secondary school today. The biomedical engineer who will design equipment suited to Nigerian hospitals may currently be a child taking apart broken electronics somewhere in Aba.

The public-health specialist who will prevent an epidemic may be sitting in a classroom in Kano. The nurse who will hold a 99-year-old's hand may not yet have been born. Nation-building requires the imagination to invest in people whose contributions may mature long after the politicians making today's decisions have left office.

Real meaning of centenarian

Japan's milestone should therefore not make us ask whether Nigerians can live to 100. Some already do. Nor should we turn longevity into a competition between countries. The better question is whether an ordinary Nigerian child born today can reasonably expect to live, supported by institutions that value survival.

Will pregnancy be safer? Will childbirth be safer? Will infancy be safer? Will cancer be detected earlier? Will emergency care arrive faster? Will people treat the elderly as human beings rather than burdens? Will quality healthcare depend less on whether your surname opens doors or your bank account can purchase treatment abroad? That is the journey from birth to 100.

And we must understand something else. The health system we refuse to build today is the one we will desperately need tomorrow, and won't have.

Politicians grow old too. Civil servants grow old. Business leaders grow old. Presidents grow old. Governors grow old. The body eventually makes everyone equal.

Our young are the infrastructure

Nigeria's youth are frequently described as a problem to be managed. Too many are unemployed. Many more are leaving. So are the frustrated. Countless have lost faith in their nation. Perhaps we should see them differently. They are the people who must build what does not yet exist.

Our responsibility is to give them the education, healthcare, laboratories, mentorship, research funding, employment opportunities, and functioning institutions that let their abilities become national assets.

Japan's 107,677 centenarians tell one story about a country growing older. Nigeria's millions of young people tell another story about a country still extraordinarily young. Neither youth nor longevity guarantees prosperity. Both require planning.

One country must ask how it will care for an ageing population. Nigeria must ask whether it will prepare its young population to build a country where growing old is worthwhile. That is our assignment. Because somewhere in Nigeria today is a child who could transform African medicine.

Somewhere is tomorrow's surgeon. Tomorrow's nurse. Tomorrow's scientist. Tomorrow's hospital administrator. Tomorrow's biomedical engineer. Tomorrow's public-health leader. The question is whether we will find them, educate them, equip them, and give them a country where they can do their best work.

Japan has more than 107,000 people who have reached 100. I celebrate them.

But in Nigeria, I think about the future. Who will build the health systems that will carry our children safely into old age? The answer is already among us. We have to stop wasting them.

Ukoh, a Ph.D student and co-author of Built By The Ancestors. He wrote from New York, the United States.

Nigeria @ 66: Gridlocks and illusive *el dorado*

By **Bobson Gbinije**

IT is a Maxim founded on the universal experience of mankind that no Nation is to be trusted farther than it is bound by its' interest – George Washington (1732-1799) Letter to Congress.

WITH peremptory magistracy and awesome gallantry our founding fathers fought with dogged obduracy for the political independence of our glorious country, Nigeria. They invested their dreams on Nigeria, but whither goeth Nigeria today? After 66 years of political independence Nigeria is still silhouetted in the sordid saga and tapestry of progressivistic labyrinth. We are still rumbling in the cabbage of unthinkable corruption, arrant poverty, HIV/AIDS, malaria scourge and arrested development.

We are submerged in the cocoon of human rights violations, including politically- motivated assassinations, extra-judicial killings and excessive use of force. The arrest and detention of people for political reasons, restriction on freedom of the press, speech and assembly, prolonged pre-trial detention and aiding and abetting of electoral malpractices still constitute some dark characteristics of our nation. We are still sunken in blatant illegalities, tragic criminalities, prebendalistic graft and wallowing in unmitigated sleaze.

After 66 years of independence, we have no functional hospitals, no roads, no affordable houses, no jobs and no food security, no light, no effective transport system, no water, no affordable education and no road map and viable blue print for strategic repositioning of our country, Nigeria.

The statesman, Alfred Rewane, captures the scenario thus: 'Yesterday, we yearned for a better tomorrow. Today, we mourn the loss of a better yesterday. How sad"? Whither goeth Nigeria after 66 years of political independence?

These weird economic, socio-political policies successfully befuddled our nation. What is the way forward? Hence, a Chartered Member of the Nigerian Institute of Management, Chief LEA Aimiuwu once said: "First, we blamed the colonial masters; next, military blamed military. Then politicians blamed military. Now, party blames party, Legislature blames Executive, Executive blames Legislature; tribe blames tribe, zone blames zone, private sector blames public sector, public sector blames private sector, followers blame leaders, leaders blame followers."

Who blames self? Now we turn round and say: "Nigeria has failed us". But who makes up Nigeria?

Nigeria has not failed, we have failed ourselves! Working together, mission driven, with shared passion and vision-focus Nigeria shall rise again. Things work only if we make them work! They work only as we make them work. So let's work the work!!"

This could be a peripheral and simplistic overview of Nigeria's problems, but it bears a ring of the horizontal and vertical integration which Nigeria needs to move forward as a nation.

It is sacrosanct truism that after 66 years of independence Nigeria needs the implosive surgeonisation of a moral rearmament, ethical revolution, attitudinal re-orientation, leadership altruism, political re-evaluation, policy screening, patriotism and change of psyche with everything and anything that has to do with Nigeria and Nigerians to enable our country make palpable progress. We need to focus on:

(a) Leadership by example: It is a quintessential fact that absence of good leadership has been the bane of the Nigerian nation right from 1960 till date. We need leaders who can carry the vast majority of Nigerians along through policies that will alleviate the agonies and travails of the people.

A leader that understands that Nigeria is a microcosm in a global macrocosm and that Nigeria must hold and take an enviable seat in the comity of nations. A leader that calls the totality of Nigeria his or her main constituency. A detribalised and cosmopolitanised leader. A leader who understands that leadership is all about people's welfare through committed and honest leadership.

As the 2027 election approaches, we hope and pray that our leaders will not resort to thuggery, political assassinations, vote rigging, etc., to get power. It is clear that the political antecedents of our politicians remain hideously ghoulish, but we call on them to put Nigeria first before exercising their pathological quest for power.

The political algebra glaringly shows that the next president of the Federal Republic of Nigeria should come from any of the geopolitical zone. We hope that through co-ordinated dialogue the elections will go on without ethnic cleansing, genocide, social schism and the break-up of our country, Nigeria. Our leaders must hold their vaulting ambition in-check.

A good, progressive and functional economy constitute the matrix on which the growth and development of any nation can take place; Nigeria has been quite amorphous in its economic principles and logistics, although we have been called one the fastest growing economies in the world and the highest in Africa.

In the light of the new millennium, Nigeria must continue to make strides in economic development by adopting new global strategies. The importance of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), NEEDS, SEEDS and such-like bodies were not tapped for macro-economic impact.

An economic "Think tank" must be set up to look into ways and means of diversifying the Nigerian economy and looking at the logistics of re-launching a New Agricultural Revolution in Nigeria.

It is a shame that Nigeria still remain one of the largest importers of food in the world, whilst China with its over 1.5 billion people feeds itself. A new Operation Feed the Nation (OFN) and a new school to farm project must re-launched. It is a shame that 2/3 of 150 million Nigerians still live on $1 dollar a day.

A leadership that cannot feed the people and a nation that cannot feed itself are doomed to perdition. Providing food for the teeming masses should be the cardinal and fundamental concern and priority of government at all levels. The importation of farmers from Zimbabwe is not the answer.

We should not under the guise of assistance bite more than we can chew. We also have pressing economic problems at home. We should, however continue to promote international co-operation for the consolidation of universal peace and mutual respect among all nations and strive for elimination of discrimination in all its manifestations. We must continue to have respect for international laws and treaty obligations.

Democracy is a process and not just an event, therefore, the political engineering process in Nigeria through democratic metamorphosis is still at its inchoate and gestational stage. It must therefore be handled with care by our politicians and leadership aspirants if Nigeria must continue to remain as one united sovereign nation.

Gbinije is of Mandate Against Poverty (Map) Sapele-Warri.

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ON YOUR SECOND TERM!



Her Excellency
Monisade CHRISTIANAH AFUYE
Ekiti State Deputy Governor

His Excellency
BIODUN ABAYOMI OYEBANJI
Ekiti State Governor

On behalf of my family, constituents and the leadership of the National Assembly, I warmly congratulate my dear brother, visionary leader and **Ekiti State Governor, His Excellency Biodun Abayomi Oyebanji** and my dear sister, the **Deputy Governor** of our beloved state, **Her Excellency Monisade Christianah Afuye**, on your historic inauguration for a second term in office today.

Your inauguration for a second term in office back-to-back reflects the deep trust and confidence the people of Ekiti State place in your leadership. In the last four years, your unwavering commitment to peace, inclusive governance, and people-centric development had placed our beloved state on a steady path of growth and progress.

As you begin this new term, I am confident your administration will further consolidate the gains recorded in your first term; expand infrastructure; empower our people and elevate Ekiti State to greater heights.

May Almighty God grant you divine wisdom, enduring strength and matchless grace to lead our beloved state to greater heights in all ramifications.

Congratulations, Your Excellencies!

Senator Michael Opeyemi Bamidele, CON
Leader of the Senate,
Federal Republic of Nigeria.

Deputy Director-General (South 1),
PBAT/APC 2027 Presidential Campaign Council



Congratulations
ON YOUR ELEVATION TO
PROFESSOR!



His Excellency,
BIODUN ABAYOMI OYEBANJI
Executive Governor of Ekiti State

A WELL-DESERVED RENEWED MANDATE!

We proudly celebrate your successful inauguration for a **Second Term as the Executive Governor of Ekiti State.**

Thank you for your tireless dedication to sustainable development, peace, and the prosperity of the Land of Honour. May your second term bring unprecedented growth and continuing success to the good people of Ekiti State.

Happy Inauguration



HER EXCELLENCY,
PROF. OLAYEMI J. ABIODUN-OYEBANJI
FIRST LADY OF EKITI STATE

It brings us immense joy to celebrate this momentous milestone with you! Congratulations on your elevation to the professorial chair.

Working closely with you, we have seen firsthand your dedication to excellence, your depth of knowledge, and your genuine heart for impact. Seeing your years of scholarly dedication recognized with the rank of Professor is a victory that resonates deeply with all of us who have the privilege of partnering with you.

Thank you for being a beacon of academic excellence and visionary leadership. We celebrate your remarkable achievements today and look forward to even more impactful years ahead.

May this new chapter bring you greater fulfillment, breakthroughs, and joy. Amen.

With deep respect and admiration.



Signed:
ADEOLA ADELEYE-FASUBAA

TheGuardian Business

www.guardian.ng Friday, October 16, 2026 Guardian Nigeria GuardianNigeria 08136370421 Guardiannigeria

CRUDE OIL PRICE UPDATE Brent crude: $107.0 | WTI crude: $94.96 **FOREX MARKET UPDATE** I&E Window: N1,326.00

Nigerians hopeful lower inflation reflects in household spending relief

By Tobi Awodipe, Isaac Chibuife (Lagos) and Joseph Chibueze (Abuja)

. CPPE seeks further rate cuts, warns of rising energy costs

NIGERIA's inflation cooled in September, offering a glimmer of relief for households and businesses battered by months of rising costs. Headline inflation slowed to 14.63 per cent from 15.39 per cent in August, driven by a 1.55 per cent month-on-month drop in food prices.

Yet for families in Lagos, the story is starkly different: food inflation surged to 34.40 per cent, underscoring the uneven burden of living costs across the country and the persistent strain on urban households.

The September rate is 0.76 percentage points lower than the previous month and 6.35 percentage points below the 20.98 per cent recorded in September 2025, according to the Consumer Price Index (CPI) report released by the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) yesterday. It is the fourth consecutive monthly decline, following the first drop in June, and the lowest rate since the NBS changed its CPI methodology in January 2025.

However, the report showed that the moderation in inflation has not yet translated into uniform relief across the country. Food inflation remained elevated at 19.59 per cent year-on-year, while Lagos recorded the highest state-level food inflation rate at 34.40 per cent. On a month-on-month basis, headline inflation slowed sharply to 0.06 per cent in September from 0.71 per cent in August, indicating that the average price level increased at a much slower pace during the month.

The CPI, which measures changes in the prices of goods and services households consume, rose marginally from 146.30 in August to 146.38 in September.

Despite the slowdown, the figures underline the distinction between falling inflation and falling prices. While the rate of price increases has moderated, the report does not indicate that the general price level has returned to previous levels.

Food inflation, one of the most consequential components of household expenditure, stood at 19.59 per cent year-on-year in September. That is marginally higher than the 19.57 per cent recorded in August, but lower than the 20.16 per cent in the corresponding month of 2025.

More significantly, food inflation declined by 1.55 per cent month-on-month, reversing the 1.02 per cent increase recorded in August.

The NBS attributed the monthly decline to changes in the prices of several food items, including local short-grain rice, maize flour, guinea corn flour, eggs, onions, palm oil, green beans, Irish potatoes, okra, fresh tomatoes, dried green peas and plantain.

The decline suggested that food prices eased across a range of important household staples during the month, although the annual inflation rate indicates that food costs remain substantially higher than a year earlier.

Food and non-alcoholic beverages remained the largest driver of headline inflation, contributing 5.85 percentage points, ahead of restaurants and accommodation services (1.89) and transport (1.56).

The report also put the average yearly food inflation rate for the 12 months ending September 2026 at 15.72 per cent, compared with 28.37 per cent recorded in September 2025.

A breakdown of inflation across states reveals significant disparities in food price movements, with Lagos recording the highest year-on-year food inflation at 34.40 per cent. Imo State followed with 33.79 per cent, while Ondo recorded 31.49 per cent.

At the other end of the scale, Taraba recorded a negative year-on-year food inflation rate of 7.47 per cent, followed by Yobe at negative 0.37 per cent. Borno recorded 2.18 per cent.

The figures highlighted the uneven distribution of food price pressures across the country, with households in some states continuing to face steep increases even as national inflation moderates.

On a month-on-month basis, Imo recorded the highest food inflation at 5.15 per cent, followed by Ondo at 4.46 per cent and Oyo at 3.82 per cent.

In contrast, Adamawa recorded a decline of 13.84 per cent, Kano 11.01 per cent and Bauchi 10.21 per cent. The state-level figures suggest that the national decline in food inflation masks substantial differences in local price movements.

While headline and food inflation moderated, core inflation moved in the opposite direction monthly.

NIMC onboards 63 biometric agents, reaffirms local hosting of national database

By Adeyemi Adepetun

THE National Identity Management Commission (NIMC) has integrated 63 biometric capturing agents into its enrolment system; a move it claims will expand access to identity registration across Nigeria. The commission also emphasised that its national identity database remains securely hosted within the country, countering concerns about foreign storage or external control.

According to NIMC, the addition of these agents is part of ongoing efforts to strengthen Nigeria's identity infrastructure and ensure wider coverage for citizens and legal residents.

Director of NIMC's Strategic Programme Office, Dr Alvan Ikoku, disclosed this during a virtual session with the Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI) Alumni Network, organised by the Media Foundation for West Africa.

Ikoku, who used the interaction to discuss key provisions and developments under the amended Act, said that while harmonisation with other government parastatals and agencies remains gradual, "There has been huge success around integration of some disparate data. Harmonisation handshake has been slow because some of these entities still lack what to offer to ensure seamless harmonisation, but we are good on integration. I can say about 95 per cent of integration has been achieved."

He disclosed that while it is "One thing is to be ready to integrate with agencies, another issue is the maturity of some of these organisations and agencies. NIMC has an API set, and if they are ready, in less than 72 hours, integration can happen, but harmonisation can be delayed due to some challenges."

According to him, there has been integration with the Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board, Nigerian Education Loan Fund, National Health Insurance Authority, among others.

On local hosting of data, the NIMC chief said the national identity database is hosted entirely in Nigeria and managed by its own employees.

He said locally hosted databases not only guarantee data sovereignty but also enhance security, transparency, and compliance with national regulations governing personal information.

"It is being managed by Nigerians, not Nigerian vendors, by NIMC employees," Ikoku said. He maintained that NIMC has never hosted its identity data outside the country, does not use cloud hosting for its core database, and has disaster recovery systems to keep services running when systems fail.

Ikoku said NIMC maintains its core database internally and subjects employees, particularly those responsible for database management, to ongoing scrutiny by security agencies. He added that staff could face legal consequences for misconduct.

On the 2026 NIMC Act, Ikoku informed that it requires compliance with the Nigeria Data Protection Act and sets conditions for disclosing registered persons' information. These include consent, legal obligations, public-interest functions, criminal investigations and court proceedings.

He said NIMC's role is to authenticate identities, not retain the reasons behind verification requests made by other organisations.

"The commission is supposed to coordinate authentication and verification, but the authentication that the commission needs to make may be coming from another entity," Ikoku said.



Front row; Group Chairman, Nigerian Exchange Group (NGX Group), Dr. Umaru Kwairanga (left); President and Chairman, African Export-Import Bank (Afreximbank), Dr. George Elombi; President and Chief Executive, Dangote Industries Limited, Aliko Dangote; Executive Chairman, Egyptian Exchange (EGX), Omar Radwan; Group Managing Director/Chief Executive Officer, NGX Group, Temi Popoola and GMD/CEO, Vetiva Capital Management, Chuka Eseka; Back row; Managing Director/Chief Executive Officer, Central Securities Clearing System (CSCS) Plc, Shehu Shantali; Chairperson, Botswana Stock Exchange, Neo Mooki; Group Chief Financial Officer, Dangote Industries Limited, Murat Erden and Vice Chairman, EGX, Mohammed Sabry at the Dangote Petroleum Refinery Roadshow, hosted by EGX and Afreximbank, held at the Egyptian Exchange in Cairo, Egypt.

States, LGs get 56% of N2.43tr September revenue allocation

From Joseph Chibueze, Abuja

THE 36 states and 774 local government areas of the Federation received a combined N1.36 trillion, representing 56.1 per cent of the N2.428 trillion shared from the Federation Account in September 2026, as deductions, transfers and savings significantly reduced the gross revenue available for distribution.

The 36 states received N799.872 billion, while local government councils got N560.660 billion, according to a communiqué issued after the October meeting of the Federation Account Allocation Committee (FAAC) in Abuja.

The Federal Government received N832.242 billion, while oil-producing states shared an additional N236.049 billion as their 13 per cent derivation revenue.

The total distributable revenue comprised N1.672 trillion from statutory revenue and N756.587 billion from Value Added Tax (VAT).

However, the N2.428 trillion shared among the three tiers of government was substantially lower than the N3.913 trillion gross revenue available for distribution in September.

The communiqué showed that N131.758 billion was deducted as collection costs, while transfers, refunds and savings amounted to N1.352 trillion, leaving the balance available for distribution.

A breakdown of the revenue sources showed that gross statutory revenue rose to N3.096 trillion in September, representing an increase of N246.384 billion from the N2.850 trillion recorded in August.

In contrast, gross VAT revenue fell to N816.872 billion from N834.843 billion in the preceding month, representing a decline of N17.972 billion.

Of the N1.672 trillion distributable statutory revenue, the Federal Government received N756.583 billion, while the state governments got N383.749 billion.

Local government councils received N295.855 billion, while oil-producing states shared N236.049 billion as derivation revenue.

Under the VAT-sharing arrangement, the Federal Government received N75.659 billion, the states got N416.123 billion, and local government councils received N264.805 billion.

The communiqué further revealed mixed performances across major revenue sources during the period.

Receipts from Petroleum Profit Tax, Hydrocarbon Tax, petroleum royalties, import duty, Common External Tariff levies and excise duty recorded significant increases.

However, revenue from Companies Income Tax, Capital Gains Tax, Stamp Duties, VAT, mineral royalties, gas-flaring penalties, gas-flaring fees and miscellaneous oil revenue declined considerably.

Nigeria imports 5.6m tonnes of wheat as FG targets cheaper bread

From **Collins Olayinka**, Abuja

THE Federal Government has moved to address Nigeria's heavy dependence on imported wheat and high food production costs, identifying weak domestic supply, underutilised industrial capacity and expensive financing as major constraints to making bread and other wheat-based foods affordable.

The government's intervention comes as Nigeria's wheat imports are estimated at 5.6 million metric tonnes for the 2026/2027 marketing year, against domestic production of about 120,000 metric tonnes, highlighting the gap between local output and the requirements of the country's food manufacturing industry.

This was disclosed yesterday at the launch of Project WHEAT-NESS in Abuja, a Federal Government programme aimed at improving the competitiveness of the wheat-based foods value chain and reducing avoidable production costs.

The Special Adviser to the President on Industry, Trade and Investment, John Uwajumogu, said Nigeria's dependence on imported wheat exposed consumers and businesses to international price shocks, exchange-rate movements and disruptions to global supply chains.

He cited the COVID-19 pandemic and the 2022 Russia-Ukraine war as examples of how international disruptions raised wheat prices and, in turn, increased the cost of food for Nigerian households.

He said Project WHEAT-NESS was designed to improve coordination among government institutions, farmers, millers, manufacturers, financial institutions and distributors to address constraints across the value chain.

Nigeria's wheat milling capacity is estimated at eight million metric tonnes. At the same time, the Minister of State for Industry, Senator John Owan Enoh, said the country's mills were operating at roughly half their production capacity.

The disparity pointed to a challenge beyond industrial infrastructure: the availability of locally produced wheat in the volume, quality and price required by processors.

Enoh said the government would pursue an integrated approach covering domestic production, industrial processing, small businesses, consumer markets and financing, stressing that improving efficiency across the chain was necessary to strengthen competitiveness and affordability.

