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Nigeria records 9,000 cases of end-stage kidney failure monthly, says expert

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Opposition queries Tinubu's 12-state target as City Boy eyes 10m votes



Emergency responders, including the Lagos State Emergency Management Agency (LASEMA), Lagos State Traffic Management Authority (LASTMA) and the fire service, tackling the inferno from a diesel-laden tanker that plunged from the Otedola Bridge along the Lagos-Ibadan Expressway, yesterday.



Six years after: Police harassment, unkept promises rob #EndSARS protest of closure

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PSN seeks N25m minimum fine, 20-year jail term for fake drugs peddlers

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Sowore loses bid to compel DSS DG to testify in cyberbullying trial

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'Lagos resolved 3,000 petitions, cut N1.2b liability to N3m through ADR'

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IPC seeks fresh probe, prosecution of masterminds of Dele Giwa's assassination

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Tinubu, Oborewori, Natasha, Mark mourn as Uduaghan dies at 71

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Panorama

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SPOTLIGHT

Sanwo-Olu removes LAWMA MD over Lagos waste crisis

By Bertram Nwannekanma

THE lingering waste crisis in Lagos State has claimed its first major casualty, with the Managing Director/Chief Executive Officer of the Lagos Waste Management Authority (LAWMA), Dr Muiyiwa Gbadegesin, reportedly asked to resign by Governor Babajide Sanwo-Olu.

The Guardian learnt that the governor's decision followed growing dissatisfaction with the accumulation of refuse

on major roads, residential streets and drainage channels across the state, despite directives to address the situation. Although no official statement had been issued on the development as of yesterday, a LAWMA staff member confirmed to The Guardian that a senior official had been designated to oversee the agency

pending formal confirmation of the leadership change. The source declined to disclose the official's identity, saying the appointment had yet to be announced.

Indications of Gbadegesin's departure emerged during a recent waste evacuation operation in Oshodi-

Isolo Local Council, where LAWMA deployed more than 25 compactor trucks and sanitation personnel to clear accumulated refuse from several streets.

Unlike previous operations, the exercise was coordinated by the agency's management staff without Gbadegesin's visible involvement.

NUEE strike throws Edo, Delta, Ekiti, Ondo into darkness

From Joseph Kanjo (Benin)

INDUSTRIAL action by electricity workers under the auspices of National Union of Electricity Employees (NUEE) has thrown Edo, Delta, Ondo and Ekiti states into total darkness.

The workers yesterday shut down facilities of the Benin Electricity Distribution Company (BEDC) Plc

over emoluments and welfare packages, just as they blocked members of staff the company from entering the premises as they shut down vital operational facilities.

The action as thrown the franchise states into darkness since early Monday morning. Many of the workers had to close early from their offices while management was said

to be meeting with the leadership of NUEE as at the time of filing this report

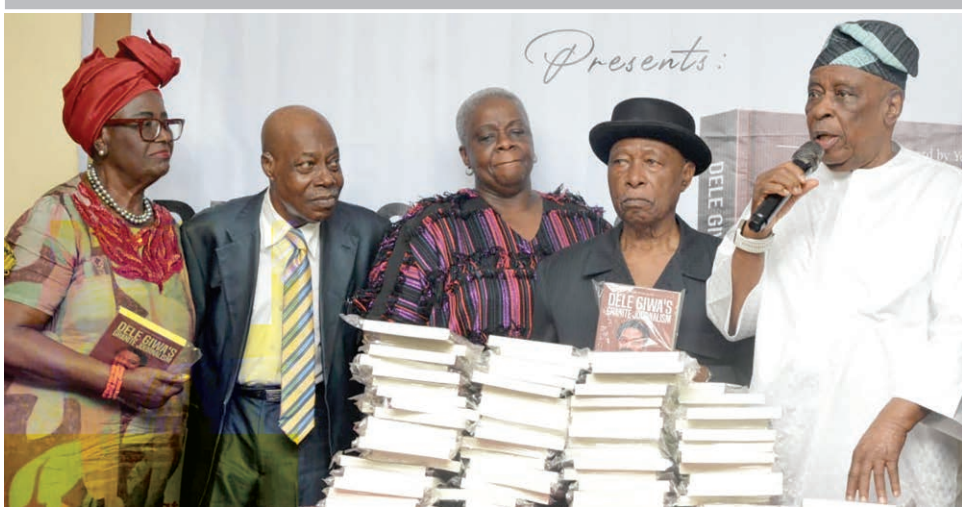
But a senior staff member said: "We are surprised at their action, some of them even harassed our staff. The management recently reviewed their emoluments, I am surprised that they shut down facilities of the company."