Ex-SAHCO chief warns of illegal car sales at airport cargo terminals

By **Olusegun Koiki**

FORMER Managing Director of Skyway Aviation Handling Company (SAHCO) Plc, Dr Oluropo Owolabi, has called for urgent intervention to halt the conversion of international bonded cargo terminals into illegal car dealerships, unauthorised trading centres and commercial motorcycle parking lots.

Owolabi, who expressed concern over the deteriorating state of aviation logistics infrastructure in Nigeria, said the development was hindering the purpose of facilities designed to meet international standards and facilitate efficient cargo clearance.

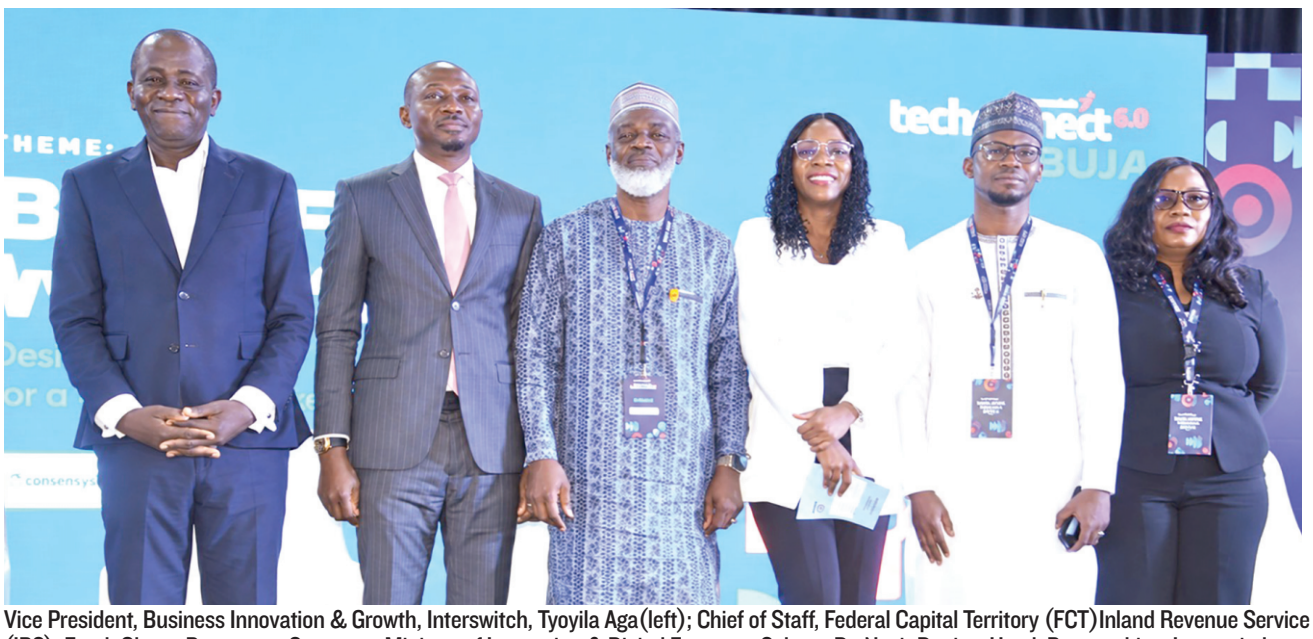
Speaking at the SAHCO Cargo Stakeholders Forum held in Lagos yesterday, he lamented that modern cargo warehouses were increasingly being used for activities unrelated to their core functions.

He mentioned the SIFAX Bonded Warehouse as an example of a world-class facility designed to support efficient document processing, customs duty assessment, security clearance and prompt cargo release.

He said: "If you want to buy a good car today, you go to the airport cargo warehouse! That place is meant strictly for clearing goods, not for people to sit down and start selling like a sausage market.

"The presence of multiple government security and regulatory agencies at cargo terminals is one of the major obstacles to efficient operations. The overlapping activities of these agencies create unnecessary bureaucratic bottlenecks."

According to him, while major international airports streamline cargo operations to minimise delays, Nigerian terminals often have as many as 10 different agency representations around individual consignments.



Vice President, Business Innovation & Growth, Interswitch, Tyoyila Aga (left); Chief of Staff, Federal Capital Territory (FCT) Inland Revenue Service (IRS), Frank Obaro; Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Innovation & Digital Economy, Sokoto, Dr. Nasir Daniya; Head, Partnerships, Interswitch, Suliyat Aliyu; Technical Assistant to the Director General, Kano State Information Technology Development Agency, Ahmed Idris; and Vice President, Enterprise Sales & Account Management, Interswitch, Serhomome Agbofode during the Interswitch TechConnect 6.0 Industry Engagement Conference held in Abuja. PHOTO: LUCY LADIDI ATEKO

'Nigeria's black-owned businesses face $131 billion funding gap'

By **Benjamin Alade**

BLACK-OWNED and -led businesses in Nigeria face a financing gap estimated at $131 billion, the largest among five African markets examined in a new report by British International Investment (BII) and Swedfund.

The report, "Understanding the Investment Gaps in Black-owned and -led Businesses in Sub-Saharan Africa," estimated that the combined funding gap for such businesses in Nigeria, South Africa, Kenya, Senegal and Côte d'Ivoire stands at $209 billion, highlighting the scale of unmet demand for capital across the region.

The research, released yesterday, found that Nigeria accounts for the largest share of the estimated shortfall, followed by South Africa with $45 billion, Kenya with $23 billion, Senegal with $5.7 billion and Côte d'Ivoire with $4.6 billion.

Across sub-Saharan Africa, the financing gap for Black-owned and -led businesses is estimated at $1.842 trillion, according to the report, which combines market analysis with consultations with stakeholders to examine business representation, access to capital and barriers to growth.

The findings highlighted the financing constraints facing businesses that contribute significantly to economic activity but struggle to secure the capital needed to expand operations, create jobs and compete in larger markets.

According to the report, Black-owned and -led businesses account for between 89 and 99 per cent of small businesses across the five countries. However, their representation declines as businesses grow, falling to 40 per cent of larger businesses in Kenya and 35 per cent in South Africa.

The report attributed the disparity partly to difficulties in accessing growth capital, suggesting that many businesses struggle to move beyond the small and medium-sized enterprise stage, where financing needs typically increase.

QNET tasks Nigerian youths on ethical direct selling, entrepreneurship

By **Adeyemi Adepetun**

AS Nigeria faces rising youth unemployment and increasing scrutiny of informal business models, trust has become the defining currency of entrepreneurship. Against this backdrop, QNET, a global wellness and lifestyle company, is positioning ethical direct selling not as a quick income promise but as a regulated, transparent pathway into micro-entrepreneurship.

Operating in Nigeria since 2021 through independent distributors and digital sales channels, QNET stresses that legitimate direct selling relies on verifiable product sales rather than recruitment schemes.

The firm said this distinction separates ethical direct selling from fraudulent operations that exploit vulnerable youth.

Speaking with the media yesterday on the just-completed VCON 2026 conference held in Malaysia, Regional General Manager, Central and West Africa, QNET, Cheriff Sarr, said direct selling offers ambitious individuals a chance to build independent businesses with minimal overhead. He said yet, the industry often faces public scepticism due to bad actors and unauthorised entities misusing prominent brand names to misrepresent business models.

He said to combat misconceptions, major global lifestyle and wellness direct-selling organisations, such as QNET, have reinforced zero-tolerance policies against unethical business practices.

According to him, key protective measures central to this framework include absolute transparency, strict compliance, valid contract registration, accurate representation, among others.

He said sustainable growth in direct marketing relies heavily on high-quality product offerings and scientific innovation.

NIFST seeks stronger pact to commercialise food research, boost export

By **Tobi Awodipe**

THE Nigerian Institute of Food Science and Technology (NIFST) has called for stronger collaboration among universities, research institutions, government agencies, regulators and private sector operators to translate food research into commercially viable products, strengthen local industries and expand Nigeria's export opportunities.

The institute also urged the government to increase funding for agricultural research, streamline regulatory approvals, protect intellectual property and provide incentives for research and development to accelerate innovation and commercialisation.

Speaking at NIFST's 50th conference and yearly general meeting in Lagos recently, its President, Dr Bola Osinowo, said Nigeria must move beyond scientific discoveries to develop market-ready products that can aid job creation, attract investment and compete in international markets.

The conference, themed "Transforming Food Research into Enterprise through Innovation and Commercialisation for Sustainable Development," brought together researchers, scientists, manufacturers, university academics and representatives of regulatory agencies, including the National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control (NAFDAC) and the Standards Organisation of Nigeria (SON).

Osinowo said the institute's next 50 years should focus on positioning Nigeria as a leading destination for food research and commercialisation, noting that although academia drives innovation, industry participation is essential to translating discoveries into sustainable businesses.

High customer acquisition costs force businesses to rethink marketing strategies

By **Gloria Nwafor**

NIGERIAN businesses have been urged to rethink their marketing strategies as rising customer acquisition costs and weakening brand loyalty make it increasingly difficult to achieve sustainable growth through conventional advertising and promotional campaigns.

Marketing experts at the fifth yearly public lecture of the National Institute of Marketing of Nigeria (NIMN), Ikeja Chapter, in Lagos, said businesses must embrace artificial intelligence (AI), customer experience, integrated data systems and purpose-driven branding to improve profitability, retain customers and deliver measurable returns on marketing investments.

Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of Nitro121, Lampe Omoyele; Professor Lere Baale, a fellow of NIMN; President and Chairman of Council of NIMN, Dr Bolajoko Bayo-Ajayi; and Chairman of the institute's Ikeja Chapter, Onome Odili, said marketing must become a strategic business function linked directly to revenue, profitability and customer retention.

Speaking on the theme: "The New Marketing Blueprint: Driving Growth Through AI, Customer Experience, Data Ecosystems and Purpose-Driven Brands," the speakers said large advertising budgets, celebrity endorsements and promotional campaigns could no longer guarantee business growth.

Omoyele said customer acquisition costs in key sectors had risen by more than 40 per cent in two years, while brand loyalty had declined by nearly a third, forcing businesses to find more effective ways to attract and retain customers.

He said increased marketing expenditure did not necessarily translate into stronger customer relationships, adding that businesses must combine AI for efficiency, customer experience for retention, data systems for precision and purpose-driven branding for loyalty.

According to him, AI could improve advertising efficiency, personalise customer engagement, analyse consumer feedback and support faster business decisions. AI-driven programmatic advertising, he added, was helping early adopters in Nigeria reduce cost per effective reach by between 38 and 45 per cent.

He urged marketing professionals to develop AI literacy and use the technology to anticipate customer needs and improve marketing decisions.

Baale said marketing professionals must measure success through revenue, profit margins, customer retention and trust rather than campaign activities alone.

FEDERAL MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT

PUBLIC NOTICE

PUBLIC DISPLAY EXERCISE ON THE ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT PLAN (EMP) REPORTS OF THE PROPOSED CONSTRUCTION OF ONE HUNDRED AND TWELVE (112) BASE TRANSCEIVER STATION (BTS) SITES IN TWENTY-ONE STATES AND THE FCT BY INDUS TOWERS NIGERIA LIMITED

In accordance with the provisions of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Act CAP E12 LFN 2004, which makes it mandatory for proponents of all new major development activities to carry out Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) of their proposed projects, the Federal Ministry of Environment hereby announces twenty–one (21) working days Public Notice for information and comments on the Draft EMP Reports submitted by Indus Towers Nigeria Limited.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

The proposed projects involve the design, construction, installation, operation and maintenance of One Hundred and Twelve (112) Base Transceiver Stations (BTS) and other ancillary facilities across Twenty-One (21) States and the FCT as listed below:

S/N	SITE ID	STATE	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	SITE LOCATION
1.	LG4990	Lagos	6.5736	3.26	3, Ekpo Achibong Close, Greenland Estate Isheri Lagos
2.	LG5163	Lagos	6.5679	3.2655	28, Ayo AJiloreStreet, Idimu Ikotun, Lagos
3.	LG5113	Lagos	6.6625	3.6746	15, Oyemade Street, Imota Lagos State
4.	LG4983	Lagos	6.5019	3.2974	Austin Obiador street, divine estate, off community road. Ago palace way
5.	LG4937	Lagos	6.5657	3.3705	Plot 1 Emperor Bayway Close, Anthony Village, Lagos State
6.	SK0520	Sokoto	13.0507	5.2522	Rjiya Shehu, Akalawa Area, Sokoto, Sokoto State.
7.	AI0966	Abia	5.1167	7.3847	No.10 Egege Street Off Ukaegbu Road Ugbor-Hill Aba, Aba North LGA, Abia State
8.	IM1035	Imo	5.5249	7.0671	a parcel of Onyekuru family land at Umudeleorji community, Owerri North LGA, Imo state.
9.	AB1208	FCT, Abuja	9.0737	7.4511	A property situated at T.O.S. Benson Crescent Utako FCT Abuja.
10.	ED1183	Edo	6.3065	5.6033	Gapiona Rd. off Airport road Benin City.
11.	DL1007	Delta	5.507273	5.766499	Merogun Ogisiapia off Iyara road Warri South LGA. Delta state
12.	KN0954	Kano	11.937596	8.552456	NAIBAWA QUARTER OPP. KANO LINE TRANSPORT PARK ALONG ZARIA ROAD KUMBOTSO LGA KANO STATE.
13.	OG1977	Ogun	7.1668	3.292	Alafia Community, Akorede Area, Mile 2, Abeokuta, Ogun state.
14.	LG5029	Lagos	6.4386	3.4805	Engineer George Enenmoh Crescent, Lagos, Eti Osa, Lagos State
15.	KN1260	Kano	11.9982	8.5655	NO.4 SAADINAH DANTATA AVENUE BY SULTAN/LAMIDO CRESENT ROAD NASSARAWA GRA KANO
16.	BY0629	Bayelsa	4.721236	6.360973	A parcel of land located at Asuo Compound, Otakeme Community, Ogbia LGA, Bayelsa State.
17.	RV1335	Rivers	4.785278	6.961667	No.2 Chief Chike Avenue by Saipen Road off Mgbuodohia Rumuolumeni Obi/Akpor LGA, Rivers State.
18.	RV1357	Rivers	4.998056	6.821389	A property located Behind Obelle Market Obelle, Emuoha LGA Rivers State.
19.	CR0773	Cross River	5.01321	8.32509	a parcel of land located at Calabar municipality opposite depot
20.	RV1358	Rivers	5.109468	6.624531	A property situated along Ula-Ahoada-Umuoku Road, Ahoada East LGA, Rivers State.
21.	IM1042	Imo	5.44	7.038333	a parcel of land located at Umuofocha Nekede
22.	ED1198	Edo	6.30104	5.61281	Ruben Agho Street, Benin City, Oredo, Edo State
23.	LG5020	Lagos	6.4245	3.5326	Okun-Ajah Road, Lagos, Eti Osa, Lagos State
24.	LG5023	Lagos	6.42515	3.45621	Lagos-Calabar Coastal Highway, Lagos, Eti Osa, Lagos State
25.	LG5021	Lagos	6.4252	3.5454	Barb wire Junction, Off Lagos - Calabar Coastal highway, Lekki, Lagos.
26.	LG5026	Lagos	6.42567	3.4973	ilasan New Road close to lagos calabar coaster higher way,Lagos State
27.	LG5016	Lagos	6.428	3.5088	Oasis Estate, opposite Data centre, along coaster Road, Lekki, Lagos
28.	OY1816	Oyo	7.31332	3.85134	New Garage,Itere junction,Isokn Extension Estate,Zone D, Oluyole LGA,Ibadan.
29.	AB1827	FCT, Abuja	8.994838	7.47928	Behind FUNTAJ International School Gudu Apo FCT Abuja.
30.	AB1894	FCT, Abuja	9.001667	7.475278	Odumegwu Ojukwu Way, Abuja, Municipal Area Council, Federal Capital Territory
31.	AB1861	FCT, Abuja	9.020833	7.518611	Linda Chalka Abuja
32.	AB1864	FCT, Abuja	9.0493	7.4575	Behind Standard Organization of Nigeria (SON) Wuse Zone 7 FCT Abuja.
33.	AB1895	FCT, Abuja	9.089722	7.449167	Capital Hub Plaza Along Jahi Ahmad Bello Way, Wuse Abuja Nigeria.
34.	AB1857	FCT, Abuja	9.0925	7.420833	Capital hub Plaza. Natasha Akpoti Street Gwarimpa Abuja.
35.	AB1824	FCT, Abuja	9.125	7.3717	KARSSANA BY DAWAKI BRIDGE, KUBWA ROAD, FCT, ABUJA
36.	BU0685	Bauchi	10.302222	9.817778	GRA Shagari Quarters behind Deputy Governor house Bauchi, Bauchi State.
37.	BU0684	Bauchi	11.650556	10.166111	KAKUDI TOWN ALONG SHIRA ROAD OPP. GOVT COLLEGE AZARE SPECIAL SCHOOL KATAGUM LGA BAUCHI STATE.
38.	RV8515	Rivers	4.7595	7.0375	Royal Ray Connection Limited, Port Harcourt Rivers
39.	AI8503	Abia	5.1116461	7.40002234	2, Akubranda Street off 162 Ikot Express Road Abia
40.	LG8504	Lagos	6.4395	3.4926	Mega-mound Estate, Ojunlari Street, Lekki Lagos
41.	LG8513	Lagos	6.4479	3.5519	Road 34, Lagos, Eti Osa, Lagos State
42.	LG8514	Lagos	6.4577	3.4783	Michael Olawale Cole Drive, Lagos, Eti Osa, Lagos State
43.	LG8618	Lagos	6.457964	3.540017	Kid Court Street, Lagos, Eti Osa, Lagos State
44.	OG8518	Ogun	6.944633	3.917886	A piece of land Omabamiro St. Konigba, Ago-Iwoye, Ogun State.
45.	AB8518	FCT, Abuja	9.0341	7.5225	Anguwar Guragu Yan Kilishi,Rail Way Station, Judges Quarters FCT Abuja Nigeria.
46.	KD8504	Kaduna	10.6014578	7.43879243	Airforce Base Kaduna
47.	DL1067	Delta	6.1829	6.6508	Delta state Agriculture & Rural Development Authority, IBUSA Delta State
48.	LG3286	Lagos	6.5654	3.3304	Adijatu Lawal street, Mafoluku, Airport Road, Ikeja, Lagos
49.	OY1741	Oyo	7.4295	3.2865	Plot @ Lawal Estate, Imeleke Road, Idofin Igboora, Oyo State.
50.	LG5019	Lagos	6.5239	3.2582	At Major Olu Abiodun Avenue, Off Ijegun Ikotun Road, Ijegun, Lagos
51.	LG5024	Lagos	6.5021	3.3833	Karimu Ikotun Street, Lagos, Lagos Mainland, Lagos State
52.	LG5028	Lagos	6.5281	3.3992	Ilaje Road, Lagos, Shomolu, Lagos State
53.	LG9187	Lagos	6.508	3.369	Tejuosho Market, Yaba, Lagos
54.	LG5018	Lagos	6.6393	3.3294	21 Coker Street, Off College Road, Ifako, Lagos
55.	LG5122	Lagos	6.5158	3.3824	African Church Primary School, Abule Oja, Yaba, Lago
56.	LG4594	Lagos	6.4579	3.3296	Oyejide Street, Ajegunle Lagos
57.	EN0922	Enugu	6.4428	7.5078	off Lagos Street, Enugu, Enugu State
58.	AB1871	FCT, Abuja	9.0494	7.4497	Finance Quarters, Wuye District, Abuja
59.	LG5211	Lagos	6.5153	3.3047	Alhaji Babs Aregbesola Street, Okota, Lagos
60.	LG4511	Lagos	6.553	3.3664	225 Ikorodu Road, Ilupeju, Lagos
61.	AB1972	FCT, Abuja	9.0069	7.5734	LEA Primary Schol, Karu, AMAC, Abuja
62.	LG5206	Lagos	6.547	3.3762	Selesi Street, Lagos, Shomolu, Lagos State
63.	LG5205	Lagos	6.5495	3.3307	7n8 Junction, Awoniyi Elena Street, Ajao Estate, Isolo Way, Lagos.
64.	LG4119	Lagos	6.4643	3.3188	Amuwo Odofin Industrial Estate Off Badagry Mile 2, Lagos
65.	LG4486	Lagos	6.5148	3.329	Fayemi Street Ilasa Maja, Lagos
66.	LG3950	Lagos	6.5473	3.3418	Nigeria Armed Forces Resettlement Centre, Oshodi, Lagos.
67.	KN1261	Kano	12.0053	8.5133	Kurmi Market, Municipal Local Government, Kano
68.	LG3429	Lagos	6.5267	3.3439	Omu Street, Olawoyin, Wassap Junction, Mushin, Lagos.
69.	AB1955	FCT, Abuja	8.9672	7.4715	Basic Estate, Lokogoma District, Abuja
70.	LG5219	Lagos	6.5685	3.2574	Abimbola Soetan Stret, Governor's Road Ikotun, Lagos.
71.	LG5212	Lagos	6.5071	3.5859	Abiodun Layout Street, Salvation Estate Ajah, Lagos
72.	LG4106	Lagos	6.5477	3.3627	Obanikoro Bus Stop, Association Avenue, Ilupeju Lagos.
73.	AB1897	FCT, Abuja	8.993	7.4231	Donaye Guest Res Hotel, Galadimawa, AMAC, Abuja
74.	LG3454	Lagos	6.5801	3.2797	Goodluck Ebele Housing Estate, Phidel Road Isheri, Lagos
75.	KG0615	Kogi	7.8392	6.7421	Transformer Junction, Matric Area behind Kogi State Polytechnic Lokoja, Kogi State.
76.	AB1971	FCT, Abuja	9.1122	7.4166	Plot 15, Block 1, Beside Redeem Church, Setraco, Gwarinpa, Abuja
77.	AB1836	FCT, Abuja	8.9964	7.3755	Winners Chapel Church Peace Village, Federal Capital Territory
78.	LG5213	Lagos	6.5255	3.2397	Gbolagade Oladeji Street, Ijegun Ikotun, Lagos.
79.	RV0635	Rivers	4.8823	6.9095	All Weather Street, Choba, Port Harcourt, Rivers State
80.	RV1317	Rivers	4.8636	6.9761	Apara Ikinigbo Estate, Port Harcourt, Rivers State
81.	DL1354	Delta	5.5007	5.7986	No 20C, Ghvwan Street, off Orhuwhorun Road, Ovwian, Warri, Delta State
82.	AB1875	FCT, Abuja	9.1913	7.3345	Kuchbuni, Federal capital Territory
83.	AB1812	FCT, Abuja	9.1169	7.2773	Along Chief Palace, Saburi 1, AMAC, Abuja
84.	AB1831	FCT, Abuja	9.1196	7.3969	Manhattan Plaza, Gwarinpa, Abuja
85.	KN1291	Kano	11.9567	8.4652	Dorayi Babba, Kumbotso LGA, Kano
86.	LG5060	Lagos	6.4888	3.8044	Located At Borrow Pit Area, Ofiran-Onosa, Ibeju-Lekki, Lagos.
87.	EB0532	Ebonyi	6.2941	8.0862	25 Oboagu, off Nkaliki Primary School, Nkaliki, Abakaliki LGA, Ebonyi state
88.	KN1252	Kano	12.0395	8.492	Kurna Quarters Kano State
89.	AB1744	FCT, Abuja	9.1167	7.3839	6931, Road, 6th Avenue, Gwarinpa, Abuja
90.	AB0698	FCT, Abuja	9.0061	7.5182	Opp. NPA House, Guzape District, Abuja
91.	BY0616	Bayelsa	4.9343	6.3342	Custom road Opolo Yenagoa, Yenagoa LGA, Bayelsa State
92.	BU0687	Bauchi	11.3797	9.9535	Kofa Garbas, Foggo, Shira L.G.A., Bauchi State
93.	BU0694	Bauchi	11.56595	9.98047	Beli Town, Beli Ward, Shira Local Government Area, Bauchi State
94.	EK0516	Ekiti	7.959258	5.256583	St. James Anglican Church Iporo Rd, Eda-Oniyo Ekiti, Ekiti State
95.	BU0690	Bauchi	11.31603	10.04429	Ungwan Mallam Mua'zu, Bangire, Shira Local Government Area, Bauchi State
96.	BU0691	Bauchi	11.506911	10.200548	Goborawa, Uzum Isawa, Giade L.G.A., Bauchi State
97.	EK0572	Ekiti	7.665694	5.220099	Olohunda zone 3, by Olohunda Pry Sch. Ado Ekiti, Ekiti State.
98.	OG2365	Ogun	6.556	3.1246	Ado Odo/Ota , Igbessa Ogun State
99.	OY1669	Oyo	7.3795	3.8881	Amunigun Street, Ibadan, Ibadan South West, Oyo State
100.	AN1170	Anambra	6.2055	7.0648	Parcel Of Communal Igweogige Amaikwo Awka, Awka South LGA, Anambra State
101.	ON0926	Ondo	6.7639	4.8745	Owodunni Street, Ore Ondo State
102.	DL1352	Delta	5.5951	5.8293	Dick Abgoire Street, along Osubi-Orerokpe Road, Osubi, Okpe LGA, Delta State
103.	OY1717	Oyo	7.4159	3.9021	A parcel of land at no 29 Ibikunle Avenue off Adeyi Bodija Ibadan, Oyo State.
104.	OY1731	Oyo	7.4046	3.8686	A parcel of land along Eleyele-Jericho Ibadan Oyo State.
105.	DL1301	Delta	6.1902	6.7199	Charles Ibe Edozzien Street, by Former FRSC Office, Asaba-Onitsha Road, Asaba, Delta State
106.	OG2335	Ogun	6.6782	3.1911	A parcel of land at Anuoluwapo Street, off Atan Road, Ota Ogun State
107.	OY1676	Oyo	7.366	3.8465	Olubadan Avenue, Apataganga, Ibadan South West, Oyo State
108.	OS0908	Osun	7.7891	4.5048	Back of Victory Montessori International School, Osogbo.
109.	LG4825	Lagos	6.4759	3.597	General Paint B/Stop. Off Alase Road, Ajah, Lagos.
110.	AB1585	FCT, Abuja	9.001439	7.455055	Drive 2, Abuja, Municipal Area Council, Federal Capital Territory
111.	LG8675	Lagos	6.4647	3.4596	3rd Avenue, Lagos, Eti Osa, Lagos State
112.	LG4130	Lagos	6.4972	3.3357	Kusimo Street, Surulere, Lagos

VENUES OF DISPLAY:

- Federal Ministry of Environment, Environment House, Central Area, Abuja FCT
- Federal Ministry of Environment Offices in all the affected States
- www.ead.gov.ng

DURATION OF DISPLAY:

Date: 16th October– 13th November, 2026

Time: 8:00am – 4:00pm Daily.

COMMENTS SHOULD BE FORWARDED TO THE HON. MINISTER, FEDERAL MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT MABUSHI, ABUJA-FCT OR info@ead.gov.ng ON BEFORE 20th NOVEMBER, 2026.

SIGNED
PERMANENT SECRETARY
FOR: HONOURABLE MINISTER

Politics&Policy

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'Peculiarities in some states made Rainbow Coalition inevitable'

*In his monthly media interaction, Minister of the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Nyesom Wike, explains the rationale behind the Rainbow Coalition supporting President Bola Tinubu across party lines, while challenging the record and public claims of ADC vice-presidential candidate, Rotimi Amaechi. **LEO SOBECHI** was there.*

You are in the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), mobilising support for President Bola Tinubu of the All Progressives Congress (APC). How do you reconcile this with concerns raised by APC governors?

IT started when various stakeholders resolved to support Mr President and APC candidates for the National Assembly. PDP candidates also said they would support him. Why should anybody see a problem with that?

There are peculiarities in some states. Take Anambra, for example. Governor Charles Soludo supports the President. Does that mean his party will not field candidates for the House of Representatives? There is no confusion here. It shows that if you are a leader and your people believe in you, they are likely to listen when you speak. That is leadership capacity.

For us, whoever has an idea or anything to contribute to the success of Mr President is welcome. The fact that you are not in the APC should not matter. Anybody who thinks otherwise is a non-starter in politics.

Is President Tinubu the originator of a political arrangement in which opposition parties support a sitting president? Having silenced your critics, particularly APC governors, do you now consider yourself his political godson?

I don't know where you are getting all this from. You are among those who think this is a problem when it is not. I would not call it a novelty. People have supported candidates across party lines before, although perhaps not so formally. Sometimes, people support you at the national level but insist on controlling their states. They want you to win the presidency but will not relinquish their political interests at the subnational level.

This time, the arrangement has become more visible because of the period we are in. Many people have been making noise about the 2027 election, claiming that the President has done nothing and should leave office.

But the governor of Bauchi State, who belongs to the Allied Peoples Movement (APM), a party with its own presidential candidate, appeared on television to say that Mr President had performed well. Speaking from his experience in Bauchi, he compared the state of the economy before and after Tinubu assumed office.

You cannot simply say that because you belong to an opposition party, the man managing the country's affairs has done nothing. That is unfair. Politics should not be a do-or-die affair.

We believe Mr President has done well, although the opposition wants to take over power. Even if a government has done things to satisfy some Nigerians, the opposition will still argue that it has achieved nothing. We believe Nigerians should hear the truth, including from those of us who belong to other political parties.

As for being called Tinubu's godson, I am not concerned about that. When you see someone doing something good for the country, you should acknowledge it, regardless of party affiliation.

You have recently criticised your predecessor in Rivers State, Rotimi Amaechi, who is now the vice-presidential candidate of the African Democratic Congress (ADC). Is this about political power, the forthcoming election or personal animosity?

I don't understand what you mean by being hard on him. I am not criticising him for the sake of it. Nigerians like to play to the gallery.

Here is somebody aspiring to become the country's vice-president. If anything happens to the president and he succeeds him, he could become president. Such a person should be properly scrutinised.

Amaechi has criticised Mr President, questioning his capacity. That is not a problem, but some of his comments have become personal. We accuse the media of bias because issues raised against certain politicians receive little attention.

I challenge journalists to invite him and ask questions about the issues I have raised. Instead, some people publish whatever they want. A television presenter accused me of bragging about being in charge of the FCT and Rivers State. Where is the bragging? Some journalists have their political preferences, and it shows in their coverage.

You cannot aspire to high public office and expect Nigerians not to examine your record. Let the electorate decide whether the allegations against you are true and whether you deserve their votes.

When somebody calls the President a thief and says only thieves will vote for him, should we ignore that? You must respect the office of the President, irrespective of your opinion of the individual. If Amaechi makes such allegations, he should also be prepared to answer questions about his own record.

What specific questions do you want Amaechi to answer?

First, when he was governor of Rivers State, he said he would fumigate the state to eliminate mosquitoes and reduce malaria. He reportedly paid $10 million to a Cuban company for the project. Nigerians should ask him how the project was executed and what results it achieved.

Rivers State shares boundaries with Imo, Abia and Bayelsa states. How would the fumigation have worked without addressing the possibility of mosquitoes coming in from neighbouring states?

If he wants to become vice-president, he should explain what happened to the money and how effective the project was. Malaria remains a major public health problem. Nigerians deserve to know what the expenditure achieved.

Second, he demolished a teaching hospital and announced plans to build a 1,000-bed facility named Karibi Whyte Hospital, in partnership with a Canadian company, Cleotect. He said the Rivers State Government had paid its counterpart contribution of $39 million.

I was Chief of Staff at the time, and I knew that the money was paid. At today's exchange rate, that amount represents a substantial sum of public money. Where is the hospital? Was it completed? What became of the project?

I challenge Nigerians to examine the project and its outcome before deciding whether to support the ADC candidates. Public funds are not private or family money. Citizens have every right to ask how they were spent and what benefits they delivered.

You have also questioned the monorail project and the sale of the gas turbine. What are your concerns?

There were heated debates in the Executive Council about the monorail. What purpose would it serve, and where would it take people? Amaechi travelled to Dubai, saw a monorail and returned with the idea that it would transform the city and reduce traffic. The state reportedly spent N68 billion on the project. Nigerians should ask what was delivered for that expenditure.

On the gas turbine, former governor Peter Odili built the facility. Amaechi later sold it to Sahara Energy for 308 million dollars, according to the account I have given. My concern is that due process was not followed. Where was the advertisement? Who carried out the valuation, and where is the valuation report?

> "I challenge Nigerians to examine the project and its outcome before deciding whether to support the ADC candidates. Public funds are not private or family money. Citizens have every right to ask how they were spent and what benefits they delivered."

The payment was made in December 2014. I became governor in May 2015. By May 29, 2015, I found that only 308,000 dollars remained from the 308 million dollars

A judicial panel of inquiry was established, and Amaechi was invited to explain the transaction. He did not appear, according to my account. The panel subsequently indicted him.

He challenged the findings in court. The matter went through the courts, including the Court of Appeal and the Supreme Court, which ruled against him on the issues before them.

My point is that Nigerians should examine the record. These are allegations and public expenditures that require answers. A person seeking the vice-presidency should be willing to explain decisions taken while in office.

Why are these matters receiving renewed attention during the electioneering period, when Amaechi has previously served as governor and minister?

I raised these issues when I was governor. People who say I am only bringing them up now should check the records.

At that time, Amaechi was a powerful minister. But once you leave office and seek another public position, you must expect scrutiny of your record. You cannot tell Nigerians that you want to lead them and then refuse to answer questions about how you spent public funds.

I have said that he should explain the $10 million fumigation project, the $39 million hospital contribution and the sale of the gas turbine for $308 million . These are legitimate questions about public expenditure.

There is also the issue of our political relationship. We worked together, and I was involved in the process that led to his emergence as governor. I believed that his relationship with former governor Peter Odili would make it easier for Odili to accept him as his successor.

Amaechi later accused me of insubordination. That is his position, but Nigerians can ask questions about how we worked together and what happened afterwards.

The important point is not our personal disagreement. It is whether people seeking public office can account for their records.

Are you suggesting that Amaechi should face prosecution over the allegations? Some people believe your actions are driven by personal animosity or hostility towards Atiku Abubakar?

I have already told you that there was an attempt to prosecute him. After I left office, the political atmosphere changed. People were aligning against me, and there were efforts to resolve the matter.

As I understand it, the charges were eventually withdrawn through the Ministry of Justice. I cannot tell you that the decision was taken on a particular person's instruction, but that was what happened.

If you call it animosity because I am asking what happened to 10 million dollars, 39 million dollars or 308 million dollars in public funds, that is not a convincing argument. Even if I had personal differences with him, would that justify misappropriating public money, if that were established?

The question is whether he can explain these transactions. Nigerians should not be distracted by arguments about whether I like him or whether we once worked together.

Given your influence in government, should the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) and the Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC) not investigate the allegations?

There are legal issues surrounding the EFCC's involvement in the matter. Rivers State went to court, and the EFCC lost at the Court of Appeal. The judgment and its implications must be respected.

There may be a route through the state legislature, depending on the applicable legal position, but I am not asking anybody to disregard a court judgment.

My point is that, whether or not a person has been prosecuted, the public deserves explanations about major projects and the expenditure of public funds. Amaechi should answer the questions instead of dismissing them as personal attacks.

I am also concerned about the closure of the courts during his administration. The judiciary is the third arm of government. When courts are shut, citizens lose access to justice.

I believe the courts remained closed for almost two years during the dispute involving the Rivers judiciary. If you prevent people from accessing the courts, you deny them an important avenue for resolving disputes and seeking justice.

The legal proceedings concerning the panel's findings went through several courts. The judgments should be examined on their terms, and the allegations should not be treated as proven criminal guilt merely because a panel made findings against him.

But these matters deserve public scrutiny. I question why organisations such as the Nigerian Bar Association would invite a politician to speak without adequately examining his record on the judiciary.



Wike

FEDERAL MINISTRY OF FINANCE
ABUJA
NIGERIA AIRWAYS LIMITED (IN LIQUIDATION)

FULL AND FINAL MOP-UP VERIFICATION EXERCISE FOR NEXT OF KIN

The Federal Ministry of Finance hereby announces a Full and Final Mop-Up Verification and Validation Exercise for the Next of Kin (NOK) of deceased former workers of Nigeria Airways Limited (in Liquidation) who are eligible for payment of their outstanding pension and severance entitlements.

The exercise is scheduled to take place simultaneously across the 6 Geo-Political zones as detailed below:

LAGOS STATE (SOUTH WEST)
Venue: Sky Power Catering and Hotel Services,
MM2, Airport, Ikeja, Lagos State.

KANO STATE (NORTH WEST)
Venue: Federal Pay Office (FPO),
Audu Bako State Secretariat,
Kano State.

RIVER STATE (SOUTH SOUTH)
Venue: Federal Pay Office (FPO),
Federal Secretariat, Aba Road
Rumola, Port-Harcourt, River State.

BAUCHI STATE (NORTH EAST)
Venue: Federal Pay Office (FPO),
Federal Secretariat Complex, Bauchi State.

ENUGU STATE (SOUTH EAST)
Venue: Federal Pay Office (FPO),
No. 1 Egeton Street, Old GRA,
Beside State SME, Enugu.

FCT (NORTH CENTRAL)
Venue: Federal Ministry of Finance Headquarters,
2nd Floor, Conference Hall,
Budget Building,
Plot 816, Ahmadu Bello Way, CBD, Abuja.

Date: 19th - 25th October, 2026
Time: Monday – Saturday 10:00am – 5:00pm
Sunday: 12:00 noon – 5:00 p.m.

IMPORTANT NOTICE
ONLY NEXT OF KIN OF BENEFICIARIES WHOSE BIOMETRIC DETAILS ARE ALREADY CAPTURED IN THE APPROVED NIGERIA AIRWAYS DATABASE SHOULD REPORT FOR THIS EXERCISE.

DOCUMENTS REQUIRED
1. Letter of Engagement/Appointment
2. Letter of Disengaement
3. Nigeria Airways ID Card of the deceased worker
4. Letter of Administration issued by a High Court, together with evidence of newspaper publication
5. Original Notarized Power of Attorney, where applicable
6. Two (2) recent passport photographs
7. Certified True Copy (CTC) of sworn affidavit
8. Police Report, where necessary of documents such as listed from 1-4 etc.
9. Evidence of last payment voucher

NOTE: Original documents along with the photocopies must be presented for sighting and verification.

THIS IS A FULL AND FINAL MOP-UP EXERCISE

Eligible Next of Kins are advised to come with all required documents and report at the designated venue within the stated period.

Signed:
Permanent Secretary, Finance (Special Duties)

PUBLIC NOTICE / RETRACTION

RE: CONGRATULATORY MESSAGE PUBLISHED ON TUESDAY, 13 OCTOBER 2026

I refer to the congratulatory message published in this newspaper on Tuesday, 13 October 2026, in honour of Mustapha Olayinka Ajenifuja, SAN.

For clarity, the publication was made without the prior knowledge, consent or authorisation of Mustapha Olayinka Ajenifuja, SAN, and should not be interpreted as reflecting his views, endorsement or involvement.

In light of this, I hereby retract the publication in its entirety. I regret any unintended inconvenience or attention the publication may have caused and apologise to Mustapha Olayinka Ajenifuja, SAN, and any other parties affected.

This notice is issued to formally clarify my position.

Signed:
Olasunkanmi Owoyemi

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Insider threat: Strengthening air safety via intel, background checks

Experts in the Nigerian aviation industry have said that the country can learn from the recent attempted hijacking of a FlyDubai flight by building on existing aviation security arrangements through strengthening personnel vetting, lawful intelligence sharing, access management, crew training, and the reporting of security concerns, ***OLUSEGUN KOIKI*** *reports.*



THE cockpit, long regarded as the most secure section of an aircraft, is increasingly at the centre of threats confronting the global aviation industry.

For decades, aviation security has concentrated heavily on preventing terrorists, hijackers and other unauthorised persons from gaining access to aircraft, especially after the September 11, 2001 attacks in the United States.

Prior to the attacks, the cockpit was wide open for viewing even by the air passengers, but the attacks compelled a change in the design of aircraft by manufacturers and a stringent review of aviation safety rules by different organisations, including the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) and the U.S. Federal Aviation Administration (FAA).

However, the alleged attack by a co-pilot on the captain of a FlyDubai aircraft operating Flight FZ1073 on September 30 has brought a less visible, but potentially significant vulnerability into focus.

The incident, which occurred on a flight from Dubai to Tel Aviv, Israel, raised fresh concerns about the adequacy of existing safeguards against insider threats, particularly those originating from the cockpit.

The FlyDubai incident was not the first time threats had emanated from the cockpit, but the airline, crew and passengers were lucky to escape the latest threat.

For instance, on March 24, 2015, a Germanwings Flight 9525, an Airbus A320 flying from Barcelona to Düsseldorf, was intentionally crashed into the French Alps by co-pilot Andreas Lubitz, killing all 150 persons on board.

The hijacking happened when the captain left the cockpit for a brief moment. Investigations by the French Bureau of Enquiry and Analysis for Civil Aviation Safety (BEA), which led the technical investigation team, revealed that Lubitz locked the reinforced door from the inside.

He then manually adjusted the autopilot to change the altitude from 38,000 feet down to 100 feet, initiating a controlled descent into the mountains.

Investigation also revealed that Lubitz had suffered from a severe mental disorder with psychotic symptoms, which he concealed from his employer and aviation authorities.

Also, on February 17, 2014, the co-pilot of Ethiopian Airlines Flight 702, Boeing 767 aircraft, Hailemedhin Tegegn, 31, locked the pilot out of the cockpit when the captain used the restroom while the plane was flying from Addis Ababa to Rome.

The co-pilot flew the aircraft to Geneva, Switzerland and requested political asylum before landing safely. Though no fatalities occurred among the 202 people on board, the co-pilot was subsequently sentenced to a 20-year jail term in absentia by a court in Ethiopia.

Aviation experts told The Guardian that the latest threat should serve as a wake-up call for regulators, airlines and security agencies, including those in Nigeria.

They said it was necessary for authorities to reassess how they identify, monitor and manage personnel entrusted with the responsibility of operating aircraft and protecting passengers.

They posited that the very system designed to guarantee operational safety, built on professional competence, mutual confidence and clearly defined responsibilities, could become susceptible when a trusted individual deliberately abuses the authority and access attached to the job.

The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Nigame Aircraft Consultancy Incorporation, Olufemi Adeniji, said insider threats posed a serious danger to the global industry.

Adeniji said that individuals with legitimate access could exploit their knowledge of procedures, equipment and security arrangements in ways that outsiders may find difficult.

Adeniji explained that the major challenge was not just how to keep unauthorised people out of the cockpit, but how to ensure that those authorised to occupy it remained fit, trustworthy and accountable throughout their careers.

According to him, insider threats are among the major exposures in aviation because insiders already possess authorised access to sensitive facilities, aircraft, operational systems, cargo, baggage and security information.

He mentioned insider threats in the aviation sector, including airline employees, pilots, engineers, ground handlers, contractors, temporary workers, and other personnel whose professional responsibilities, he said, provide access to restricted areas or safety-critical operations.

> "The threat can be deliberate, motivated by financial gain, ideology, revenge or coercion. It can also arise from negligence, complacency, failure to follow procedures or an individual's inability to recognise and respond appropriately to a security risk."