Africa must build its own wealth, Dangote tells creatives

PRESIDENT of Dangote Industries Limited, Aliko Dangote, has challenged Nigerian entrepreneurs and creative industry practitioners to think beyond conventional limits, build globally competitive enterprises and create enduring legacies, declaring that Africa must take responsibility for its own economic transformation rather than depend on foreign investors for prosperity.

Dangote gave the charge while hosting leading figures from Nigeria's creative industry at the Dangote Petroleum Refinery and Petrochemicals complex in Lekki, Lagos, where he also disclosed that the Group was considering raising its US\$100 billion Vision 2030 target in response to its industrial investments and growth ambitions.

The delegation, comprising Nollywood stars, content creators, comedians and lifestyle personalities, toured the complex before engaging Dangote in a conversation on entrepreneurship, innovation, ambition, and legacy.



Mrs Folasade Ogunbiyi (left); former Editor-in-Chief of Newswatch, Ray Ekpku; widow of the late Dele Giwa, Funmi; Publisher, Vanguard Newspaper/Chairman of the occasion, Sam Amuka; and former Governor, Ogun State, Segun Osoba, at the book presentation of *Dele Giwa's Granite Journalism*, to mark the 40th anniversary of Giwa's assassination in Lagos, yesterday.

Shettima unveils capital market masterplan as SEC targets N750tr

By Helen Oji

VICE President, Kashim Shettima has unveiled the Nigerian Capital Market Master Plan 2.0, a 10-year roadmap designed to expand the country's capital market to N750 trillion by 2036 and mobilise long-term financing for infrastructure and economic development.

Shettima, while speaking at the National Capital Market Conference held in Abuja, yesterday, said the capital market had become a critical instrument of national economic policy and a major channel for financing Nigeria's future.

The plan, developed by the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC), targets growth from a baseline of about N250

trillion to N750 trillion over the next decade.

Besides, the SEC Director-General, Dr Emomotimi Agama, said the Nigerian Capital Market Master Plan 2026-2036 was designed to deepen market participation, expand investment products and strengthen the integrity and infrastructure of the capital market.

RANDOM FACTS

- The smallest division of time ever observed is a "zeptosecond". A trillionth of a billionth of a second.
- Water is the only substance found on Earth's surface in all three forms — liquid, solid, and gas.
- Mali has ended the study of the French Revolution in schools.
- Eritrea is the only country that didn't compete in the 2026 FIFA World Cup Qualifiers. The players usually flee when they travel to other countries for international games. Eritrean players have sought asylum in Botswana, Kenya, Uganda, and The Netherlands in the past.

TODAY'S QUOTE

Always work hard and have fun in what you do because I think that's when you're more successful.

I'd rather regret the risks that didn't work out than the chances I didn't take at all.

SIMONE BILES

All I can do is be me, whoever that is.

Take care of all your memories. For you cannot relive them.

BOB DYLAN

TODAY IN HISTORY

- **2022 - UK**
Liz Truss stepped down as British Prime Minister and leader of the Conservative Party amid UK's political crisis, serving the least time of any British PM (49 days). She succeeded Boris Johnson who resigned in July over series of scandals as UK's 3rd female PM after Margaret Thatcher and Theresa May.
- **2021 - Nigeria**
Minister of Information, Lai Mohammed, denied there was a massacre during the 2020 #EndSARS protests describing reports people were killed by security agencies at Lekki toll gate on October 20 as misleading. He said families of supposed victims were yet to show up a year after. He also berated CNN, Amnesty International, and DJ Switch for giving out what he described as fake news.
- **2020 - Nigeria**
Violence erupted all over Lagos as soldiers opened fire on #EndSARS protesters at the Lekki tollgate to disperse the crowd after Governor Babajide Sanwo-Olu imposed a 24-hour curfew on the state. Over N700 billion had been lost in 12 days due to the protests, Lagos Chamber of Commerce and Industry said.
- **2019 - USA**
Simone Biles became the most-successful ever gymnast at the World Gymnastics Championships..
- **2019 - Kenya**
Kenyan Brigid Kosgei set a new world record for a woman runner with a time of 2:14:04 at the 2019 Chicago Marathon.
- **2016 - Nigeria**
It was all pomp and pageantry as Bini Kingdom crowned Oba Ewuare II. Benin City, Edo State capital, was at a standstill as dignitaries thronged the ancient city for the Obas's coronation.
- **2016 - USA**
Bob Dylan became first singer-songwriter to win the Nobel Prize in Literature.
- **2011 - Libya**
Forces loyal to National Transitional Council took Sirte, last remaining pro-Gaddafi stronghold. Rebel forces captured Muammar Gaddafi and his son Mutassim in his hometown of Sirte and killed him ending the first Libyan civil war.
- **1997 - UK**
Super Eagles forward and African Footballer of the Year, Ademola Lookman, was born in London.
- **1982 - Russia**
During UEFA Cup match between FC Spartak Moscow and HFC Haarlem, 66 people were crushed to death in the Luzhniki disaster.
- **1964 - USA**
Kamala Harris, 49th Vice President of the United States, was born.