He added: "The threat can be deliberate, motivated by financial gain, ideology, revenge or coercion. It can also arise from negligence, complacency, failure to follow procedures or an individual's inability to recognise and respond appropriately to a security risk.

"Unlike an outsider, who must first overcome security barriers, an insider may already possess the identification, technical knowledge and institutional familiarity required to bypass or exploit existing safeguards.

"This makes insider threats difficult to manage. An individual may have passed the necessary background checks, obtained the relevant licences and demonstrated the required professional competence before circumstances change or previously unknown information emerges."

Adeniji opined that aviation security must consequently extend beyond conventional passenger screening to encompass personnel vetting, access controls, security awareness, reporting mechanisms and continuous risk assessment.

He noted that Nigeria had established an aviation security framework, including the National Civil Aviation Security Programme and the National Aviation Security Risk Management Team, established by the Nigeria Civil Aviation Authority (NCAA) in February 2026.

According to him, the team was intended to strengthen the identification, assessment and mitigation of aviation security risks, including those associated with insider threats.

But he noted that the existence of regulations and institutional structures does not automatically eliminate threats, arguing that their effectiveness depended on consistent implementation, credible intelligence, appropriate technology, enforcement and cooperation among agencies and aviation service providers.

He advised Nigeria's authorities that security must go beyond the passenger, stressing that vetting must be continuous, authorised access must be controlled, aviation organisations need a strong reporting culture, while mental and behavioural warning signs should not be ignored.

"The next step should be to move from compliance-based security to intelligence-led, risk-based insider-threat management," Adeniji added.

Besides, the former Rector of the Nigerian College of Aviation Technology (NCAT), Samuel Caulcrick, said the aviation industry depended on absolute certainty that every professional, from aircraft engineers and handlers to air traffic controllers and flight crew, performed according to the highest regulatory standards.

He explained that the FlyDubai Flight FZ1073 incident had ensured the need for the industry to re-examine its approach to insider threats.

He identified operational, systemic trust and regulatory surveillance as the major pillars supporting aviation safety.

He said: "Pilots step into the cockpit trusting that engineers have released a perfectly airworthy machine, handlers have loaded cargo correctly, and fuelers have provided the right grade and amount of fuel.

"The public steps into an aircraft trusting that national regulators like the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and European Union Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) are actively auditing, certifying and monitoring every moving part.

"Trust is not left to chance. It is maintained through continuous surveillance, unannounced audits, mandatory safety reporting, and strict licensing. This is why aviation relies on a 'Just Culture' that encourages transparent error reporting."

According to him, the FlyDubai incident demonstrated the danger inherent in a system in which a trusted professional could turn against the organisation.

Caulcrick expressed that the incident raised fundamental questions about the effectiveness of existing aviation security measures, including reinforced cockpit doors, access control and the monitoring of safety-critical personnel.

He noted that cockpit doors were strengthened after the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks to prevent unauthorised persons from gaining access to the flight deck.

However, he said the FlyDubai incident, as well as the 2015 Germanwings crash, demonstrated that security measures designed to keep outsiders out could also create vulnerabilities when the threat came from within the cockpit.

ValueJet, ACPN partner for WAFFEST 2026

By **Olusegun Koiki**

VALUEJET, a Nigerian airline, has partnered with the Association of Professional Chefs Nigeria (ACPN) to support the group's participation in the 2026 edition of the West African Food Festival (WAFFEST) in The Gambia.

The partnership would see ValueJet provide discounted airfares for members of the association travelling to the festival, a gesture the ACPN said would help facilitate Nigerian participation in the international event.

The festival, scheduled for October 15 to 21, 2026, in Banjul, would bring together chefs, culinary professionals, food enthusiasts and cultural practitioners from more than 22 countries to celebrate West Africa's culinary heritage and cultural diversity.

Speaking on the partnership, the Managing Director of ValueJet, Omololu Majekodunmi, said the collaboration reflected the airline's appreciation for culinary professionals and its commitment to supporting organisations that promote Nigeria's image internationally.

He said the partnership with the ACPN would give the airline an opportunity to demonstrate its support for chefs and their contributions to society, and he expressed optimism that the relationship would lead to further collaborations.

He added that ValueJet had established partnerships with other major Nigerian organisations, including the Nigeria Football Federation (NFF), as part of its engagements with institutions promoting national development.



President, Association of Professional Chefs Nigeria (ACPN), Dr Eric Mukwuye (left) and Managing Director, ValueJet Airlines, Omololu Majekodun, in a handshake during the former's visit to the head office of the airline in Lagos, earlier in the week.

IN THE HIGH COURT OF RIVERS STATE OF NIGERIA
IN THE PORT HARCOURT JUDICIARY DIVISION
HOLDEN AT PORT HARCOURT

IN THE HIGH COURT OF RIVERS STATE OF NIGERIA
IN THE PORT HARCOURT JUDICIAL DIVISION
HOLDEN AT PORT HARCOURT

SUIT NO. PHC/2542/CS/2026

BETWEEN:

MONIER CONSTRUCTION COMPANY (NIGERIA) LTD. } **CLAIMANT/ APPLICANT**

AND

(1) JOHN AZUTA - MBATA
(2) JOHNSON ROADWORKS & PROPERTIES
(3) FINANCIAL FLEX LIMITED
(4) MR. MBATA VICTOR
(5) GOVERNMENT OF RIVERS STATE
(6) ATTORNEY GENERAL & COMMISSIONER FOR JUSTICE, RIVERS STATE } **DEFENDANTS RESPONDENTS**

ORDER FOR SUBSTITUTED SERVICE

UPON READING THE AFFIDAVIT deposed to by Mercy Bariesia Igboh, adult, female, Nigerian Citizen and Litigation Secretary of No. 1c Isaac Boro Street (Asarama Road) Old G.R.A Port Harcourt and after hearing A. N. Odebe, Esq. of Counsel for the Claimant/Applicant with E. O. Goodwill, Esq. and C. P. Diepiri, Esq. in the Motion *Exparte* of 28th September, 2026. No Counsel appeared for the Defendants/Respondents.

IT IS ORDERED AS FOLLOWS:

1. That Leave is granted the Claimant/Applicant to serve the Writ of Summons and other processes filed in this Suit on the 1st – 4th Defendants/ Respondents by publishing the said processes in one National Newspaper and another Newspaper circulating within Rivers State.
2. That upon the publication of the processes, the Bailiff of this Court shall depose to an Affidavit of Service stating the facts of the publication and how the processes were served on the 1st – 4th Defendants/Respondents and transmit same to the Court as appropriate and also return copies of Newspaper to the Court.
3. That the matter be adjourned to the 23rd day of October, 2026 for motion.

GIVEN AT PORT HARCOURT, under the Seal of the Court and the Hand of the Presiding Judge, this 2nd day of October, 2026.

HON. JUSTICE SYLVESTER S. POPNEN, Ph.D
JUDGE

IGWE JOHN PROMISE (ACA)
ASSISTANT CHIEF REGISTRAR (LIT)

IN THE HIGH COURT OF RIVERS STATE OF NIGERIA
IN THE PORT HARCOURT JUDICIAL DIVISION
HOLDEN AT PORT HARCOURT

SUIT NO: PHC/ /CS/2026

BETWEEN

MONIER CONSTRUCTION COMPANY (NIGERIA) LTD ===== **CLAIMANT**

AND

1. **JOHN AZUTA-MBATA**
2. **JOHNSON ROADWORKS & PROPERTIES LTD**
3. **FINANCIAL FLEX LIMITED**
4. **MR. MBATA VICTOR**
5. **GOVERNMENT OF RIVERS STATE**
6. **ATTORNEY GENERAL & COMMISSIONER FOR JUSTICE, RIVERS STATE**

DEFENDANTS

TO: THE 1ST, 3RD AND 4TH DEFENDANTS

OF: No. 17 Liberty Close, Off Ada George Road, Port Harcourt, Rivers State.

TO: THE 2ND DEFENDANT
OF: Rd.2, Plot 43, Rumuobiakani Housing Est. P/Harcourt, Rivers, P/Harcourt, Rivers State.

TO: THE 5TH AND 6TH DEFENDANTS

OF: Ministry of Justice, Rivers State Secretariat Complex, Port Harcourt, Rivers State.

You are hereby commanded that within Thirty (30) days after the service of this Writ on you, inclusive of the day of such service, you do cause an appearance to be entered for you in an action at the suit of the Claimant above and take notice that in default of your doing so, the Claimant may proceed therein and judgment may be given in your absence.

DATED THIS THE JUDICIARY HIGH COURT REGISTRY PORT HARCOURT CASH OFFICE Date 10 day of July 2026 **2026.**

BY ORDER OF THIS COURT

10 day of July 2026

Ndu. Lillian O. (PhD)
REGISTRAR

N/B: This Writ is to be served within six (6) calendar months from the date thereof, or if renewed within six (6) Calendar Months from the date of the last renewal, including the day of such date and afterwards.

The Defendants may enter appearance personally or by Legal practitioner either by handing in the appropriate forms duly completed at the Registry of the High Court or by Registered post.

ENDORSEMENT TO BE MADE ON THE WRIT BEFORE ISSUE THEREOF:

THE CLAIMANT CLAIMS AGAINST THE DEFENDANTS JOINTLY AND SEVERALLY AS FOLLOWS:

1. **A DECLARATION** that the 2nd and 3rd Defendants are mere alter egos, conduits, and sham corporate vehicles created, controlled, and used by the 1st **Defendant and the 4th Defendant** to fraudulently divert funds, profits, and business opportunities belonging to the Claimant, particularly funds and profits accruing from the contract for the Construction of Egbeda-Omerelu Link Road in Emohua and Ikwerre Local Government Areas of Rivers State awarded by the 5th Defendant.
2. **A DECLARATION** that the 3rd Defendant, by procuring contracts for itself and sub-letting portions thereof to the Claimant as a subcontractor, fundamentally repudiated and breached its core contractual and agency duties under the Letter of Appointment dated January 15th, 2015 (Ref: MCC/GMO.015/15), and that the Claimant is entitled to treat the said Agency Agreement as terminated and to claim damages for breach of contract.
3. **A DECLARATION** that the 2nd and 3rd Defendants directly and/or through their agents including the 1st and 4th Defendants, have unjustly enriched themselves at the expense of the Claimant by receiving and retaining agreed remuneration pursuant to the letter of appointment dated January 15th, 2015, and by receiving and retaining the profits, revenues, and benefits from the main contract for the Construction of Egbeda-Omerelu Link Road, which benefits were derived directly from the Claimant's resources, technical profile, engineering proposal, and the fiduciary position of **the 1st Defendant, and for which the said 1st – 4th Defendants have provided no lawful consideration**.
4. **AN ORDER** that the 1st and 2nd Defendants do pay to the Claimant the sum of **N14,939,558,262.65 (Fourteen Billion, Nine Hundred and Thirty-nine Million, Five Hundred and Fifty-eight Thousand, Two Hundred and sixty-two Naira, Sixty-five Kobo)**, representing the known value of the unjust enrichment received and retained by them, the said sum to be held and administered as money had and received by the said Defendants for the use and benefit of the Claimant.
5. **A DECLARATION** that all profits, revenues, and benefits derived by the 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th Defendants directly and/or through their agents from contracts sourced through the Claimant's resources, reputation, and efforts, including but not limited to the contract for the Construction of Egbeda-Omerelu Link Road in Emohua and Ikwerre Local Government Areas of Rivers State, are held in a **CONSTRUCTIVE TRUST** for the absolute benefit of the Claimant.
6. **A DECLARATION** that the letter of appointment dated 15th of January, 2015 (Reference No: MCC/GMO.015/15), appointing the 3rd Defendant as a "Contract Sourcing Agent" was part of a fraudulent scheme orchestrated by the 1st **Defendant** in his former capacity as Chairman/CEO of the Claimant, and the 4th Defendant, to swindle the Claimant for their personal benefit and is therefore null, void, and of no legal effect.
7. **A DECLARATION** that the 1st, 3rd and 4th Defendants, under a scheme orchestrated by the 1st Defendant, acted in gross breach of their fiduciary duties to the Claimant by usurping the Claimant's corporate opportunities, engaging in corporate self-dealing, and conspiring to defraud the Claimant for their personal enrichment by deliberately refusing to accept the contract offer made to the Claimant, allowing it to lapse, and converting the award of the Egbeda-Omerelu Link Road contract to themselves while acting as the Chairman/CEO of the Claimant and financial consultants of the Claimant respectively.
8. **A DECLARATION** that the Claimant is entitled to the direct award of the said contract for the Construction of Egbeda-Omerelu Link Road from the 5th Defendant and all revenues payable under the said contract, less the amount already paid to the 2nd Defendant by the 5th Defendant, the 5th Defendant having originally evaluated, vetted, and awarded the contract to the Claimant based on the Claimant's technical proposal dated 2nd July, 2024.
9. **AN ORDER** directing the 1st, 3rd and 4th Defendants jointly and severally to pay to the Claimant the sum of **N100, 000,000,000.00 (One Hundred Billion Naira)** as damages for breach of contract and the massive corporate fraud perpetrated against the Claimant.
10. **AN ORDER** directing the 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th Defendants jointly and severally to pay to the Claimant the sum of **N100, 000,000,000.00 (One Hundred Billion Naira)** as damages for the fraud perpetrated against the Claimant in their roles as mere alter egos, conduits, and sham corporate vehicles used to fraudulently divert funds, profits, and business opportunities belonging to the Claimant arising from the Egbeda-Omerelu Link Road Contract.
11. **AN ORDER** directing the 1st, 3rd **and 4th Defendants** jointly and severally to pay to the Claimant the sum of **N100, 000,000,000.00 (One Hundred Billion Naira)** as damages for breach of their fiduciary duties to the Claimant for usurping corporate opportunities, engaging in gross self-dealing, and conspiring to defraud the Claimant.
12. **AN ORDER** directing the 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th Defendants jointly and severally to pay to the Claimant the sum of **N100, 000,000,000.00 (One Hundred Billion Naira)** as **Exemplary and Punitive Damages** for the pre-meditated fraud and stratified corporate concealment orchestrated to siphon business opportunities and profits due to the Claimant, and from the Claimant.
13. **AN ORDER** directing the 1st Defendant to pay to the Claimant the sum of **N100, 000,000,000.00 (One Hundred Billion Naira)** as **Exemplary and Punitive Damages** for the scheme orchestrated by the 1st Defendant, and for acting in gross breach of his fiduciary duties to the Claimant by usurping the Claimant's corporate opportunities, engaging in corporate self-dealing, and conspiring to defraud the Claimant for his personal enrichment by deliberately refusing to accept the contract offer made to the Claimant, allowing it to lapse, and converting the award of the Egbeda-Omerelu Link Road contract to himself through the 2nd Defendant while acting as the Chairman/CEO of the Claimant.
14. **AN ORDER OF PERPETUAL INJUNCTION** restraining the 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th Defendants, whether by themselves, directors, officers, or privies, from disposing of, transferring, or dealing in any assets or bank funds belonging to the Claimant or traceable to the scheme described in this Statement of Claim.
15. **AN ORDER OF PERPETUAL INJUNCTION** restraining the 5th Defendant (Government of Rivers State), its ministries, departments, agencies, officials, or privies from making any further project payments, mobilization funds, interim valuations, or financial disbursements with regards to the contracts for the **Construction of Egbeda-Omerelu Link Road** in Emohua/Ikwerre LGAs to the 1st, 2nd 3rd or 4th Defendants, or to any corporate or personal bank accounts designated by them.
16. **30% post-judgment interest** on all sums awarded, to be paid annually until the judgment debt is finally and completely liquidated.
17. **Costs** of this action assessed at **N250,000,000.00 (Two Hundred and Fifty Million Naira)**.

DATED THIS 10TH DAY DAY OF JULY 2026.

THE JUDICIARY HIGH COURT REGISTRY PORT HARCOURT CASH OFFICE Date 10 day of July 2026

A. N. ODEBE, ESQ. (SIGNED)
MILLS C. ORLU-ORLU, ESQ.
A. N. ODEBE & CO.
(CLAIMANT'S SOLICITORS)
2ND FLOOR,
NO. 1C, ISAAC BORO STREET,
(ASARAMA ROAD),
OLD GRA, PORT HARCOURT,
RIVERS STATE.
08033121742
anodebe_co@yahoo.com
anthonyodebe@nigerianbar.ng

FOR SERVICE ON:

THE 1ST 3RD AND 4TH DEFENDANTS
No. 17 Liberty Close, Off Ada George Road,
Port Harcourt, Rivers State.

THE 2ND DEFENDANT
Rd.2, Plot 43, Rumuobiakani
Housing Est. P/Harcourt, Rivers,
P/Harcourt, Rivers State.

THE 5TH AND 6TH DEFENDANTS
Ministry of Justice, Rivers State Secretariat Complex,
Port Harcourt, Rivers State.

This Writ is issued at the instance of the Claimant by **A. N. ODEBE, ESQ.** of **A.N. ODEBE & CO.,** whose Address for Service is No. 1c Isaac Boro Street (Asarama Road) Old GRA, Port Harcourt, Nigeria, Legal Practitioners for the said Claimants who reside in Port Harcourt, Rivers State.

This Writ was served by me at _____

On the Defendants (here insert mode of service) _____

On the _____ day of_____ 2026

Endorsed the _____ day of _____, 2026

SIGNED_____

ADRESSED_____

ENDORSEMENT TO BE MADE ON COPY OF WRIT FORTHWITH AFTER SERVICE.

A sufficient affidavit in verification of the endorsement on this Writ to authorize the signing and stamping thereof has been produced to me this 10 day of July 2026 day of_____2026.

Ndu. Lillian O. (PhD)
(Signature of Registrar)

THE JUDICIARY HIGH COURT REGISTRY PORT HARCOURT CASH OFFICE Date 10 day of July 2026

IN THE HIGH COURT OF RIVERS STATE OF NIGERIA
IN THE PORT HARCOURT JUDICIAL DIVISION
HOLDEN AT PORT HARCOURT

SUIT NO: PHC/ /CS/2026

BETWEEN

MONIER CONSTRUCTION COMPANY (NIGERIA) LTD ===== **CLAIMANT**

AND

1. **JOHN AZUTA-MBATA**
2. **JOHNSON ROADWORKS & PROPERTIES LTD**
3. **FINANCIAL FLEX LIMITED**
4. **MR. MBATA VICTOR**
5. **GOVERNMENT OF RIVERS STATE**
6. **ATTORNEY GENERAL & COMMISSIONER FOR JUSTICE, RIVERS STATE**

DEFENDANTS

STATEMENT OF CLAIM

1. The Claimant is a Limited Liability Company duly incorporated under the Companies and Allied Matters Act, Cap. C20, Laws of the Federation of Nigeria, 2020. It is a leading building and civil engineering contractor with its registered office situated at Mile 7 Ikwerre Road, Rumuigbo, Port Harcourt. The status report of the Claimant is hereby pleaded as **ANNEXURE A**
2. The 1st Defendant, was at all material times up to the 9th day of December, 2025, the Chief Executive Officer, and Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Claimant Company. In these capacities, he owed the Claimant the highest fiduciary duties of good faith, absolute disclosure, diligence, trust, confidence, and loyalty. He resigned from these executive positions on the said 9th day of December, 2025. The Claimant's Notice of Reconstitution of Board of Directors dated 9th October, 2024 is hereby pleaded as **ANNEXURE A1.**
3. The 2nd Defendant (Johnson Roadworks & Properties Ltd) is a private company limited by shares, incorporated under the Corporate Affairs Commission on 2nd March, 2000, which formerly bore the name "Johnson Properties Limited" until its name was suddenly changed on 9th July, 2024, under the secret direction of the 1st Defendant to act as an engineering front. The Certified Status Report of the 2nd Defendant issued by the CAC is hereby pleaded as **ANNEXURE B**.
4. The 3rd Defendant is a company limited by shares, incorporated in Nigeria. At all material times, it was used as an alter ego, conduit, and sham corporate vehicle by the 1st and 4th Defendants to perpetrate a massive corporate fraud against the Claimant.
5. The 4th Defendant is a shareholder and director of the 3rd Defendant and is the relative of the 1st Defendant. The 2nd Defendant at all material times acted at the direction and for the **personal enrichment** of himself and the 1st Defendant through the use of sham corporate entities. A copy of the status report of the 3rd Defendant issued by the Corporate Affairs Commission (CAC) is hereby pleaded as **ANNEXURE B1**.
6. The 5th Defendant is the Government of Rivers State, which is the statutory authority that evaluated, vetted, and issued the contract for major public infrastructure works, including the Egbeda Omerelu link Road project being the subject matter of this suit.
7. The 6th Defendant is the Chief Law Officer of Rivers State and is joined as the legal representative of the 3rd Defendant.
8. Sequel to the resignation of the 1st Defendant, Mr. Henry Adawari Macpepple, who was at all times prior to the 9th of December, 2025, the Vice Chairman and CEO of the Claimant, became the substantive Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of the Claimant company with immediate effect.
9. The Claimant avers that the 2nd Defendant was secretly managed by the 1st Defendant using nominees, specifically to act as a parallel, un-vouched repository and corporate front for funds siphoned from the Rivers State Government originally meant for the Claimant for the construction of the Egbeda-Omerelu Link Road project.
10. The Claimant further avers that on or about the 15th day of January, 2015, the 1st Defendant, while in absolute control of the Claimant's management, caused the Claimant to issue a letter of appointment (Ref: MCC/GMO.015/15) titled "**APPOINTMENT AS CONTRACTOR SOURCING AGENT FOR MONIER CONSTRUCTION COMPANY (NIGERIA) LTD (MCC)**" to the 3rd Defendant. A copy of an internal approval memo dated 30th July, 2014, signed by the 1st Defendant as Chairman/CEO, and a copy of the final letter of appointment are hereby pleaded as **ANNEXURES C and C1** respectively.
11. The said letter of appointment purported to appoint the 3rd Defendant as a "Contract Sourcing Agent" for the Claimant, with a promise of a finder's fee of 4% of the total contract value of any project secured or **N50,000,000.00 (Fifty Million Naira)** per annum, whichever is higher. The 3rd Defendant was further designated Finance Consultant/Business Development Manager on an honorary basis for a consideration of a monthly

Automotive industry seeks reform, homegrown support

By **Benjamin Alade**

NIGERIA's automotive industry is seeking stronger policy support, improved access to vehicle financing and measures to protect local manufacturers as the Federal Government pushes to deepen domestic production and reduce dependence on imported vehicles.

The issues featured prominently during the week when the Senate Committee on Industry toured the facilities of automotive and industrial in Kano and Kaduna states.

The lawmakers and the National Automotive Design and Development Council (NADDC) examined the capacity of local facilities to support manufacturing, technical skills development and the country's clean mobility transition.

The exercise comes amid renewed attention to the implementation of Nigeria's automotive policy, the protection of domestic investments and the need to create a more sustainable market for locally assembled vehicles.

A major concern raised during the exercise was the continued importation of foreign-used vehicles and tricycles, which lawmakers said could be produced locally, potentially limiting opportunities for domestic manufacturers and the development of supporting industries.

Chairman of the Senate Committee on Industry, Francis Adenigba Fadahunsi, said the government needed policies that would encourage local production and create stronger demand for vehicles manufactured in Nigeria.

He also stressed the importance of sustained maintenance of existing automotive facilities and greater government support to enable them to operate at optimal capacity.

Fadahunsi expressed satisfaction with the facilities visited, noting their potential to support large-scale production.

He, however, emphasised that maintaining the facilities and providing the necessary institutional support would be critical to maximising their productive capacity.

In his comment, the Director-General of NADDC, Oluwemimo Osanipin, said the exercise was significant in the context of the Federal Government's 'Nigeria First Policy,' which seeks to encourage domestic production and patronage of locally made goods.

He also stated that the facilities demonstrated the country's capacity to manufacture locally and contribute to meeting domestic demand.

Osanipin identified legislation, patronage and affordable credit as critical areas requiring attention if the automotive industry is to expand its contribution to the economy.

To address this challenge, he said NADDC was working with the Nigerian Consumer Credit Corporation (CrediCorp) to expand vehicle financing across more vehicle categories.

The oversight tour began at the NADDC Automotive Training and CNG Conversion Centre in Kano, where lawmakers assessed its capacity to provide technical training and support the transition to cleaner mobility.

The committee subsequently visited the NADDC Zaria office, PAN Nigeria Limited and Dangote facilities in Kaduna to examine their operations and contributions to the country's industrial and automotive value chains.

Spiro targets expansion of electric motorcycle network in Nigeria

By **Benjamin Alade**

SPIRO, an electric mobility company operating in Africa, has unveiled plans to expand its battery-swapping infrastructure, strengthen local assembly and extend its operations beyond Lagos, Ogun and Oyo states as it seeks to deepen the adoption of electric motorcycles in Nigeria.

The company disclosed this at its second edition of Media Connect in Lagos, where it introduced its new Country Head and Managing Director for Nigeria, Prasad Sane.

Sane said the company would focus on making electric mobility more accessible and affordable, while expanding its network of battery-swapping stations, service centres and after-sales support facilities.

He said the strategy would build on Spiro's existing operations in its three priority markets, with plans to enter additional states as the company scales its presence in the country.

"Today is about progress, partnership and purpose. A year ago, we shared our vision for electric mobility in Nigeria. Today, we are demonstrating tangible results and a clear path forward.

"My mandate is simple: to make Spiro the most trusted, affordable and accessible electric mobility solution for Nigerians, beginning with Lagos, Ogun and Oyo states," Sane said.

According to him, the company was expanding beyond the supply of electric motorcycles to develop an integrated mobility ecosystem built around its battery-swapping technology and rider support services.

Under the model, riders could exchange depleted batteries for fully charged ones in less than a minute, reducing downtime and eliminating the need to wait for conventional battery charging.

Sane said the system was designed to help riders reduce their exposure to fuel costs and lower maintenance expenses, while providing a more convenient alternative for commercial motorcycle operations.

Classic car enthusiasts relive oldies, mark 10th anniversary

By **Benjamin Alade**

CLASSIC car enthusiasts, collectors and lovers of motoring culture gathered in Lagos on October 1 to celebrate a decade of the Classic Car Club of Nigeria, using a display of vintage automobiles to reconnect generations with the city's motoring history.

The 10th anniversary event, tagged Nostalgic Lagos, was held in partnership with the Lagos Polo Club and featured classic vehicles spanning several decades, including cars from the 1950s, 1960s, 1970s, 1980s and 1990s.

The event brought together collectors, families, creatives and motoring enthusiasts, with organisers using the vehicles and images of old Lagos to recreate memories of a city where owning certain cars was once regarded as a strong symbol of status.

Speaking at the event, Chairman of the club, Dapo Otunla, said the preservation of classic vehicles demonstrated that Nigerians could maintain valuable possessions when they attached sufficient importance to them.

"People tend to say Nigerians don't have a maintenance culture. But we say within the club, if you value something, you will look after it, you will maintain it," Otunla said.

According to him, the club's collection demonstrates how automotive preservation can keep history alive, with some of the vehicles still being maintained decades after they first appeared on Nigerian roads.

He recalled an earlier club event where an 85-year-old man and his 83-year-old wife sat in a Peugeot 404, which triggered an emotional reaction in the man because it was the first car he drove while courting his wife.

IN THE HIGH COURT OF RIVERS STATE OF NIGERIA
IN THE PORT HARCOURT JUDICIARY DIVISION
HOLDEN AT PORT HARCOURT

impress of **N400, 000.00 (Four Hundred Thousand Naira)** for logistics, entertainment, transport, and public relations.

12. The Claimant avers that this appointment was not an arm's-length commercial agreement but was conceived and executed as part of a fraudulent scheme orchestrated by the 1st Defendant and the 4th Defendant for their personal enrichment. The 3rd Defendant had no independent capacity, expertise, or track record as a contract sourcing agent in the construction industry, and existed solely as a corporate vehicle secretly controlled by the 1st Defendant through his relative, the 4th Defendant, to intercept payments for contracts that rightfully belonged to the Claimant.

13. In further execution of this fraudulent scheme, the 1st Defendant utilized the Claimant's corporate resources, technical reputation, financial standing, and his commanding position as its Chairman/CEO to source major government infrastructure projects. However, instead of securing these contracts directly for the Claimant as was his strict fiduciary duty, he willfully suppressed the Claimant's interest, neglected his administrative duties, and orchestrated for the main contract pathways to be diverted to his secret fronts, namely the 2nd and 3rd Defendants.

14. The Claimant avers that on the **2nd day of July, 2024**, the Claimant submitted a comprehensive formal proposal for the **"Construction of Egbeda-Omerelu Link Road in Emohua and Ikwerre Local Government Areas, Rivers State"** to the 5th Defendant's Ministry of Works. Following extensive evaluation and vetting by the Ministry's engineers, the contract sum was determined at **N24,899,263,770.48 (Twenty-Four Billion, Eight Hundred and Ninety-Nine Million, Two Hundred and Sixty-Three Thousand, Seven Hundred and Seventy Naira, Forty-Eight Kobo)**, as captured in the project's Bill of Engineering Measurement and Evaluation (BEME). The 5th Defendant is hereby given a notice to produce this document.

15. Consequent upon the technical evaluation, the 5th Defendant formally awarded the contract to the Claimant on **27th September, 2024.** The formal Letter of Award issued by the 5th Defendant was received at the Claimant's headquarters on **10th October, 2024.** The 5th Defendant is hereby given a notice to produce this document.

16. Sequel to this award of the said contract, the 5th Defendant also released the sum of **N7, 469,779,131.15 (Seven Billion, Four Hundred and Sixty-nine Million, Seven Hundred and Seventy-nine Thousand, One Hundred and Thirty-one Naira, Fifteen Kobo)** to its ministry of works on 8th October, 2024 to be released to the Claimant for the construction of Egbeda-Omerelu link road in Emohua Local Government Area of Rivers State.

17. Shockingly, the 1st Defendant, acting in his capacity as Chairman/CEO and utilizing his absolute control over the administrative machinery of the Claimant, **willfully refused and neglected to sign or execute the corresponding acceptance of this initial mobilization** within the slated terms and on behalf of the Claimant, deliberately keeping the rest of the board and management in complete ignorance of the transaction.

18. The Board of Directors of the Claimant never had any knowledge or notice of this contract rejection and also never passed any resolution rejecting the contract for the construction of the Egbeda-Omerelu link road awarded to the Claimant by the 5th Defendant.

19. The Claimant avers that this failure of the 1st Defendant to communicate acceptance of this initial mobilization was a deliberate, fraudulent act of insider sabotage designed by the 1st Defendant to create a false record of negligence, thereby forcing the 5th Defendant's Ministry of Works to raise an immediate Letter of Withdrawal of the offer from the Claimant.

20. Immediately after orchestrating the withdrawal of the offer from the Claimant, the 1st Defendant stepped forward with his alternate corporate front, and on the **6th day of November, 2024**, caused the 5th Defendant to re-award the exact same contract for the Egbeda-Omerelu Link Road to the 2nd Defendant, **Johnson Roadworks & Properties Ltd.** A formal letter of acceptance was immediately returned by the 2nd Defendant and confirmed on 6th of November, 2024. The 1st, 2nd and 5th Defendants are hereby given a notice to produce this document.

21. Following this unfortunate and mischievous diversion of the Claimant's contract by the 1st Defendant, the 1st Defendant on the 3rd of December, 2024, rather caused the 5th Defendant to release the same initial contract mobilization sum of **N7,469,779,131.15 (Seven Billion, Four Hundred and Sixty-nine Million, Seven Hundred and Seventy-nine Thousand, One Hundred and Thirty-one Naira, Fifteen Kobo)** to the 2nd Defendant for the construction of the same Egbeda –Omerelu link road in Emohua/Ikwerre Local Government Area of Rivers State.

22. The Claimant avers that the 1st Defendant again on the 3rd of March, 2025, also caused the 5th Defendant to release another contract mobilization sum of **N7,469,779,131.15 (Seven Billion, Four Hundred and Sixty-nine Million, Seven Hundred and Seventy-nine Thousand, One Hundred and Thirty-one Naira, Fifteen Kobo)** to the 2nd Defendant for the construction of the same Egbeda –Omerelu link road in Emohua/Ikwerre Local Government Area of Rivers State.

N24,899,263,770.48 contract to the 2nd Defendant (**Johnson Roadworks & Properties Ltd**) on **6th November, 2024.**

e. The 1st Defendant actively concealed that he holds the absolute controlling interest of 600,000 ordinary shares (60% equity) in the 2nd Defendant, using it to intercept a principal contract that was already legally secured by the Claimant and formally awarded to the Claimant.

f. The 1st Defendant caused the Claimant to enter into subcontracts presented as standard commercial agreements between independent parties, when in fact they were steps to create a false paper trail legitimizing the siphoning of principal contract funds to entities owned by its own Chairman/CEO, the 1st Defendant.

g. Shockingly and against standard corporate accounting practice, all funds meant for the 3rd Defendant under the sham agency arrangement were instructed to be paid, and were indeed paid, directly into the 4th Defendant's personal bank account with Guaranty Trust Bank (**Account Number: 0001448523 in the name of Victor Mbata**), entirely bypassing standard corporate oversight. Copies of the written payment instructions issued to Levite Microfinance Bank Ltd are pleaded as **ANNEXURE D**.

h. The 2nd and 3rd Defendants lack independent management, separate infrastructure, technical staff, or equipment to execute any construction contracts or the construction contracts of the magnitude covered under the contract for the construction of the same Egbeda –Omerelu link road in Emohua/Ikwerre Local Government Area of Rivers State. The 4th Defendant allowed his name to be used as a shareholder and director with full knowledge that he was acting as a nominee to conceal the 1st Defendant's beneficial interests.

27. The Claimant avers that by their respective actions, the 1st, 3rd, and 4th, Defendants fundamentally breached their fiduciary duties to the Claimant by placing themselves in positions of direct conflict of interest, usurping the Claimant's corporate opportunities, making secret profits, and entering into an unlawful conspiracy to defraud the Claimant for their personal enrichment.

28. The 2nd and 4th Defendants knowingly participated in, facilitated, and received the benefits of this dishonest and fraudulent scheme, and have provided no legitimate service, consideration, or commercial value to justify retaining the massive profits derived from the Egbeda-Omerelu Link Road project.

23. The Claimant avers that the project scope of work diverted by the 1st Defendant includes a **Length of road of 17.5km**, a **Width of clearing of 12m**, a **Width of pavement of 8m**, excavation of unsuitable materials to an average depth of 0.5m, filling with sharp river sand to an average depth of 0.6m, a **Stone base thickness of 0.2m**, a binder course thickness of 50mm, a wearing course thickness of 40mm, **35km of total drains** with a cross-sectional area of 1.05m², 600m of internal dimension culverts (2mx2m), and 500m of kerbs for the island and bell mouth.

24. The Claimant avers that in a pre-meditated bid to exploit the Claimant's extensive heavy construction equipment, technical expertise, and field personnel to physically execute these monumental works, the 3rd Defendant (acting through the 4th Defendant under the master direction of the 1st Defendant) issued a restrictive subcontract to the Claimant dated **around November, 2024** for only a minor segment of the works for the Claimant to act as a subcontractor to its own paid agent.

25. The Claimant avers that the entire scope of work under the said contract for the construction of the same Egbeda –Omerelu link road in Emohua/Ikwerre Local Government Area of Rivers State was executed by the Claimant under a purported subcontract scheme orchestrated by the 1st – 4th Defendants without the knowledge of the fact that the Contract was originally awarded to the Claimant by the 5th Defendant.

26. Following the resignation of the 1st Defendant, the Claimant's new management led by Mr. Henry Adawari Macpepple conducted extensive investigations and received the official Project Brief which revealed the precise layout of the administrative fraud and siphoning mechanism utilized by the 1st Defendant.

PARTICULARS OF FRAUD AND BREACH OF FIDUCIARY DUTY

a. The 1st Defendant received the official Letter of Award for the Egbeda-Omerelu Link Road on behalf of the Claimant on **10th October, 2024**.

b. As Chairman/CEO holding the highest fiduciary duties, the 1st Defendant **refused to sign the acceptance** or initiate formal execution, intentionally allowing the offer to lapse.

c. The 1st Defendant deliberately triggered a structural withdrawal of the award from the Claimant by the Ministry of Works to clear the path for his private vehicle being the 2nd Defendant to be awarded the said Contract.

d. Immediately after the contract was withdrawn from the Claimant, the 1st Defendant processed and finalized the re-award of the

15. **AN ORDER OF PERPETUAL INJUNCTION** restraining the 5th Defendant (Government of Rivers State), its ministries, departments, agencies, officials, or privies from making any further project payments, mobilization funds, interim valuations, or financial disbursements with regards to the contracts for the **Construction of Egbeda-Omerelu Link Road** in Emohua/Ikwerre LGAs to the 1st, 2nd, 3rd or 4th Defendants, or to any corporate or personal bank accounts designated by them.

16. **30% post-judgment interest** on all sums awarded, to be paid annually until the judgment debt is finally and completely liquidated.

17. **Costs** of this action assessed at **N250,000,000.00 (Two Hundred and Fifty Million Naira)**.

DATED THIS __10TH ___DAY OF _____JULY_____2026.

THE JUDICIARY HIGH COURT REGISTRY PORT HARCOURT CASH OFFICE Date 10 day of July 2026

A. N. ODEBE, ESQ. (SIGNED)
MILLS C. ORLU-ORLU, ESQ.
A. N. ODEBE & CO.
(CLAIMANT'S SOLICITORS)
2ND FLOOR,
NO. 1C, ISAAC BORO STREET,
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OLD GRA, PORT HARCOURT,
RIVERS STATE.
08033121742
anodebe_co@yahoo.com
anthonyodebe@nigerianbar.ng

FOR SERVICE ON:

THE 1ST 3RD AND 4TH DEFENDANTS
No. 17 Liberty Close, Off Ada George Road,
Port Harcourt, Rivers State.

THE 2ND DEFENDANT
Rd.2, Plot 43, Rumuobiakani
Housing Est. P/Harcourt, Rivers,
P/Harcourt, Rivers State.

THE 5TH AND 6TH DEFENDANTS
Ministry of Justice, Rivers State Secretariat
Complex,
Port Harcourt, Rivers State.

IN THE HIGH COURT OF RIVERS STATE OF NIGERIA
IN THE PORT HARCOURT JUDICIAL DIVISION
HOLDEN AT PORT HARCOURT

SUIT NO: PHC/_____/CS/2026

BETWEEN

MONIER CONSTRUCTION COMPANY ===== CLAIMANT/APPLICANT (NIGERIA) LTD

AND

1. **JOHN AZUTA-MBATA**
2. **JOHNSON ROADWORKS & PROPERTIES LTD**
3. **FINANCIAL FLEX LIMITED**
4. **MR. MBATA VICTOR**
5. **GOVERNMENT OF RIVERS STATE**
6. **ATTORNEY GENERAL & COMMISSIONER FOR JUSTICE, RIVERS STATE**

DEFENDANTS/ RESPONDENTS

MOTION ON NOTICE

BROUGHT PURSUANT TO ORDER 39 OF THE HIGH COURT OF RIVERS STATE (CIVIL PROCEDURE) RULES 2023 AND UNDER THE INHERENT JURISDICTION OF THIS HONOURABLE COURT

TAKE NOTICE that this Honourable Court will be moved on the_____ day of _____ 2026 at the hour of 9 o'clock in the forenoon or so soon thereafter as Counsel for the Claimant/Applicant may be heard praying this Honourable Court for:

1. **AN ORDER OF INTERLOCUTORY INJUNCTION** restraining the 5th Defendant (Government of Rivers State), its ministries, departments, agencies, officials, or privies from making any further project payments, mobilization funds, interim valuations, or financial disbursements with regards to the contracts for the **Construction of Egbeda-Omerelu Link Road** in Emohua/Ikwerre LGAs to the 1st, 2nd, 3rd or 4th Defendants, or to any corporate or personal bank accounts designated by them pending the determination of this Suit.

2. **AN ORDER OF INTERIM INJUNCTION** restraining the 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th Defendants, whether by themselves, directors, officers, or privies, from disposing of, transferring, or dealing in any assets or bank funds belonging to the Claimant or traceable to the scheme described in this Statement of Claim pending the hearing and determination of this Suit.

3. **AND FOR SUCH FURTHER ORDER OR ORDERS** as this Honourable Court may deem fit to make in the circumstances.

GROUNDS FOR THE APPLICATION:

1. There is a serious, triable issue raised between the Claimant and the Defendants concerning a massive corporate insider fraud, diversion of business opportunities, and direct breach of fiduciary duties by the 1st Defendant (former MD/CEO).

2. The balance of convenience tilts heavily in favor of the Claimant/Applicant, who generated the technical and engineering proposals used to secure the subject contracts.

3. Irreparable damage and loss will be suffered by the Claimant if the 3rd Defendant continues to pay out multi-billion Naira project sums into the unverified corporate structures of the 1st and 5th Defendants or the personal accounts of the 2nd Defendant while the main suit is pending.

4. Damages will not be an adequate remedy to compensate the Claimant if the funds are fully dissipated and siphoned out of the jurisdiction during the pendency of litigation.

DATED THIS ____10TH_____DAY OF_____JULY_____2026.

A. N. ODEBE, ESQ. (SIGNED)
MILLS C. ORLU-ORLU, ESQ.
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THE 5TH AND 6TH DEFENDANTS
Ministry of Justice, Rivers State Secretariat Complex,
Port Harcourt, Rivers State.

THE JUDICIARY HIGH COURT REGISTRY PORT HARCOURT CASH OFFICE Date 10 day of July 2026

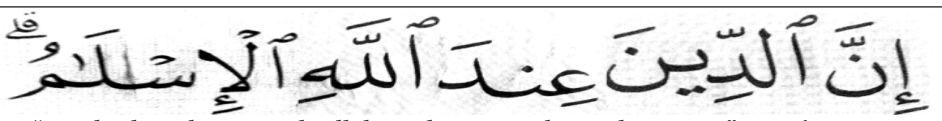
FridayWorship

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In the Name of the Almighty, the Beneficent, the Merciful

"By Al-'Asr. Verily, mankind is in loss, except for those who believe, do righteous deeds, encourage one another to truth, and encourage one another to patience." Qur'an 103:1–3

By **Kabir Alabi Garba**



"Surely, the religion with Allah is Islam,complete submission"... Qur'an 3:19

Jumaada al-Ulaa and passage of time

BRETHREN, the fifth month of Muslim lunar calendar, *Jumaada al-Ulaa* is here. Its commencement on Monday, October 12, 2026 is a reminder that the end of our sojourn on the surface of earth is fast approaching. So, the month offers a sobering reminder that life is fleeting, accountability is inevitable, and faith must translate into righteous deeds, justice and compassion.

While the Islamic calendar moves from one month to another, millions of people remain consumed by the pursuit of wealth, power, status and worldly pleasures, often forgetting the certainty that one day they will stand before their Creator to account for their deeds.

This is the sobering message that *Jumaada al-Ulaa* offers us as Muslims: time is running out, death is inevitable, and the most important question is not how much we have accumulated, but how well we have lived.