... DAY 4559

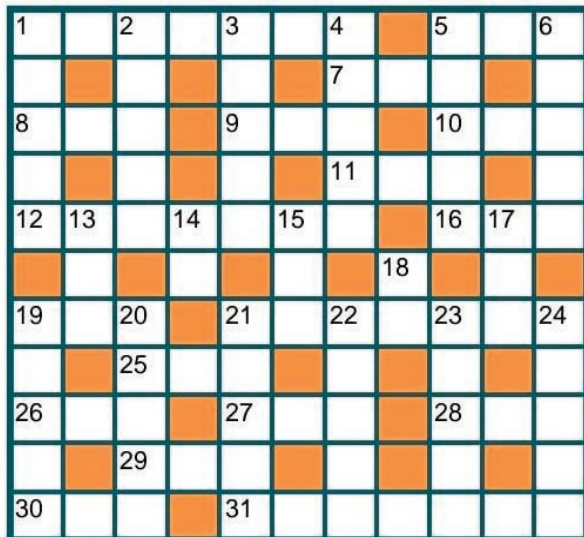
OUR GIRLS
STILL
MISSING

Tope Templer Olaiya,
News Editor

@TopeTempler



CROSS WORD PUZZLE



• ACROSS

1. LGA in Ondo State, (7).
5. A long white robe, (3).
7. Weapon that fires bullets, (3).
8. Hebrew Judge, (3).
9. Atmosphere we breathe, (3).
10. Drug Enforcement Admin., abbr. (3).
11. Female sheep, (3).
12. One-to-one broadcast, (7).
16. Board to slide across snow, (3).
19. Small drops, (3).
21. LGA in Yobe State, (7).
25. Cassava flour paste, (3).
26. SE Asian language family, (3).
27. International Criminal Court, abbr. (3).
28. Period of history, (3).
29. Make vehicle engine go faster, (3).
30. Islamic feast day, (3).
31. LGA in Ogun State, (7).

• DOWN

1. City on Lagos Peninsula, (5).
2. Gov. Oyebanji's State, (5).
3. LGA in Kogi State, (5).
4. Heron with long ornamental feathers, (5).
5. S'American mountain system, (5).
6. LGA in the FCT, (5).
13. Formerly known as, (3).
14. Cerium symbol, (2).
15. Whirlpool bath, (3).
17. Cassis liqueur, wine cocktail, (3).
18. Parental guidance, abbr., (2).
19. LGA in Jigawa State, (5).
20. Odd, (5).
21. extremely simple, (5).
22. Mother-of-pearl, (5).
23. Area in Lagos Island, (5).
24. Greek Muse of lyric poetry, (5).

Check page 30 for solution to the puzzle

IN
MEMORY
OF OUR LOVING
Patriarch

O ALLAH, FORGIVE OUR
FATHER AND GRANDFATHER,

LATE HON. JUSTICE (DR)
**IDRIS LEGBO
KUTIGI**

GCON, FCIArb, FNIALS, FNJI
DUJUMAN NUPE AND FORMER CHIEF JUSTICE OF NIGERIA
(31ST DEC 1939 – 20TH OCT 2018)

ELEVATE HIS STATION AMONG THOSE WHO ARE GUIDED.
SEND HIM ALONG THE PATH OF THOSE WHO CAME BEFORE,
AND FORGIVE HIM AND US, O LORD OF THE WORLDS.
ENLARGE FOR HIM HIS GRAVE AND SHED LIGHT UPON HIM IN IT.

AMEEN.
THE FAMILY

News

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2027: Makinde campaign alleges Nigeria on verge of collapse under Tinubu

ADC-PCC asks Nigerian youths to vote out Tinubu, tags pump discount scam

From Azimazi Momoh Jimoh and Andrew Oota, Abuja

THE Makinde-Daura Presidential Campaign Organisation (MDPCO) has warned that Nigeria is teetering on the brink of collapse under President Bola Tinubu, blaming the administration for worsening poverty, mounting public debt, insecurity and declining public confidence in government.

Consequently, the African Democratic Congress Presidential Campaign Council (ADC-PCC) urged Nigerian youths to reject the All Progressives Congress (APC) and Tinubu in the January 16 presidential election, accusing the ruling party of failing the nation's young people after years in power.

The organisation, which is campaigning for Oyo State Governor Seyi Makinde ahead of the 2027 presidential election, alleged that about 140 million Nigerians, representing 63 per cent of the population, were living in poverty, citing figures it attributed to the World Bank's April 2026 Nigeria Development Update.