Known also as *Jumaada al-Awwal*, the month provides an opportunity for Muslims to reassess our relationship with Allah, reflect on the passage of time and renew our commitment to the principles of Islam.

Although no special prayer, fast or religious ritual is prescribed specifically for this month, its arrival presents another opportunity to embrace the timeless teachings of the Qur'an and the authentic traditions of Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him).

Indeed, the significance of a month should not be measured merely by its position on the calendar, but by the lessons believers draw from it and the positive changes they make in their lives.

Perhaps no reminder of human vulnerability is more profound than the passage of time. Wealth can be regained, businesses can be rebuilt, and lost opportunities may sometimes return. Time, however, once spent, can never be recovered.

Allah (SWT) draws attention to this reality in Qur'an 103:1–3, declaring: "By time, indeed mankind is in loss, except for those who believe, do righteous deeds, encourage one another to truth, and encourage one another to patience."

This short but powerful chapter offers a comprehensive guide to a meaningful life. It establishes that faith alone must be accompanied by righteous conduct, a commitment to truth and the patience required to remain steadfast in the face of adversity.

The message is particularly relevant in an age when people measure success largely by material possessions, professional achievements and social influence. These pursuits are not inherently wrong, but they become dangerous when they displace spiritual responsibility, moral discipline and concern for others.

The Holy Prophet (SAW) warned about the careless use of time and health, saying: "There are two blessings which many people lose: health and free time."

How many people postpone repentance because they assume they have years ahead of them? How many neglect their religious obligations in pursuit of business, only to discover that wealth cannot purchase another day of life? How many relationships remain broken because pride prevents reconciliation? *Jumaada al-Ulaa* should therefore inspire every Muslim to examine personal priorities and consider whether time is being invested in pursuits that will bring lasting benefit.

Another challenge facing many believers is the tendency to approach religion with temporary enthusiasm rather than sustained commitment. Some become more devoted during Ramadan, increase their charitable activities during particular seasons or turn to prayer when confronted by personal difficulties, only to return to old habits when circumstances improve.

Islam, however, teaches consistency in worship and righteousness. When asked about the deeds most beloved to Allah, the Prophet replied that they are those performed consistently, even if they are few.

This teaching challenges Muslims to move beyond occasional displays of devotion towards a lifestyle characterised by regular prayer, engagement with the Qur'an, honesty, charity and good character.

The arrival of *Jumaada al-Ulaa* should not be an invitation to invent religious observances that have no established basis in Islamic teachings. Rather, it should encourage Muslims to strengthen acts of worship already prescribed by the Qur'an and Sunnah.

Protecting the five daily prayers, reading the Qur'an regularly, maintaining family ties, assisting vulnerable people and seeking forgiveness are among the practical steps through which believers can make their lives more meaningful.

The lesson is simple: righteousness is not merely about what a person does during a special season, but what that person consistently becomes.

For millions of people, the passage of time brings not only reflection but also anxiety about the future. Economic hardship, unemployment, rising living costs, insecurity and family difficulties continue to test the resilience of individuals and communities.

In such circumstances, Islam provides a framework for patience, hope and responsible action.

Allah says in Qur'an 2V155-156: "And give good news to the patient, who, when disaster strikes them, say, 'Indeed we belong to Allah, and indeed to Him we will return."

Patience in Islam is not passive resignation. It is the determination to remain faithful to Allah, preserve one's moral principles and pursue legitimate solutions despite adversity.

The Holy Prophet (SAW) explained this principle in a Hadith recorded in Sahih Muslim (2999), describing the affair of the believer as wonderful because both prosperity and hardship can become sources of good: the believer gives thanks when blessed and exercises patience when tested.

This teaching has profound implications for contemporary society. Financial difficulties must not become an excuse for fraud, corruption or exploitation. Political disagreements must not justify violence, while personal disappointment should not extinguish compassion for others. Muslims must combine prayer with diligence, patience with action, and trust in Allah with a willingness to confront injustice through lawful and constructive means.

> **"The reflection encouraged by Jumaada al-Ulaa should translate into practical action: settling outstanding debts, honouring agreements, restoring the rights of others, reconciling with estranged relatives and seeking forgiveness for past wrongs. Repentance must not be postponed indefinitely on the assumption that another opportunity will always come."**

In Nigeria today, where many households continue to face economic pressures and communities grapple with insecurity and social divisions, this message is particularly urgent. Religious devotion must inspire honesty, resilience, mutual assistance and a commitment to the common good.

Perhaps the most uncomfortable subject in human existence is death. People readily discuss business opportunities, political ambitions, property acquisitions and retirement plans, but often avoid confronting the reality that their earthly journey will eventually end. The Qur'an (chapter 3:185) leaves no room for doubt: "Every soul will taste death."

The certainty of death makes accountability one of the central themes of Islamic belief. Life is not an endless opportunity to accumulate possessions or pursue personal gratification; it is a trust for which every individual will ultimately answer before Allah.

In the Qur'an, believers are urged to be conscious of accountability: "O you who believe, fear Allah. And let every soul look to what it has put forth for tomorrow" (Qur'an 59:18). This verse invites a searching examination of personal conduct. What have we done with our lives? Whose rights have we violated? What obligations have we neglected? What good have we contributed to society? And what preparations have we made for the Hereafter?

These are questions that should trouble the conscience of every believer.

The Holy Prophet (SAW) also explained that when a person dies, his deeds come to an end except for three: ongoing charity, beneficial knowledge and a righteous child who prays for him.

The significance of this teaching extends beyond personal piety. It encourages Muslims to invest in lasting benefits for humanity: establishing charitable projects, educating others, supporting useful institutions and raising children who will contribute positively to society.

A meaningful legacy is not measured only by the wealth accumulated or the offices occupied during one's lifetime. It is also measured by the good that continues after one's departure.

For this reason, the reflection encouraged by *Jumaada al-Ulaa* should translate into practical action: settling outstanding debts, honouring agreements, restoring the rights of others, reconciling with estranged relatives and seeking forgiveness for past wrongs.

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

Ogun community honours Muslim leaders, seeks support for socio-economic growth

By **Shakirah Adunola**

IN a striking demonstration of civic responsibility intertwined with religious tradition, the Muslim community of Imodi-Ijebu in Ogun State has honoured 20 prominent citizens with Islamic titles while inaugurating an ambitious 1bn development fund aimed at tackling local socio-economic challenges.

The dual ceremony, held at the Titilayo Agbaje Memorial Comprehensive High School in the Odogbolu Local Council attracted Islamic scholars, traditional rulers, politicians and business leaders from across Nigeria.

The gathering underscored a growing trend within south-western Nigeria whereby religious and traditional institutions are coalescing to engineer socio-economic growth of their community.

Addressing the congregation on the theme "Faith in Action, Community in Unity; Future in Our Hands," the National Missioner of the Ansar-Ud-Deen Society of Nigeria, Sheikh AbdurRahman Ahmad, spotlighted a firm critique of passive religious observance.

"Faith without action is just wishful thinking," Sheikh Ahmad declared. "Community without unity is just a crowd of strangers. Faith is the belief that things can be better, combined with the willingness to get your hands dirty to make it so."

Echoing similar sentiment, Grand Mufti of the Conference of Islamic Organisations (CIO), Sheikh Dhikrullah Shafi'i, delivered a stern reminder on the ethics of religious governance. Drawing from Qur'an 33:72, he instructed the newly installed chiefs that their titles represented an amanah, a sacred trust and heavy obligation before God and the public rather than mere badges of social distinction or authority.



Giwa Adinni, Alhaji Tajudeen Adebanjo (left); Baba Adinni, Alhaji Fatai Olufowobi; Sheikh AbdurRahman Ahmad and Aare Adinni, Alhaji Ishaq Sanni, at the installation of 20 prominent Muslim indigenes of Imodi-Ijebu by the Muslim community.

He cautioned against institutional rivalry, calling for order and mutual respect among the newly structured hierarchy.

The key speaker, former Chairman/CEO of National Hajj Commission of Nigeria (NAHCON), Alhaji Zikrullah Kunle Hassan, advocated a fundamental reassessment of the role of religious infrastructure in modern Africa.

"A mosque is not merely a building with a minaret," Alhaji Hassan noted, asserting that religious spaces must historically and practically serve as centres for scholarship, youth mentorship and poverty alleviation. "If the answer is simply a place to pray, then we have not fully utilised the potential of the mosque."

The newly launched 1bn initiative, spearheaded by engineering executive Alhaji Abdul Waheed Yusuf, seeks to establish a sustainable economic buffer for the township. Funds raised will be channelled into vocational training, information technology infrastructure, healthcare, small-scale agricultural subsidies and career development programmes designed to stem the tide of rural-to-urban youth migration.

The initiative comes at a critical juncture for rural communities across Ogun State, where youth unemployment and underfunding in public infrastructure have increasingly driven skilled young people toward major urban centres such as Lagos.

The Chairman of the Planning Committee, Alhaji Ishaq Olugbenga Odubote, stressed that the 20 honourees, comprising both men and women, were selected strictly on the merits of their character, public generosity and longstanding devotion to communal welfare.

Among those turbaned in the administrative and executive leadership roles were Dr Alhaji Chief Abdul Fatah Olumide Owolabi Olufowobi, installed as Baba Adeen, who pledged to streamline the administrative governance of the Imodi Muslim Chiefs Council and foster local unity. Alhaji Ishaq Titilayo Ayodele Sanni was installed as Aare Musulumi, committing immediate resources to welfare interventions for widows and the underprivileged.

Adebayo accuses Tinubu of avoiding voters over performance fears

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

Group challenges Tinubu to campaign nationwide or quit race

THE Makinde/Daura Presidential Campaign Organisation (MDPCO) challenged Tinubu to campaign nationwide ahead of the 2027 presidential election or withdraw from the race, accusing him of avoiding voters for fear of public rejection.

The organisation also criticised Tinubu's reference to himself as "Governor Tinubu" during the inauguration of his presidential campaign council, describing the remark as evidence of alleged disorientation and unfitness to govern.

In a statement issued yesterday and signed by its Director of Strategic Communications, Richard Ihediwa, the MDPCO accused the President of attempting to evade public anger over his administration's performance.

It said Tinubu's reported decision not to accompany his campaign council to every state was an affront to democratic principles and raised questions about his willingness to defend his record before voters.

"A president who believes he has performed well should be confident to defend his record before the people," the organisation said, alleging that Tinubu had failed to fulfil his campaign promises.

The group cited worsening electricity supply, rising electricity tariffs, widespread poverty, hunger and insecurity as evidence of what it described as the administration's failures.

It also blamed the removal of the petrol subsidy, the floating of the naira and other economic policies for worsening hardship, claiming that millions of Nigerians had been pushed into poverty.

The MDPCO argued that Tinubu's alleged reluctance to campaign directly across the country reflected fears of public resentment over the economic and security challenges confronting Nigerians.

"If President Tinubu is so fatigued that he cannot go round the country to canvass for votes, then he should withdraw from the race," the statement said.

Tinubu to lead APC campaign rallies in 12 states

MEANWHILE, the All Progressives Congress has released its nationwide campaign rally schedule for the 2027 presidential election, covering the 36 states and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), with President Bola Tinubu expected to lead rallies in 12 states.

The campaign is scheduled to run from October 2026 to early January 2027, with the official flag-off in Kaduna on October 24 and the grand finale in Lagos on January 9, 2027.

The timetable, sighted yesterday, comes days after Tinubu hinted that he might not attend every campaign rally, citing the need to balance electioneering with governance.

The President is expected to lead the campaign in Port Harcourt on November 7, Plateau State on November 14, Ibadan, Oyo State, on November 21, Borno State on November 25 and Enugu State on November 28.

He is also scheduled to lead rallies in Bauchi on November 29, Sokoto on December 5, Asaba, Delta State, on December 12, Kano on December 17 and Yola, Adamawa State, on January 4, 2027.

The schedule lists other rallies in Akure, Ondo State, on November 11; Edo State on November 12; Uyo, Akwa Ibom State, on November 18; Awka, Anambra State, on November 19; and Gombe State on November 3.

Other dates include Cross River State on November 2; Ekiti State on November 5; Ebonyi State on November 9; Jigawa State on November 10; Kebbi State on November 17; and Yobe State on November 16.

The campaign will also hold rallies in Makurdi, Benue State, on November 30; Katsina State on December 2; Abeokuta, Ogun State, on December 3; Abia State on December 7; Kogi State on December 8; Osun State on December 9; and Kwara State on December 10.

Further rallies are scheduled for Bayelsa State on December 15; Niger and Zamfara states on December 16 and 14, respectively; Taraba State on December 19; and Owerri, Imo State, on December 30.

The timetable places the Adamawa rally on January 4, 2027, ahead of the grand finale in Lagos on January 9.

Adamawa is the home state of former Vice President Atiku Abubakar, who is among Tinubu's potential challengers in the 2027 presidential election.

The APC's campaign schedule is expected to take the party's message across the country as it seeks to secure a second term for Tinubu.

Tinubu's re-election campaign draws supporters to Yola

THIS came as supporters of President Tinubu yesterday converged on Yola, Adamawa State, for a rally in support of his re-election bid in 2027, with organisers describing the turnout as evidence of his growing political appeal in the North-East.

The rally was organised by the Tinubu Must Go Again (TMGA) 2027 North-East Campaign Group as part of its mobilisation drive ahead of the presidential election.

Speaking at the event, the group's National Coordinator, Prof. Sheriff Almuhajir, said the mobilisation was voluntary and aimed at demonstrating support for Tinubu while explaining his administration's reform agenda to Nigerians.

Almuhajir, a professor of Economic and Financial Administration, urged Nigerians to assess the country's economic difficulties within the broader context of the administration's reforms.

He argued that difficult policy decisions were necessary to achieve lasting economic transformation and sustainable growth.

The campaign coordinator also cited Tinubu's support for the political aspirations of northern politicians, claiming that the President had backed three candidates from the region, including two from Adamawa State.

He described the turnout as a response to claims that Tinubu's re-election campaign would struggle to gain traction in Northern Nigeria.

According to him, thousands of young men and women marched for more than a kilometre, while residents along the route expressed solidarity with the campaign.

APC accuses Makinde of insulting 32 govs over Tinubu's campaign council

RELATEDLY, the All Progressives Congress in the South-West has accused Oyo State Governor Seyi Makinde of insulting 32 governors and millions of Nigerians by describing the APC Presidential Campaign Council for the 2027 general election as a "Nebuchadnezzar Coalition" and an "alliance of failed governors".

The party said the remarks, attributed to Makinde's presidential campaign organisation, were disrespectful to governors who had expressed support for President Bola Tinubu's re-election bid, irrespective of their political affiliations.

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

Musa: Come out, vote for whoever you want

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

portation bottlenecks, shortages and security threats.

Amupitan stressed that no Nigerian should be disenfranchised because of the late arrival of election materials, adding that early planning was essential to conducting transparent, efficient and credible elections.

Speaking, Abubakar-Sadiq described election logistics as the operational foundation of the democratic process, with direct implications for electoral integrity and public confidence. She said the committee would focus on strategic airlift and cargo planning, identifying operational bottlenecks, coordinating land and maritime transportation, and mapping difficult terrain, security-challenged areas and locations prone to crises.

As part of the arrangements, the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) will receive, store and distribute sensitive election materials through its nationwide branch network. The commissioner emphasised that effective cooperation among government agencies and other stakeholders would be crucial to the committee's assignment.

The inauguration attracted INEC national commissioners, representatives of the Chief of Defence Staff and service chiefs, and officials of the Nigeria Immigration Service, Nigerian Civil Aviation Authority, Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps, Federal Airports Authority of Nigeria and Nigerian Ports Authority.

Other stakeholders included representatives of the Nigerian Union of Road Transport Workers, the Nigerian Association of Road Transport Owners, maritime workers and other transport and security institutions.

THE INEC Chairman has further stated that the Commission has completed 10 of the 14 activities on its timetable for the 2027 general election.

Speaking in Abuja on Thursday at the flag-off of a nationwide grassroots mobilisation campaign for the 2027 general election organised by the National Orientation Agency (NOA), Amupitan said INEC had completed the 10 activities in line with the statutory deadlines and operational benchmarks.

"To manage an enterprise of this magnitude, the commission operated under the legal framework established by the Electoral Act of 2026 and a published timetable schedule of activities," he said,

"I am pleased to announce that, out of the 14 disputed activities provided in our timetable. The commission has successfully executed 10 major milestones, strictly adhering to legal deadlines and operational benchmarks. Some of the timelines were breached by the parliament."

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CHANGE OF COMPANY NAME

I, ISIOLU CHIJIOKE, That I am the Company Secretary of the company formerly known as SWIFT PETROLEUM OIL AND GAS LIMITED and the Company was incorporated in Nigeria on the 26th day of October, 2005 under the name SWIFT PETROLEUM OIL AND GAS LIMITED with RC NO. 637917 and the Registered Office of the company is situated at No. 3, Bankole Oki Street, Ikoyi Eti-Osa, Lagos State.

That pursuant to a special resolution duly passed by the members of the company and the approval of the CORPORATE AFFAIRS COMMISSION, the name of the company has been changed from SWIFT PETROLEUM OIL AND GAS LIMITED to SPOG PETROCHEMICALS LIMITED and the name change does not create a new legal entity and does not affect the company right, obligations, asset liabilities, contracts or legal proceedings and this publication is made for the purposes of updating the records of the Company with the central securities clearing system Plc., (CSCS), financial institutions, regulatory authorities and all other relevant public and private bodies to reflect the company's NEW NAME.

PUBLIC NOTICE

CHANGE OF COMPANY NAME

Company formerly Known as
Premium Nigeria Limited
has changed its name to
Messrs Premium Nigeria Limited.

All concerned are hereby notified, including:

1. Company Registrars
2. Nigerian Exchange Group (NGX)
3. Securities and Exchange Commission
4. Central Securities Clearing System Plc (CSCS)

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CAVEAT EMPTOR

This property located at Number 17 Oyedeji Street, Ojo Road, Ajegunle, in the Ajeromi / Ifelodun Local Government Area of Lagos State, belonging to Late Mr Stephen Obi Onyemaobi is not for sale and nobody has been authorised to sell, or dispose of the property

The Land Registry, other relevant agencies, and the general public, should take note.

BUYERS BEWARE

Signed

Barr. Ego Onyemaobi
Dr. Ogechi Abalihi
Dr. Chukwuemeka Onyemaobi
Mrs. Uche Onyemaobi Obiora
Dr. Ngozi Onyemaobi

PUBLIC NOTICE

I, Basirat Taiwo Yusuf, adult, Female, Businesswoman, Muslim citizen of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, of No. 2, Abiodun Ogundipe Avenue Road, Laaga Elepe, Ikorodu, Lagos State, Ikorodu, Ikorodu Local Government Area, Lagos State,

AND

I, Sholape Jamiu Omikunle, adult, Male, Artisan, Muslim citizen of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, of 5, Avenue Oposuru Bus-Stop, Ilogbo, Ota, Ogun State, do hereby make oath and declare as follows:

1. That we are the deponent herein.
2. That we are the administrators of the Estate of Late Mr. Dele Omikunle.
3. That we are equally part of the beneficiaries of the Estate of Late Mr. Dele Omikunle.
4. That the purchase receipt issued in favour of our father Late Mr. Dele Omikunle by his Vendor Mr. Tairu Oyelusi of Ikowogbe Compound, Otun Quarters, Ota, Ogun State dated the 4th day of February, 1978 in respect of the property lying, being and situate along Idi-Iroko Road, Sango-Ota, Ifo/Ota Local Government, Ogun State (now known as No. 119, Idiroko Road, Baby O Bus-Stop, Ojuore, Ota, Ogun State) measuring approximately 696.016 Sq. Metres got damaged in an inferno that happened at our Head of Family, Mr. Omikunle Ismail's house, Ile-Kaniwo, Ipapo, Oyo State sometime in the year 2012.
5. That the Deed of Agreement signed, sealed and delivered in favour of our father Late Mr. Dele Omikunle by his Vendor Mr. Tairu Oyelusi of Ikowogbe Compound, Otun Quarters, Ota, Ogun State in respect of the property lying, being and situate along Idi-Iroko Road, Sango-Ota, Ifo/Ota Local Government, Ogun State (now known as No. 119, Idiroko Road, Baby O Bus-Stop, Ojuore, Ota, Ogun State) measuring approximately 696.016 Sq. Metres also got damaged in an inferno that happened at our Head of Family, Mr. Omi kunle Ismail's house, Ile-Kaniwo, Ipapo, Oyo State sometime in the year 2012.
6. That this affidavit is now required for record and official purposes.

AND that I make this solemn Oath in good faith believing same to be true and correct in accordance with the Statutory Declaration Laws of Ogun State of Nigeria, 2006

FG, Soyinka decry non-compliance with court orders, interim reliefs abuse

From **Joke Falaju** and **Sodiq Omolaoye**, Abuja

NOBEL laureate, Prof. Wole Soyinka, has decried the failure to comply with court orders in Nigeria while expressing concern that citizens sometimes die without benefiting from favourable judgments.

Soyinka called for stronger institutional accountability and effective enforcement of court decisions, urging the Public Complaints Commission (PCC) to help address the gap between judicial pronouncements and the actual delivery of justice.

He spoke yesterday at the Nigerian Ombudsman Annual Conference 2026 in Abuja.

The Nobel laureate questioned why government agencies and other institutions failed to implement court judgments, leaving litigants waiting for years despite securing favourable rulings.

Soyinka cited cases in which courts ordered the return of passports to litigants, but the affected individuals waited for years without the judgments being enforced.

He also raised concerns about land disputes in which individuals allegedly resorted to violence and destroyed property despite ongoing judicial processes.

He urged the PCC to take up the challenge, saying effective intervention could help bridge the gap between court decisions and the actual delivery of justice.

Supporting his position, the Emir of Lafia and Chairman of the Nasarawa State Council of Chiefs, Justice Sidi Bage Muhammad, said compliance with court orders must begin with political leaders.

The former Supreme Court justice argued that citizens would find it difficult to respect judicial decisions when those in positions of authority disregarded them.

Bage urged the PCC to explore ways of addressing the frustrations citizens experience when judgments delivered in their favour are not enforced.

In his remarks, the former Commonwealth Secretary-General, Chief Emeka Anyaoku, called for greater public awareness of the services provided by the Ombudsman, describing the commission as a less expensive and less cumbersome avenue for citizens to seek redress.

He cited complaints involving unpaid pensions and gratuities, as well as inadequate medical care in public and private hospitals, as examples of grievances the commission could help address.

Anyaoku expressed confidence that the commission, under its current leadership, could improve its services and meet citizens' expectations.

In a related contribution, the Director General of the Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution, Joseph Ochogwu, said strong institutions were essential to upholding the rule of law, protecting citizens' rights and preventing violent conflicts.

Ochogwu, represented by the institute's Director of Conflict Prevention and Resolution, Gerard Okafor, identified institutional continuity, compliance monitoring and coordination among government agencies as important requirements for effective governance.



Prof. Femi Osofisan, 1959 set (left); keynote speaker; Prof. Wole Soyinka, 1946 set; Guest of Honour, Dr Olawale Babalakin, 1971 set; Chairman of the occasion and President, GCIOBA, Chief Jibola Ogunsola, 1956 set, at the 2026 Reunion Public Lecture of the Government College Ibadan Old Boys' Association held at the Shell Hall of the MUSON Centre, Onikan, Lagos.

EFCC, NJI seek legal reforms in prosecuting corruption cases

By **Ameh Ochojila**, Abuja

ECONOMIC and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) and the National Judicial Institute (NJI) have called for legal and procedural reforms to curb delays and abuse of court processes in the trial of corruption and other economic and financial crimes cases.

The call is contained in a communique issued by participants at the end of the 8th Capacity Building Workshop for Justices and Judges, held in Abuja between October 13 and15, 2026.

The workshop was organised by the EFCC in collaboration with the NJI under the theme "Investigation and Prosecution of Economic and Financial Crimes in a Digital Age."

It brought together Justices and Judges from across the country, as well as investigators and prosecutors of the EFCC.

At the end of the three days of lectures, exhaustive discussions and a workshop survey, participants arrived at several resolutions that formed the basis of the communique.

U.S., France, Brazil commit to Nigerian talents, partner AFRIFF

By **Ngozi Egenuka**

UNITED States, France and Brazil have reiterated their commitment to Nigeria's talent development through their support for Africa International Film Festival (AFRIFF).

This was announced at the press conference announcing the 15th edition of AFRIFF, held yesterday in Lagos.

The festival, which would be held from November 1 to 7, is themed "Frames of the Future".

According to the United States Consul General in Lagos, Brandon Hudspeth, this year, AFRIFF tells a story of what the future film industry could look like, one where creators meet international demand and global demand for distribution services while remaining true to their art and true to their storytelling.

He stressed that the future of film belongs to those who can pair creative talent with technology and sell the whole story.

Experts urge Nigeria, others to link renewable energy to industrial growth

From **Terhemba Daka** and **Joel Oladele**, Abuja

Reps pass Renewable Energy Regulation Bill for second reading

ENERGY experts have urged Nigeria and other African countries to link investments in renewable energy to industrial growth, local manufacturing and job creation, warning that the continent could miss the economic benefits of the global energy transition if it continues to depend on imported technologies.

They said renewable energy investments must go beyond expanding electricity generation to powering industries, strengthening indigenous businesses, developing technical skills and creating regional supply chains capable of retaining economic value within Africa.

The experts spoke yesterday at the inaugural Energy Transition Africa (ETA) 2026 Colloquium, held virtually, where policymakers, energy practitioners and researchers examined the theme, "Transition or Transformation? What Will the New Energy Economy Mean for Africa's Development?"

They argued that the real measure of Africa's energy transition should be its contribution to industrialisation, productive employment, affordable electricity and improved livelihoods, rather than the volume of investments attracted or renewable energy installations completed.

Opening the discussion, the Head of Policy Planning and Strategy at the African Energy Commission of the African Union, Yagouba Traoré, said African countries must harness their abundant energy resources to build domestic industries instead of remaining exporters of raw materials and consumers of imported technologies.

Traoré noted that nearly 600 million Africans lacked access to electricity, while close to one billion relied on firewood, charcoal and kerosene for cooking.

Cardoso affirms MPC members' independence, defends rate cut

From **Geoff Iyatse**, Bangkok

- Defends rate cut amid push to raise monthly remittances to $1b
- IMF chief worried over global trade imbalances

GOVERNOR of the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), Yemi Cardoso, has said he does not impose his views on members of the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC), insisting that independent contributions from all 12 members strengthen the credibility of monetary policy decisions.

Cardoso, who chairs the committee, said his role was to provide leadership and steer discussions while allowing members, including the five external representatives, to express their expert views on economic developments and market trends.

He said the CBN was deliberately building an MPC where independent positions count in the decision-making process, reducing the risk of "groupthink" and strengthening the country's monetary policy framework.

The committee comprises seven internal and five external members, whose participation, according to the governor, has added rigour and credibility to deliberations.

Cardoso spoke during a panel session, How Central Banks Decide, at the ongoing International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank Annual Meetings in Bangkok, Thailand.

He was joined by the Governor of Banque de France, Emmanuel Moulin, and the Chairman of the Governing Board of the Swiss National Bank, Martin Schlegel. The IMF's First Deputy Managing Director, Dan Katz, moderated the discussion.

The panellists examined the importance of effective communication in achieving central banks' policy objectives.

Cardoso said the CBN had provided external MPC members with the necessary support and resources to strengthen their research capacity and prepare for the eventual transition to inflation targeting.

The governor also defended the recent decision to cut the monetary policy rate by 3.5 percentage points, arguing that the market absorbed the adjustment without a significant shock because conditions were ripe for the move.

National Policing Bill: FG sets two-week deadline for transmission to National Assembly

From **Terhemba Daka** and **Ernest Nzor**, Abuja

THE Federal Government has set a two-week timeline for transmitting the National Policing Bill to the National Assembly, with the proposed legislation now 90 per cent ready and awaiting the resolution of outstanding observations from state governors, Chief of Staff to the President, Femi Gbajabiamila, has disclosed.

Gbajabiamila, who chairs the Presidential Working Group on the proposed policing reforms, gave the indication yesterday after a meeting of the group's steering committee at the State House, Abuja.

He said the committee was approaching the final stage of preparing the bill, with another meeting expected to resolve outstanding issues and ensure that the proposed legislation adequately addressed the concerns raised during deliberation.

According to him, the governors have made one or two observations that must be considered before the document is finalised and forwarded to the National Assembly for legislative consideration.

Although Gbajabiamila expressed confidence that the bill would be ready shortly, its transmission to the legislature remains subject to the conclusion of the committee's work and the resolution of the outstanding issues.

MEANWHILE, the Democratic Leadership Alliance (DLA), yesterday called for urgent reform of the Nigeria Police Force and constitutionally safeguarded state policing to tackle insecurity and protect lives and property across the country.

The party also urged the Federal Government to review economic policies contributing to rising living costs, declining purchasing power and increasing poverty among Nigerians.

FG flags off 17.7MW Oyo mini-grids project, rules out electricity tariff increase

From **Waliat Musa** (Lagos) and **Rotimi Agboluaje** (Ibadan)

Says project to supply power to five Ibadan communities

THE Federal Government has commenced a 17.7-megawatt (MW) interconnected mini-grids project in Ibadan, Oyo State, targeting at least 20 hours of daily electricity supply to five communities along the Iwo Road axis.

The project, being developed by Paras Energy & Natural Resources Development Limited, is expected to provide additional generation capacity to Bola, Jiboye, Ogo-Oluwa, Molade-Adelubi and Sooko Elega communities, where improved electricity supply is expected to support households, businesses and other productive activities.

The project was part of efforts to expand electricity supply through decentralised generation alongside improvements to Nigeria's national grid.

Upon completion, the project is expected to deliver a minimum of 20 hours of electricity daily to the beneficiary communities, which also include the provision of 18 new transformers to strengthen electricity distribution within the project area.

Minister of Power, Joseph Tegbe, during the groundbreaking ceremony for five interconnected mini-grid projects with a combined generation capacity of 17.7 megawatts and a 17.74-megawatt-hour Battery Energy Storage System (BESS), said the project demonstrated the Federal Government's commitment to increasing available electricity, improving supply reliability and ensuring that power infrastructure translates into economic opportunities.

He said that the government's focus extended beyond expanding electricity infrastructure to ensuring that additional generation capacity supports businesses, productive enterprises, industries and households.

"Our objective is clear: to increase the quantum of electricity available to Nigerians, improve the reliability of supply and ensure that electricity becomes an enabler of productivity, investment and economic growth. Projects such as this demonstrate how we are translating that commitment into infrastructure that directly serves communities and productive economic clusters," he said

Tegbe said that the mini-grid intervention was being pursued alongside the Federal Government's initiatives to strengthen generation, transmission and distribution infrastructure across the country.

The minister, however, dismissed reports of a planned increase in electricity tariffs, assuring Nigerians that the Federal Government is prioritising improved power supply across the country.

Managing Director/Chief Executive Officer of the Rural Electrification Agency (REA), Abba Aliyu, said the 17.7MW Ibadan project reflected the scale of distributed energy investments being developed under President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's Renewed Hope Agenda.

He said the agency focused on deploying generation capacity where it could deliver the greatest economic impact, while leveraging private-sector investment and sustainable operating models.



Special Adviser to the President on Media and Public Communications, Sunday Dare (left); representative of Grand Patron of PBAT Door-to-Door Campaign and Managing Director of Tantita Security Services Nigeria Limited, Kestin Pondi; a member of the All Progressives Congress Presidential Campaign Council (APC-PCC), Ali Modu Sherrif; Director-General of the APC-PCC, Abdulaziz Yari, and Senator Gbenga Daniel, during a courtesy visit by the Movement to the Olubadan of Ibadan, Oba Rashidi Ladoja, yesterday.

2027: APC presidential campaign council visits Olubadan, rallies support for Tinubu

Tompolo donates 32 vehicles in Oyo

From **Helen Oji** (Lagos) and **Rotimi Agboluaje** (Ibadan)

PROMINENT political figures, including former Ondo State Governor, Olusegun Mimiko; former Imo State Governor, Rochas Okorocha, and Niger Delta figure, Government Ekpemupolo, popularly known as Tompolo, yesterday joined members of the All Progressives Congress Presidential Campaign Council (APC-PCC) on a courtesy visit to the Olubadan of Ibadanland, Oba Rashidi Ladoja.

The delegation, during the visit to the monarch at his palace in Oke-Aremo, Ibadan North Local Government Area of Oyo State, was led by the Director-General of the campaign council, Abubakar Yari.

Other prominent members of the delegation include former Ogun State Governor, Gbenga Daniel; the President's Special Adviser on Digital Information, Sunday Dare; and the APC governorship candidate in Oyo State, Sharafadeen Alli.

Meanwhile, Tompolo called on the people of Oyo State to vote massively for Tinubu's re-election as one of their own.

He appealed, as he donated 32 vehicles to the Movement in Oyo State for grassroots mobilisation.

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

Ogombo land: Oloja-elect explains TBT Properties' mandate, cites court judgment

By **Seye Olumide**

THE Oloja of Lagos-elect, Abiola Olojo-Kosoko, has clarified the basis of TBT Properties Limited's authority to manage and sell the Kosoko Royal Family's 114.476-hectare Ogombo land in Lagos, following a recent publication questioning the company's mandate.

In a statement, Olojo-Kosoko said the company's authority was based on a power of attorney granted by the royal family to manage, recover, defend and sell its property, including the land in Ogombo, Eti-Osa Local Council.

He also referred to a consent judgment of the Lagos State High Court, which he said resolved aspects of the dispute concerning the property.

According to him, the terms of settlement dated November 1, 2024, were adopted as a consent judgment on November 12, 2024, in suit No. LD/12881LMW/2022.

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

Turn medical brain drain into gain, Fayemi tells FG

From **Rotimi Agboluaje**, Ibadan

FUHSI has 3,332 students, completes 20 projects in five years, says VC

FORMER Governor of Ekiti State, Dr Kayode Fayemi, has urged the Federal Government to address the increasing brain drain in Nigeria's healthcare sector, improve working conditions of medical professionals, strengthen diaspora engagement and negotiate agreements with countries recruiting the nation's health workers.

Fayemi said Nigeria must move beyond lamenting the exodus of doctors and other health professionals to creating conditions that would make them willing to remain in the country or contribute to its healthcare system from abroad.

The former governor spoke yesterday while delivering the maiden convocation lecture of the Federal University of Health Sciences, Ila-Orangun (FUHSI), Osun State.

In the lecture, titled "Rethinking 21st Century Specialised Medical University in the Nigerian Context: Are the Challenges Surmountable?" Fayemi identified poor remuneration, inadequate medical facilities, limited career progression and insufficient postgraduate training opportunities as factors driving health workers abroad.

He said the country was investing public resources in training medical personnel only for wealthier nations to benefit from their expertise after graduation.

The former governor, however, warned against coercive measures to prevent health workers from leaving Nigeria, saying that the country should focus on making its healthcare system attractive enough to retain them.

Fayemi also called for agreements with countries recruiting Nigerian health workers, saying that destination countries should contribute to training replacement personnel and strengthening the institutions that produced the professionals they employed.

He said such arrangements should form part of Nigeria's bilateral negotiations with countries benefiting from its health workforce.

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

Advocates decry stigma, barriers to family planning in Lagos PHCs

By **Glory Sunday**

Urge LASG to restore safe-abortion guidelines

WOMEN'S health advocates have raised concerns over stigma and barriers to family planning services at Primary Healthcare Centres (PHCs) in Lagos State.

They, therefore, urged the state government to improve access to reproductive healthcare and restore its suspended guidelines on safe termination of pregnancy for legal indications.

According to them, the guidelines, which outlined circumstances in which pregnancy termination may be managed within the existing legal framework, were suspended in July 2022 following public controversy.

The advocates said some women, particularly those from vulnerable backgrounds, faced discrimination when seeking care, while opposition to contraception and concerns over unsafe abortion further underscored the need for community sensitisation and better access to accurate reproductive health information.

The health advocates made the call on Wednesday during a Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) awareness walk organised by Ohotu Diamond Women Initiative (ODWI), with support from AmplifyChange, from Oniwaya Market to Dopemu Palace in Agege.

The exercise featured sensitisation in English, pidgin, Hausa, Yoruba and Igbo, focusing on family planning, contraception, Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs), HIV prevention and the dangers of unsafe abortion.

It also encouraged women to seek medical care without fear of discrimination.

ODWI's Project Coordinator, Dr Margaret Onah, said the organisation had received complaints from women who felt stigmatised or inadequately attended to at PHCs because of their backgrounds or occupations.

She said that women reached by the organisation were sex workers, adding that reproductive health education needed to extend beyond brothels into the wider communities where they lived.

11th Senate: Drama as Akpabio, Barau declare 'no vacancy'

From **John Akubo**, Abuja

IN a move that has raised fresh questions about Nigeria's political culture, the 10th Senate has declared the leadership seats of the 11th National Assembly effectively reserved for incumbent office holders.

The dramatic declaration, which followed a motion adopted through a voice vote yesterday, saw senators throwing their weight behind Senate President Godswill Akpabio and Deputy Senate President Barau Jibrin for another term, alongside other principal officers who win re-election.

But the declaration threw up an obvious question: how can senators who are yet to secure fresh mandates from voters begin allocating leadership positions in a Senate whose membership has not been determined?

The resolution covers Akpabio and Barau, as well as Senate Leader Opeyemi Bamidele; Chief Whip Tahir Monguno, Deputy Whip Peter Nwaebonyi, Minority Leader Abba Moro, Deputy Minority Leader Oyewumi Olalere and Minority Whip Tony Nwoye.

The development followed a motion moved by Monguno and seconded by Cyril Fasuyi of Ekiti North.

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

UCH resident doctors end warning strike, demand urgent repairs to power system

Kwara doctors begin warning strike over salary dispute

From **Rotimi Agboluaje**, Ibadan

THE Association of Resident Doctors (ARD) at the University College Hospital (UCH), Ibadan, has suspended its three-day warning strike and directed members to resume duty, while insisting on urgent repairs to the hospital's faulty electricity infrastructure.

The Association announced the suspension in a memo issued to members and made available to journalists in Ibadan yesterday.

The memo was jointly signed by the association's President, Dr Uthman Adedeji, and General Secretary, Dr Mary Awodiji.

MEANWHILE, doctors employed by Kwara State Government have begun a seven-day warning strike over salary deductions and non-implementation of the 2025 Consolidated Medical Salary Structure (CONMESS).

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

'Soludo's support for Tinubu will aid APC's chances in South-East'

By Seye Olumide

THE Chairman of the Media and Publicity Committee of the Forum of Chief Executives of Federal Parastatals (FORCEPA), Biodun Ajiboye, has said Anambra State Governor Chukwuma Soludo's support for President Bola Tinubu's re-election bid could give the ruling All Progressives Congress (APC) an inroad into the South-East ahead of the 2027 presidential election.

Ajiboye, in a statement on Soludo's participation at the inauguration of the APC Presidential Campaign Council in Abuja on Wednesday, described the governor's position as significant, given his membership of the All Progressives Grand Alliance (APGA).

Soludo, a former governor of the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), had described the political support for Tinubu at the inauguration as unusual in Nigeria's democratic history, citing the participation of political stakeholders from different party backgrounds.

He said APGA's support for the President was anchored on shared interests in national unity, security and economic prosperity.

The Anambra governor also described the Tinubu administration's economic approach as "pragmatic progressivism," arguing that its reforms were aimed at addressing structural challenges and laying the foundation for sustainable growth.

Soludo maintained that the administration's economic decisions should be assessed against the difficulties confronting the country, although critics have questioned the impact of the reforms on household incomes and the cost of living.

Ajiboye said the governor's position could strengthen the APC's political prospects in the South-East, where the party has faced the challenge of expanding its electoral support.

Meanwhile, the Lagos State chapter of the APC has faulted the presidential candidate of the Social Democratic Party (SDP), Adewole Adebayo, over his criticism of Tinubu's reported plans to delegate some campaign activities ahead of the 2027 election.

The party's spokesman, Seye Oladejo, described Adebayo's position as an attempt to create controversy around the President's campaign strategy, arguing that Tinubu did not need to attend every campaign event personally to demonstrate his commitment to re-election.

Oladejo said the APC had an extensive nationwide political network and experienced leaders capable of undertaking campaign engagements on the President's behalf.

He argued that the reported decision to delegate some campaign responsibilities reflected confidence in the party's political machinery rather than weakness.

According to him, presidential leadership requires more than public appearances and criticism of an incumbent, but also experience in public administration, economic management, national security and intergovernmental relations.

Oladejo challenged Adebayo to demonstrate his preparedness for the presidency by explaining his public service experience and showing how the SDP intended to build a formidable political structure capable of mobilising voters nationwide.

He also said Tinubu had responsibilities beyond electioneering, including managing the economy, security, infrastructure development and international relations.

Lagos APC faults Adebayo over President's campaign plans



Consul General of Brazil to Nigeria, Ronaldo Lima Vieria (left); Consul General of France to Nigeria, Laurent Favier; Founder African International Film Festival and Afriff Film and Content Market (AFRIFF and AFCM), Chioma Ude; Group Managing Director, Mikano, Joel Haykal; Consul General of the United States to Nigeria, Brandon Hudspeth; and Director General, Nigeria Film and Video Censors Board, Dr Shuaibu Husseini, at the press briefing to announce the 15th African International Film Festival (AFRIFF) in Lagos, yesterday.

Nigeria to link power grid with telecom networks to expand connectivity

By Adeyemi Adepetun

PLANS are underway in Nigeria to integrate its electricity infrastructure with telecommunications networks in a bid to accelerate digital access and improve service reliability.

The initiative aims to leverage the country's extensive power grid to support telecom expansion, particularly in underserved rural areas where connectivity challenges remain a major barrier to economic growth.

This was disclosed by the Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of REA, Abba Aliyu, at the second edition of the Rural Connectivity Summit (RuralConnect 2.0), organised by Business Metrics Limited in Lagos under the theme "Rural Inclusion at Scale: Connecting the Next 25 Million Users for Frontier Market Growth," yesterday.

Aliyu disclosed that Nigeria has more than 11,000 rural base stations, with more than 40 million litres of diesel estimated to be consumed monthly to power a large proportion of them.

"Across the digital sector, when you are talking about rural base stations and rural connectivity, we have over 11,000 rural base stations. And it's estimated that over 40 million litres of diesel are consumed every month to power a lot of these rural base stations," Aliyu said.

FG reopens First Niger Bridge, installs CCTV, solar streetlights

From Monday Osayande, Asaba

THE Federal Government has reopened the First Niger Bridge linking Asaba, Delta State, and Onitsha, Anambra State, following extensive rehabilitation works aimed at improving structural safety, strengthening security and restoring seamless vehicular movement between Nigeria's South-South and South-East geopolitical zones.

The rehabilitation included the installation of solar-powered streetlights and Closed-Circuit Television (CCTV) cameras, improvements to the road surface, the installation of median barriers and the creation of three designated turnaround points to facilitate traffic management during emergencies and vehicle breakdowns.