In a statement, yesterday, by its Director of Strategic Communications, Richard Ihediwa, the campaign organisation described the situation as a potential humanitarian crisis, warning that continued economic hardship could deepen social tensions and undermine national stability.

It also cited a purported government report that approximately 70 per cent of Nigerian children under the age of 10 years could neither read nor understand a simple sentence, describing the situation as evidence of a worsening education crisis with serious implications for the country's future.

The MDPCO accused the APC-led administration of failing to address the hardship confronting ordinary Nigerians, while some government officials allegedly continued to display affluence and indulge in extravagant lifestyles.

It said the contrast between the economic difficulties faced by citizens and the perceived extravagance of public officials reflected a leadership increasingly detached from the realities of the people.

The organisation further expressed concern over Nigeria's position on global poverty rankings.

I have no regrets over subsidy removal, other policies, says Tinubu

By Kehinde Olatunji

PRESIDENT Bola Tinubu has declared that he has no regrets over the removal of petrol subsidy and other economic reforms introduced by his administration, insisting that Nigeria could not borrow its way to greatness.

Meanwhile, the Minister of Finance and Coordinating Minister of the Economy, Taiwo Oyelede, has warned Nigerians against returning to petrol subsidy. He said the backtrack could trigger capital flight, undermining investor confidence and pushing the naira to N3,000, N3,500 or even N4,000 per dollar.

But the Director of Media and Publicity of the African Democratic Congress (ADC) Presidential Campaign Council (PCC), Kola Ologbondiyan, challenged Oyelede to publish the economic model behind his warning that a return to fuel subsidy could push the naira to N4,000 per dollar.

The President spoke yesterday at the City Boys Movement retreat in Abuja, where he charged members of the group to mobilise support for his administration ahead of the 2027 general elections, insisting that the country's future mattered more than the ambition of any individual candidate.

"No regrets," Tinubu said, insisting that his administration would not be pushed back from its reform agenda.

He took a swipe at his political opponents, promising to restore the petrol subsidy, saying Nigeria could no

ADC campaign knocks Oyelede over N4,000/\$ fuel subsidy warning

longer afford to pay the fuel subsidy, and warning that reversing the policy would take the country back to an unsustainable economic path. Defending his decision to remove the subsidy on his first day in office, Tinubu said the country was on the verge of financial collapse and could no longer afford the policy's cost.

Tinubu also sought to reassure Nigerians about the direction of the economy, arguing that growth was steady and that the sacrifices

associated with his reforms would ultimately offer citizens a future worth believing in.

OYELEDE disclosed at a press briefing of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank Annual Meetings in Bangkok, Thailand, yesterday, that investors had repeatedly questioned whether the government would abandon its reforms ahead of the next election cycle.

Ruling out the reversal of the government's economic re-

forms, he maintained that any signal that Tinubu's administration was contemplating or reinstating the subsidy would immediately affect financial markets, raise borrowing costs and worsen economic pressures on households.

"In all the meetings I have had, I came to a conclusion that the markets, including the domestic market, which you can read from the capital market, and the international market, have largely written off the opposition in

Nigeria as unserious.

"If, for any reason, the President were to say we are merely considering the return of fuel subsidy, capital would react immediately, airfares would struggle, the naira would come under severe pressure, potentially moving towards 3,000, 3,500 or even 4,000.

INEC charges staff on professionalism, non-partisanship

Tinubu campaign spokesperson, Showunmi defends wife's new INEC role

From Lawrence Njoku, Enugu

NATIONAL Chairman of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), Prof. Joash Amupitan (SAN), has charged the commission's staff on professionalism, urging them to refrain from showing interest in any political party to ensure transparent elections in 2027.

A member of the All Progressives Congress (APC) Presidential Campaign Council (PCC), Segun Showunmi, has defended his wife's redeployment to head INEC's Electoral Operations Department.

Amupitan, in an interactive session with INEC staff from the South-East yesterday after arriving Enugu, stated that staff of the commission must show neutrality and professionalism in the discharge of their electoral duties.

He urged the staff to steer clear of partisan politics, adding: "You should not pick interest in any political party: be neutral and firm. I am hearing that some of you are showing interest in some political parties. This is absolutely wrong."

"The commission will not take unprofessional or unethical electoral conduct from any staff. We have instituted a reward and sanction mechanism even from local councils, states and to even national level," he said.

The chairman said the commission was working relentlessly to improve the welfare of its staff across all cadre and levels.



President Bola Tinubu (right) receiving the UN Budget 2027 from the Permanent Representative of Nigeria to the United Nations (UN), Ambassador Jimoh Ibrahim, at the Presidential Villa, Abuja.