The Minister of Works, David Umahi, who announced the reopening during a ceremony in Onitsha yesterday, said the intervention was part of President Bola Tinubu's commitment to maintaining critical national infrastructure and improving transportation across the country.

Umahi explained that the rehabilitation became necessary following reports of structural concerns, including the alleged removal of bolts from the bridge's steel components, inadequate maintenance and activities capable of undermining its structural integrity.

He stressed that the bridge, which serves as a critical transportation link between the South-South and South-East, required continuous maintenance and effective security measures to protect its structural integrity and extend its lifespan.

The minister disclosed that security observation centres were being established at both ends of the bridge to enable continuous monitoring of activities on and beneath the structure.

Warns against sand dredging around structure

Tinubu inaugurates 50 CNG buses, launches initiative to empower 5,000 Edo beneficiaries

From Joseph Kanjo, Benin

WIFE of the President, Oluremi Tinubu, yesterday inaugurated 50 Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) buses to improve transportation in Edo State.

Mrs Tinubu also launched a N1 billion economic empowerment programme for 5,000 beneficiaries to strengthen small businesses in the state.

Speaking, Tinubu said both initiatives of Governor Monday Okpebholo demonstrated his love for Edo people.

While noting that the empowerment initiative would promote economic opportunities for women, youths and vulnerable groups in the state, the First Lady added: "I am glad to be in Edo today for the commissioning of 50 Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) buses for the benefit of the people," she said.

She commended the Edo State Government for introducing the initiatives, describing them as important steps towards improving livelihoods and supporting economic growth.

She said the state government is empowering 5,000 beneficiaries with N200,000 each to strengthen their livelihoods, support small businesses and promote financial independence.

"I pray that the monies received will prosper in your hands and grow your businesses," she said.

Earlier, Okpebholo described her visit as a demonstration of care, compassion and commitment to the welfare of the people."

Oba of Benin honours First Lady with royal coral beads

Scores hospitalised as explosion rocks Eleme in Rivers

From Ann Godwin, Port Harcourt

SCORES have reportedly been hospitalised following an explosion in Aleto, Eleme Local Government Area of Rivers State.

The Guardian gathered that the incident, which was still ongoing at the time of filing this report, affected nearby buildings, with some residents reportedly hospitalised as a result of the impact.

The Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC) was said to be at the scene monitoring the situation and participating in rescue efforts.

Although the cause of the explosion was yet to be independently verified, preliminary reports have linked it to a pipeline rupture allegedly caused by equipment failure at a facility said to belong to the Nigerian National Petroleum Company Limited (NNPCL).

The Youths and Environmental Advocacy Centre (YEAC-Nigeria), an organisation that monitors environmental issues, confirmed the explosion in the area.

Its Executive Director, Dr Fyneface Dumnamene, said volunteers from the organisation had visited the scene to independently verify the incident.

YEAC-Nigeria called on the National Oil Spill Detection and Response Agency (NOSDRA) to identify the operator of the affected facility and conduct a Joint Investigation Visit (JIV) to the site.

The organisation also urged the agency to invoke relevant provisions of the Petroleum Industry Act (PIA) 2021, where applicable.

World Anaesthesia Day: Association laments dearth of physician anaesthetists, poor remuneration

From Nkechi Onyedika-Ugoeze, Abuja

THE Nigerian Society of Anaesthetists (NSA) has called on federal and state governments to urgently hire more anaesthetists and improve remuneration and welfare to retain the anaesthesia workforce.

In a statement jointly signed by the President of the association, Prof. Alhassan Datti Mohammed, and the Public Relations Officer (PRO), Dr Agwu Nnanna, to mark the 2026 World Anaesthesia Day, the organisation noted that Anaesthetists are the guardians of patient safety, adding that their mandate goes far beyond putting patients to sleep, but also ensuring that patients are fit for surgery before, keep them alive and pain-free during surgery, and ensure they recover safely beyond surgery in Post Anaesthesia Care Unit (PACU) or Intensive Care Unit (ICU).

The association lamented that Nigeria still faces a critical shortage of physician anaesthetists, inadequate monitoring equipment in many centres, and poor public awareness of our role.

Experts urge strategic leadership, policy shift to drive Africa's development

By Adelowo Adebumiti

TO address critical bottlenecks hindering Africa's socio-economic progression, scholars, policymakers, and industry leaders have called for evidence-based leadership, climate-smart innovations, and deep structural reforms across education, agriculture, and waste management on the continent.

The call was made at the Bells-DiaDeRC International Conference 2026, held at Bells University of Technology (BellsTech), Ota, Ogun State, in collaboration with the DePECOS Institutions and Development Research Centre (DiaDeRC).

The three-day summit brought together global experts under the theme "Harnessing Climate Action, Sustainable Food Systems and Human Capital Development for Well-Being in Africa" to translate academic research into actionable policy and economic solutions.

Delivering a presentation titled "Research-Informed Educational Leadership: Advancing Human Capital Development and Talent Retention in Africa," Registrar and Chief Executive, Institute of Educational Leadership Practitioners of Nigeria (IELPN), Dr Taiwo Olusa, warned that Africa's failure to build supportive domestic institutions continues to drive severe skill flight.

Terrorists kill soldiers at Borno military post, six in Niger, Plateau

• Troops neutralise Lakurawa in Sokoto, recover weapons

From **Isa Abdulsalami Ahovi** (Jos), **Njadvara Musa** (Maiduguri) and **Ifeanyichukwu Nwannah** (Gusau)

SUSPECTED Boko Haram terrorists have reportedly attacked a military formation in Mairari community of Guzamala Local Council Area of Borno State, with some undeclared number of soldiers feared killed.

Chairman of Guzamala Local Council, Umar Sheriff, and local sources told *The Guardian* that the terrorists attacked the military post around midnight on Tuesday in an operation that lasted over two hours, leaving some casualties on both sides.

Details of the incident were still expected from the Acting Military Information Officer of Operation Hadin Kai, Capt. Mohammed Goni, as at press time.

In another development, suspected bandits reportedly killed five farmers, abducted 18 people and burnt houses and shops in separate attacks on Niger State communities.

The attacks occurred between October 9 and 12 at Fanga community in Mashegu Local Council Area, and Kigbere and Kokani communities in Borgu Local Council Area, after the residents allegedly failed to meet the attackers' demand for millions of naira in levies.

Also, the Mishkaham Bokkos, Da Jatau Samkwar, was said to have died yesterday following Monday night's attack by suspected gunmen on his residence at Daffo, in Bokkos Local Council Area of Plateau State.

Confirming the incident, the Chairman of the Community Peace Observers in Bokkos Council, Kefas Mallai, said the traditional ruler was shot in the leg but died yesterday after efforts to treat him at different hospitals failed to save him.

He expressed concern at the prevailing insecurity in the area, as the traditional ruler's son had earlier been kidnapped but was released on Sunday, before his father was shot.

In the meantime, the Nigeria Immigration Service (NIS) has confirmed the death of an officer, ASI Ibrahim Babangida, following an attack by unidentified gunmen while the personnel was conducting routine surveillance patrols in Niger State.

In a statement yesterday, the NIS said the other officer, simply identified as Inspector A.K. Musa, sustained serious injuries but managed to escape and was currently receiving medical attention.

Describing his death as a loss to the organisation, the agency said it was collaborating with the Niger State Government and other security agencies to track down the attackers.

However, troops of the Joint Task Force North West, Operation Fansan Yamma (OPFY), have reportedly neutralised some unknown number of terrorists when they overran a Lakurawa enclave in Waria Forest, Tangaza Local Council Area of Sokoto State.



Executive Director, Civil Society Legislative Advocacy Centre (CISLAC), Auwal Rafsanjani (left), and the Registrar-General/Chief Executive Officer, Corporate Affairs Commission (CAC), Hussaini Magaji, during CISLAC's advocacy visit to CAC's head office in Abuja yesterday. PHOTO: LUCY LADIDI ATEKO

Heavy security as terrorism trials begin in Abuja

• Fintiri urges improved security at Nigeria-Cameroun border

From **Ameh Ochojila** (Abuja) and **Joy Dennis** (Yola)

THERE was a heavy security presence at the Federal High Court in Abuja yesterday as the federal government commenced another phase of mass trials of the defendants in terrorism-related cases.

Security was heightened around the high-rise court building along Shehu Shagari Way in the Central Business District, where several courtrooms were in session.

Leading the federal government's prosecution team during the proceedings was the Director of Public Prosecutions of the Federation, Rotimi Oyedepo, SAN, while the Director-General of the Legal Aid Council, Aliyu Abubakar, led the team of lawyers for the defendants.

Away from that, Adamawa State Governor, Ahmadu Fintiri, has urged the federal government to deploy drones, modern surveillance technology and joint border patrols to curb arms proliferation, illegal migration and smuggling along the Nigeria-Cameroun border.

Two Boko Haram allies get life sentence

From **Ameh Ochojila**, Abuja

A Federal High Court in Abuja yesterday sentenced two men, Abba Mustapha and Bukar Ibrahim, both from Borno State, to life imprisonment for providing support for the proscribed Boko Haram terrorist group.

They were sentenced after pleading guilty to charges bordering on providing support to the terrorist group and concealing information on their activities.

Consequently, the presiding Justice Salim Ibrahim sentenced both defendants to life imprisonment on the first count, and 20 years' imprisonment on the second count.

The sentences were handed down during the federal government's latest phase of mass trials of suspected terrorists at the trial court. The exercise, which began yesterday, is being conducted across several courtrooms.

Among the judges handling the proceedings are Justices Salim Ibrahim, James Omotosho, Binta Nyako, Emeka Nwite, Obiora Egwuatu, Hauwa Yilwa, Joyce Abdulmalik and Peter Lifu.

Conflict-induced malnutrition surges 18% in North-East, says ICRC

MALNUTRITION record at health facilities supported by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) in North-East Nigeria surged by 18 per cent in one year, with young children, pregnant women and breastfeeding mothers bearing the brunt of worsening food insecurity, the organisation disclosed yesterday.

In a statement, the ICRC said admissions at six health centres and four hospitals it supports rose from about 17,000 between January and September 2025 to nearly 20,000 during the same period in 2026.

This, it noted, was amid persistent armed conflict, climate shocks and economic pressures that have made food increasingly difficult for vulnerable families to access.

According to the ICRC, the situation was particularly difficult in Mubi, Adamawa State, where malnutrition admissions increased by nearly 24 per cent, from about 4,600 in the first nine months of 2025 to approximately 5,700 in the corresponding period this year.

Behind the figures are families struggling to feed their children, with some mothers seeking treatment for infants who have battled ill health since birth, it stated.

The agency said the inability to access farmland safely, coupled with market disruptions and economic hardship, has compounded food insecurity, with particularly severe consequences for young children and pregnant and breastfeeding women, whose nutritional needs are heightened.

For farmers, the threat posed by explosive devices has further restricted access to agricultural land, limiting food production and household income.

In a United Nations analysis cited by the organisation, over 34 million people in Nigeria are expected to lack sufficient food for their families in 2026, the highest figure in six years.

The analysis also places Nigeria among the world's hunger hotspots of greatest concern, alongside Sudan, Yemen, Somalia and Gaza.

As part of efforts to address the crisis, the ICRC said that, working with the Nigerian Red Cross Society, it supports 15 primary healthcare centres and four hospitals, while helping more than 200 communities treat malnutrition and strengthen their food security.

Its interventions include providing farmers with seeds suited to drought and flooding, promoting crop diversity and teaching mothers how to prepare nutritious meals from locally available ingredients.

UNESCO urges children media literacy to combat cyber threats

From **Joel Oladele**, Abuja

THE United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) has advocated early media and information education to help children identify fake news, resist online manipulation and protect themselves from cyber threats.

Making the call yesterday in Abuja during the public presentation of *Young Truth Detective*, a media and information literacy workbook designed for children aged six to 10, the UNESCO Representative to Nigeria, Dr Isaías da Rosa, said children needed to learn how to verify information before sharing it.

Da Rosa, also the Head of the UNESCO Abuja Office, said this would help curb misinformation, disinformation, and hate speech, insisting that the best way to fight fake or misleading information is through education.

He stressed that teaching children to check facts and avoid sharing unverified information would help build a better society. He further described media and information literacy as an important part of UNESCO's work, particularly as social media and other digital platforms continue to shape how people access and share information.

For his part, the Secretary-General of the Nigerian National Commission for UNESCO, Dr Lateef Olagunju, emphasised the need to equip children with critical thinking skills to help them assess information before accepting or sharing it.

Olagunju cited cartoon-based educational resources designed to teach children the importance of checking claims and unverified announcements, stating that such interactive materials could make fact-checking easier for children growing up with smartphones and other digital technologies.

Also, Director of the International Media and Information Literacy Institute (IMILI), Dr Sharon Omotoso, warned that parents, teachers and communities have a shared responsibility in helping children navigate digital platforms safely due to the various dangers online, including scams, identity theft and inappropriate contact with strangers.

She added that media literacy education should cover personal data protection and the risks associated with using artificial intelligence tools, sharing digital images, and subscribing to online services, including possible consequences.

Meanwhile, the Executive Director of the Media and Information Literacy and Intercultural Dialogue Foundation (MILID Foundation), Chiamaka Okafor-Onumah, said the workbook was developed to instil responsible information habits in children before they grew older.

She explained that many interventions against misinformation focused on adults, journalists, civil society organisations and older young people, prompting the foundation to introduce media literacy education to children aged six to 10.

Bauchi governor directs tougher sanctions for illegal miners

From **Rauf Oyewole**, Bauchi

GOVERNOR Bala Mohammed of Bauchi State has told the Nigerian Army and other security agencies to deal decisively with persons involved in illegal mining, regardless of status.

The governor gave the directive yesterday in Bauchi during the State Security Council meeting, where he identified illegal mining as a major security concern linked to banditry and criminal syndicates.

Stating that his administration would not tolerate activities that undermine the state's economy and threaten residents' safety, Mohammed urged the security agencies to intensify efforts against illegal mining and dismantle criminal networks operating across the state.

He listed banditry, kidnapping, cross-border criminal incursions, illegal mining and the spread of misinformation among what he described as the increasingly mobile, adaptive and interconnected threats facing the state and requiring coordinated and sustained security operations.

Meanwhile, the governor commended security personnel for their success in dismantling criminal networks in Alkaleri, Ningi and Ganjuwa local councils, while calling for intensified ground operations and patrols across other vulnerable communities.

Mohammed further warned traditional rulers, community leaders and local council officials against illegal allocation of land, harbouring suspicious individuals, or facilitating unlawful access to mining sites.

CIOTA seeks transport supervisors in councils

AS part of the resolutions at its just concluded national transport conference, the Chartered Institute of Transport Administration of Nigeria (CIOTA) has called on the federal and state governments to introduce a supervisory councillor for transport in every local council across Nigeria as a policy.

In a communiqué, the institute called on all tiers of government to recognise public transport as an essential social service and make adequate budgetary provisions for its development, operations, and maintenance to ensure accessible, affordable, and reliable mobility for Nigerians.

CIOTA also called for an institutional framework for collaboration between the Federal Ministries of Transportation and Works, with the former leading transport needs assessment, network planning and functional design requirements, while the latter undertakes road construction in accordance with approved designs and relevant engineering standards.

Among other things, the conference advocated the adoption of modern technologies to improve traffic management, reduce congestion, enhance road safety, and promote the efficient movement of passengers and goods, as well as the tracking and monitoring of vehicles and vessels to strengthen security, accountability, and regulatory compliance across all modes.

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Friday, October 16, 2026

New NBBF president pledges reforms, grassroots development

From **Ernest Nzor**, Abuja

NEWLY-ELECTED President of the Nigeria Basketball Federation (NBBF), Dr Mustapha Abdullahi, has pledged to reunite the basketball family and drive the sport to new heights.

Mustapha, yesterday, in Abuja defeated former D'Tigers captain Olumide Oyedeji and former international, Ejike Ugboaja to succeed Musa Kida, who had completed his eight- year tenure.

Mustapha, who is the Director-General of the Energy Commission of Nigeria, secured 40 of the 48 votes cast to win the presidency, while Oyedeji polled eight votes. Ugboaja failed to secure any vote.

Former presidential aspirant, Igoche Mark, had withdrawn from the race on Wednesday, citing concerns about the fairness and credibility of the electoral process.

Also elected yesterday was Ugo Udezue, who emerged NBBF's Vice-President unopposed, having been the sole candidate for the position.

Speaking after his victory, Mustapha pledged far-reaching reforms, grassroots development, improved player welfare and stronger commercial partnerships to reposition Nigerian basketball.

He thanked the delegates for the confidence reposed in him, describing his election as a collective victory for players, coaches, officials and young Nigerians seeking opportunities through the sport.

He said his administration would depart from existing practices and prioritise strategic leadership, sound administration, institutional reforms and measurable results.

Said he: "My presidency will mark a decisive departure from business as usual. We cannot keep doing things the same way and expect a different result.

"Nigerian basketball needs more than enthusiasm; it needs strategic leadership, sound administration, institutional reforms and measurable results."

Mustapha outlined an agenda focused on rebuilding basketball from the grassroots, strengthening domestic leagues, improving sporting facilities and investing in coaches and referees.

He also promised to prioritise players' welfare, advance women's basketball and pursue improved performances across the senior national teams, D'Tigers and D'Tigress, as well as the country's youth teams.

According to him, his administration will work towards building a basketball ecosystem that provides talented young Nigerians, regardless of their geographical location or economic background, with a credible pathway to represent the country.

He said basketball should go beyond competitive sports to become a platform for education, employment, enterprise and national unity.



New NBBF President, Dr Abdullahi Mustapha



Victor Osimhen is one of the contenders for the 2026 CAF Men's Footballer of the Year award.

CAF Awards: 15-man facilities inspection team arrives Nigeria today

From **Ernest Nzor**, Abuja

A team of facilities' inspectors from the Confederation of African Football (CAF) headquarters will arrive in Nigeria today for a second and final inspection of facilities the country is putting up for the 48th CAF Ordinary General Assembly and the 2026 CAF Awards.

The 48th CAF Ordinary General Assembly will hold at the Bola Ahmed Tinubu International Conference Centre, Abuja on November 21, while the 2026 CAF Awards - the biggest football awards ceremony on the African continent - is slated for the Wole Soyinka Centre for Culture and Creative Arts, Lagos on December 7.

During the first inspection held from July 31 to August 4, the CAF officials interacted with executives of various institutions and agencies that will be involved in the hosting of the events, in Lagos and Abuja, and agreed on regular communication towards mutual understanding and agreements that would guarantee seamless, innovative and futuristic events.

The 15-man team, which will be led by CAF's Head of Safety and Security, Dr. Christian Emeruwa, will land in Lagos this afternoon, and is scheduled to further assess and have robust and meaningful engagements with executives of the Wole Soyinka Centre for Culture and Creative Arts, Eko Hotel & Suites and Murtala Muhammed International Airport, and officials of the Lagos State Government.

Despite apologies to FIFA Council, UEFA tell Infantino he is not fit to lead

- Senior UEFA figures want Wenger to run for FIFA presidency
- Opponents discuss mystery candidate as successor

PRESIDENT Gianni Infantino has apologised to the FIFA Council for his World Cup sell-off plan - but has been told he is not fit to lead unless he releases all of the documents and answers key questions, reports BBC.

The FIFA Council met in Zurich yesterday for the first time since Infantino's secret FIFA Forward Enterprise (FFE) proposal emerged.

Under FFE, which Infantino scrapped within days, a portion of the commercial rights of football's world governing body would have been given to a private investment firm.

In a three-and-a-half-hour meeting, Infantino also faced questions about U.S. striker Folarin Balogun's suspended red-card ban, the FIFA Peace Prize and funding for national associations.

English Football Association chair Debbie Hewitt - a FIFA vice-president - said afterwards that many questions remained unanswered despite the "most robust, most frank, most open Council meeting" she had experienced.

"One of the disappointing things is that we didn't get answers to anything that we had specifically requested - for example getting the papers from FFE," Hewitt said.

"I asked the question 'why not?' - and we were asked to submit those questions in writing.

"I think the man has to answer those questions and if he doesn't answer those questions now, he's not fit to be FIFA president - and that was what was shared in the meeting."

Hewitt added: "I've repeatedly asked for the papers to be shared. I haven't received them and still in spite of the request today, I haven't received them.

"It is the rationale for why FFE happened in the way that it did, the Balogun case, the Peace Prize.

"The responses to those questions, which I still don't have answers to, will determine from my personal point of view whether or not Gianni is the right candidate.

Today's Football Matches

Nigerian Premier League		
Shooting Stars	v	Ranchers Bees
Spanish La Liga		
Deportivo la Coruña	v	Levante
German Bundesliga		
Eintracht Frankfurt	v	Köln
Italian Serie A		
Frosinone	v	Sassuolo
French Ligue I		
Le Mans	v	Toulouse

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FIFA U-17 Women's World Cup

Flamingos target three points against Poland in Rabat

NIGERIA'S U-17 girls, Flamingos will begin their 2026 FIFA U-17 Women's World Cup campaign against Poland at Pitch 4 of the Mohammed VI Football Complex tomorrow.

Nigeria will be hoping to go further than they did in the previous edition, where they were eliminated in the Round of 16 following a 4-0 defeat to Italy.

The team battled through a tough qualifying campaign, defeating Guinea and Benin Republic to secure their place in Morocco.

They also showed their attacking strength, scoring freely along the way.

Poland, meanwhile, are returning to the tournament after missing the 2025 edition. Their last appearance was in 2024 in the Dominican Republic, where they reached the quarterfinals before losing to eventual champions Korea DPR.

This will be the first meeting between Nigeria and Poland at this level, with the Flamingos looking to start their campaign with a win.

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