Nigeria records 9,000 cases of end-stage kidney failure monthly, says expert

From Nkechi Onyedika-Ugoeze, Abuja

CONSULTANT Neurosurgeon and Chief Executive Officer of Wellington Neurology and Neurosurgery Hospital, Abuja, Dr Charles Ugwuanyi, has warned that Nigeria is facing a growing kidney health crisis, with as many as 9,000 new cases of end-stage kidney failure reportedly emerging every month.

Hecalled for urgent attention to prevention, early diagnosis and improved access to specialist care.

Similarly, Vice Chancellor of the University of Medicine and Medical Sciences, Abeokuta, Prof Fatiu Arogundade, said about 25.4 million adult Nigerians may be living with CKD.

Speaking to journalists on the hospital's 15th anniversary in Abuja yesterday, Ugwuanyi said the reported monthly figure was alarming and underscored the need for Nigerians to take routine health

- Urges early screening, responsible drug use, lifestyle changes
- 25.4m Nigerians may be living with kidney disease —Arogundade

checks seriously rather than wait until symptoms become severe.

He who spoke on kidney disease prevention and the challenges of delivering specialised healthcare in Nigeria.

Hypertension, diabetes, excessive alcohol consumption and the indiscriminate use of medications were identified as important risk factors that require greater public awareness and intervention.

Ugwuanyi stated that the country's response to kidney disease must go beyond social media campaigns and sensational commentary to practical measures that help prevent illness, support affected patients and improve access to treatment.

"It is assuming an epidemic pattern, and the question is, why is it so? The solution is not in making noise on social media. It is to find out what the issues are and how you can

help," he said.

According to him, the growing burden of kidney disease calls for a stronger culture of preventive healthcare, particularly among young Nigerians who may be living with high blood pressure or elevated blood sugar without knowing it.

He expressed concern that many Nigerians, including young adults, are reluctant to undergo routine medical examinations, often because they feel healthy or believe that serious illness will not affect them.

Ugwuanyi urged Nigerians to make blood pressure and blood sugar checks part of their regular healthcare routine, stressing that early detection gives patients an opportunity to manage underlying conditions before irreversible damage occurs. AROGUNDADE disclosed the figure while delivering the

430th Inaugural Lecture of Obafemi Awolowo University (OAU), Ile-Ife, Osun State, entitled 'The Burden, Barriers, Bottlenecks and Breakthroughs in the Management of Kidney Disease in Nigeria: A Journey from the Grassroots to the Frontiers'.

Drawing on more than three decades of clinical practice and research, the don described kidney disease as an epidemic and a major public health challenge.

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Common Entrance:

Hurdles await point-scoring system

The Minister of Education, Dr Tunji Alausa, recently announced plans to phase out the National Common Entrance Examination. The proposal to replace the high-stakes examination with a system of continuous assessment anchored by a unique Learner Identification Number (LIN) is generating concerns, IYABO LAWAL reports.

RECENTLY, the Federal Government announced plans to phase out the National Common Entrance Examination (NCEE) and replace it with a continuous assessment system tracked by a unique Learner Identification Number (LIN). The reform, championed by the Minister of Education, Dr Tunji Alausa, aims to address Nigeria's primary-to-secondary transition crisis, where only three million of 23 million primary pupils advance to public junior secondary schools.

According to the minister, an identification system allows the government to track children from primary one, identify dropouts, and ensure records follow pupils wherever they transfer.

The proposal is not merely about phasing out an exam. It introduces a centralised digital tracking system in which every child would have a LIN, allowing real-time monitoring of retention and progression. This data-driven approach, combined with a planned revival of the National Home-Grown School Feeding Programme, will represent a holistic attempt to tackle the foundational crises of access and quality.

During an interactive session with journalists, Alausa disclosed that the government would phase out the NCEE and replace it with continuous assessment.

The key policy elements include ending the exam for the primary-to-junior secondary transition, with CA tracking pupils' performance from primary one through ongoing classroom work, participation, and skills development.

Each pupil will receive a unique LIN from primary enrolment, enabling academic tracking across school transfers, while CA records will follow students when transferring between schools to prevent data loss.

The stated objectives include improving access by removing examination barriers preventing primary pupils from transitioning to secondary education, providing comprehensive evaluation by assessing pupils holistically over six years rather than through a single high-stakes exam, enabling better tracking through LIN to monitor student progress and identify dropouts, and addressing inequality by reducing advantages held by wealthy families who can afford examination preparation and private schooling.

Nigeria faces one of the world's most severe education access challenges.

According to the United Nations Children's Fund's (UNICEF) 2025 report, 10.2 million children are out of school at the primary level, while 8.1 million children are not enrolled at the junior secondary level. Approximately 66 per cent of out-of-school children come from North-West and North-East geopolitical zones, and the transition rate shows only about 13 per cent of public primary pupils advance to public junior secondary schools.

The government gives three reasons for the move. First, it aims to reduce stress and malpractice. Some stakeholders noted that the common entrance exam had lost relevance

because many secondary schools now conduct their own entrance examinations, and that restating daily progress through continuous assessment would build confidence and self-esteem, in contrast to high-stakes examinations sometimes marred by malpractice.

The second reason is to reflect true ability. By definition, continuous assessment considers students' performance in the cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains from entry to exit, covering assignments, classwork, and projects. Current practice in Nigeria often falls short, as most teachers use only one end-of-term test to assess performance, which is inadequate because it ignores class records.

The third reason is to track out-of-school children as the learner ID would help track pupils' data and show records of enrolment, dropout, and transfer. With 20.2 million out-of-school children reported by UBEC in 2024, the government believes that a digital trail is more valuable than a one-off examination.

Nigeria is not inventing this model.

FINLAND'S education system is globally renowned for minimal standardised testing and high academic performance. Finnish students take no national standardised tests during basic education covering grades one to nine for ages seven to 16.

The only standardised assessment is the matriculation examination at the end of upper secondary school for ages 18 to 19, and even this is optional.

Classroom teachers design and administer all assessments based on curriculum objectives, demonstrating significant teacher autonomy.

Assessment is continuous and personalised through observations, portfolios, projects, oral presentations, and one-on-one conferences.

Also, national evaluation tests use only representative samples of approximately 10 per cent of students to inform policy without high-stakes pressure.

Finland consistently ranks in the top five to 10 globally in reading, mathematics, and science despite minimal testing, and excels in creative, collaborative problem-solving skills.

Critical success factors include highly trained teachers who are master's-level professionals trusted with significant autonomy; strong social safety nets and equitable school funding that reduce resource disparities; a low-stakes culture where assessment supports learning rather than ranking students or schools, and professional trust where teachers' judgments are respected without external verification pressures.

For Nigeria, the relevance is limited because it lacks Finland-style teacher-training infrastructure, with widespread teacher shortages and inadequate professional development.

Equity gaps between Nigerian states and schools far exceed Finnish disparities, and cultural emphasis on examinations as meritocratic gatekeepers runs deep in Nigerian society.

Another example is the United Kingdom. England maintains rigorous national examinations, while incorporating some continuous assessment components.

Most subjects are assessed primarily through final examinations at the end of two-year courses. Non-examined assessments are retained only where essential for practical skills such as art, physical education, and science experiments.

Northern Ireland's Education Minister, Paul Givan, announced 2029 reforms to scrap AS Levels and reduce controlled assessment, retaining it only for practical skills.

The assessment philosophy prioritises national comparability over teacher autonomy, maintains accountability through school performance tables and Ofqual oversight, and, while the Curriculum and Assessment Review reported in November 2025 recommended changes to GCSE English, the 2026-2027 examinations remain unchanged.

For Nigeria, the UK demonstrates the tension between standardisation and flexibility in assessment, shows that heavy coursework loads can contribute to teacher and student burnout, and illustrates that national examinations provide comparability but may not capture holistic student abilities.

The United States of America employs diverse assessment approaches varying by state, with growing reform movements. Yearly standardised tests in grades three to eight are required under the Every Student Succeeds Act. SAT and ACT were historically required for college admissions, though many universities moved to test-optional post-pandemic.

Test results influence school funding, teacher evaluations, and student promotion under high-stakes accountability.

The 2026 reform initiatives include new federal guidelines encouraging competency-based assessments over single exams, ESSA permitting states to replace yearly tests with multiple interim assessments if they produce valid and reliable data, and over 40 state education chiefs meeting with the US Department of

Education in August 2026 to discuss K-12 assessment futures.

Expert commentary from the 1992 Office of Technology Assessment noted that standardised examinations have been used since the mid-19th century to inform education authorities and legislatures about school quality.

For Nigeria, the U.S. experience warns against over-reliance on standardised testing that narrows curricula. It also shows that affluent families purchase test preparation that widen achievement gaps, and demonstrate that frequent policy changes create reform fatigue among educators.

Finland's signature assessment model relies on teacher assessment plus an optional matriculation exam at ages 18 to 19, with no standardised testing before age 18, very high teacher autonomy, top five to 10 PISA ranking, key strengths in low stress, holistic development, and equity, and key weaknesses in requiring highly trained teachers and strong social safety nets.

England's GCSE system, with limited coursework, features standardised testing at the end



Alausa

of secondary education at ages 16 and 18, low to moderate teacher autonomy, a top 20 PISA ranking, key strengths in national comparability and accountability, and key weaknesses in examination pressure, teaching to the test, and burnout concerns.

The United States employs state tests comprising the SAT and ACT, which are optional at many universities, with standardised testing in grades 3-8 annually, including high school, low teacher autonomy, top 30 to 40 PISA ranking, key strengths in multiple measures and reform flexibility, and key weaknesses in inequality amplification, reform fatigue, and narrow curricula.

Nigeria's current system uses the common entrance exam plus BECE, with standardised testing at Primary Six for NCEE and JSS 3 for BECE; low teacher autonomy; no PISA ranking; key strengths in national benchmarking and merit-based selection; and key weaknesses in high-stakes pressure, access barriers, and regional disparities.

Nigeria's proposed system would use continuous assessment plus LIN tracking, with no standardised testing as it would be school-based CA only, moderate to high teacher autonomy, no PISA ranking, key strengths in holistic evaluation, reduced exam pressure, and portability, and key weaknesses in standardisation challenges, manipulation risks, and infrastructure gaps.

The US and UK use a flexible SAT-style format, while countries like China and South Korea use very high-stakes, single-window examinations.

Finland succeeds without entrance examinations because teacher training is elite, with all teachers holding master's degrees. Trust in teacher judgement is also sky-high.

Nigeria has 1.2 million primary teachers, and about 43 per cent lack the required NCE qualification according to the Teachers Registration Council of Nigeria (TRCN), with a pupil-teacher ratio of 45 to one in public primary schools, compared to 11 to one in Finland, 20 to one in the UK and 14 to one in the US.

If implemented well, education stakeholders believe, phasing out the common entrance exam could bring gains.

For Dr Olu Adejo, founder of Keddiess Foundation School, Ogba, the move would reduce high-stakes trauma, as psychologists report that about 35 per cent of Lagos primary six pupils experience examination anxiety before the common entrance examination, while continuous assessment spreads evaluation across terms.

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

“Replacing common entrance with a system of continuous assessment could curb examination malpractice because miracle centres that thrive on last-minute leaking become less useful when assessment travels with the pupil, while also providing data for planning, since a Learner ID linked to NIN and EMIS could finally give real-time data on retention in a country where primary completion is only 64 per cent.”

Opposition queries Tinubu's 12-state target as City Boy eyes 10m votes

From Seye Oluide (Lagos), Leo Sobechi, Terhemba Daka, Adamu Abuh, Joel Oladele (Abuja), and Ann Godwin (Port Harcourt)

PRESIDENT Bola Tinubu's decision to limit his re-election campaign rallies to 12 state capitals has drawn mixed reactions, with opposition figures questioning his capacity to campaign nationwide.

This came as Tinubu reached out to Nigerian youths yesterday, urging them to defend his administration's economic reforms, while the City Boy Movement (CBM) pledged to mobilise at least 10 million youth votes for his re-election, citing its nationwide grassroots structures and 4.6 million registered members.

The All Progressives Congress Presidential Campaign Committee (APC PCC) recently disclosed that Tinubu would physically attend and address campaign rallies in 12 state capitals as part of efforts to secure re-election.

The move comes on the heels of the Independent National Electoral Commission's (INEC) recent disclosure that 103 million Nigerians are eligible to vote in next year's general election. The figure suggests that the President's campaign strategy may have been influenced by voter distribution and other electoral calculations.

Stakeholders who spoke to *The Guardian*, including the Chancellor of the International Society of Social Justice, Dr Omenazu Jackson; the Secretary of the Coalition of United Political Parties (CUPP), Peter Ameh; and Fouad Oki, were divided over the wisdom of the President's decision to campaign in fewer than 25 per cent of the states.

- **APC says 12-state itinerary balances electioneering with governance**
- **Stakeholders urge President to prioritise health, reconsider second term**
- **Tinubu defends subsidy removal, urges youths to sustain reform support**
- **Russian analyst warns opposition disunity could favour Tinubu**

Describing the APC's selective campaign itinerary as a tacit admission that its leader was too frail to campaign nationwide, Ameh said the strategy created the impression that some states were considered less important by the President.

The CUPP scribe said: "The decision by the APC Presidential Campaign Council to cherry-pick states where President Bola Ahmed Tinubu will personally attend and address rallies for the 2027 poll is not just troubling; it is insulting and a deliberate declaration of some states as second-class and unimportant."

"In a presidential contest, ev-

ery state, every citizen, and every vote is supposed to matter. To openly categorise states into those worthy of a presidential visit and those to be ignored is to institutionalise discrimination and to tell millions of Nigerians that they do not count in the Renewed Hope agenda, which has driven many into renewed hopelessness.

"But, what worries me even more than this brazen political segregation is what it reveals about the President himself. This selective itinerary strongly suggests an inability on the part of the President, due to ill-health or lack of physical strength, to under-

take the vigorous, demanding, nationwide campaigning that a presidential race requires."

Ameh argued that if the President were fit and healthy, he would campaign across the country to defend his record and sell his manifesto.

He said: "You cannot lead a nation of over 200 million people with energy you do not have. You cannot inspire a youthful population when you cannot stand before them in all 36 states. Nigerians deserve to know the true state of the President's health. Nigerians deserve a President who sees every state as important, not a President whose party has to shield him from the

rigours of campaigning."

However, Jackson urged Tinubu to visit all 36 states, saying such visits would give the President firsthand knowledge of the hardship Nigerians were experiencing under his administration.

He also urged the President to reconsider his reported second-term ambition if his health would not permit him to meet the demands of the office. Jackson advised him to bow out honourably rather than succumb to pressure from political associates seeking power.

"Nigeria," he noted, "is facing multiple challenges, including insecurity, hunger and environmental problems, which require the President's direct attention. Relying on reports from surrogates and political associates is insufficient."

"The President needs to engage directly with citizens

across the country to understand their concerns. There is nothing like first-hand information. The nation is passing through difficult times, including insecurity, hunger and ecological problems."

Jackson suggested that the President use a helicopter to visit communities and observe conditions on the ground. He added that direct interaction with citizens would help Tinubu better understand their needs and develop appropriate responses.

Insisting that Nigerians in every state deserved the opportunity to meet the President, express their concerns and hear directly from him about how his administration intended to address their challenges, Jackson said Tinubu should be held accountable for his first-term mandate.

He said: "We need a President who will be free to interact with the people, hear from them and feel their pain. We need a President who can look at Nigerians in various states and say, 'This I can do, and this I cannot do.'"

"He needs to be held accountable for his pronouncements. He is not just a presidential candidate; he is the current President and Commander-in-Chief of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. His attention is needed all over the country."

Jackson warned that political associates seeking to advance their own ambitions should not pressure the President into decisions that could undermine his health and reputation. He also urged Tinubu to protect his family's dignity and the legacy he would leave behind.

"The President should not

CONTINUED ON PAGE 26



Deputy Senate President, Jibrin Barau (left); Speaker, House of Representatives, Abbas Tajudeen; Vice President Kashim Shettima; President Bola Tinubu; Patron of the City Boys Movement, Seyi Tinubu; Minister of Youth Development, Ayodele Olawande and Vice President's son, Kashim Amir, at the 'Together Till 2027: An evening with the Original City Boy', held at the State House Conference Centre, Abuja, yesterday.

Six years after: Police harassment, unkept promises rob #EndSARS protest of closure

By Silver Nwokoro

SIX years after the #EndSARS protests forced police brutality into the national spotlight, Nigeria's policing system remains burdened by allegations of unlawful arrests, torture, extortion and excessive use of force.

Despite a new Police Act, revised regulations and fresh training initiatives, the reforms have yet to bring about the fundamental change in police-citizen relations demanded by protesters in October 2020.

The protests were driven largely by demands to end abuses associated with the now-defunct Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS), including allegations of arbitrary arrests, extortion, torture and extrajudicial killings. The protests eventually evolved into a broader demand for police accountability and better governance.

The Federal Government subsequently disbanded SARS and announced a series of measures aimed at reforming policing.

- **Lawyer alleges unlawful arrests, torture, extortion persist**
- **Okeke seeks separation of AG, Justice Minister's offices**
- **Nwobi demands shift from colonial policing mentality**
- **Lawyers call for better training, recruitment, faster justice**

One of the most significant developments was the enactment of the Police Act 2020, which replaced the 1943 Police Act. The legislation established accountability and transparency, the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms, professionalism, community partnership and responsiveness to the public as core principles of policing.

The Act also provides for a Police Complaints Response Unit (CRU) at Force Headquarters and in commands across the states and the Federal Capital Territory. The unit is empowered to receive complaints about police misconduct, including allegations involving death, serious injury or other gross human rights violations.

The Police Service Commission (PSC) has also retained its role in receiving complaints against police

personnel and handling disciplinary matters.

The commission said inadequate funding remained a major constraint on its ability to effectively discharge its constitutional responsibilities regarding police recruitment, promotion, and discipline.

The Nigeria Police Force said it had developed a new training curriculum to replace the model it had used for the previous 28 years and improve the quality of policing in the country. The programme includes more practical training and prepares officers to respond to crimes involving technology and artificial intelligence (AI).

The reform process entered another phase with the gazetting of new Nigeria Police Regulations.

The Federal Ministry of Police Affairs said the regulations were designed to provide a contemporary operational

framework, strengthen disciplinary and oversight mechanisms, improve training, recruitment and career progression, and reinforce human rights standards.

The police similarly described the regulations as providing a framework for professional, accountable and rights-based policing, promising to integrate them into training and operational structures.

However, the existence of new laws and regulations does not, by itself, resolve the challenges of police reform. The gap between the legal framework and citizens' lived experiences therefore remains one of the biggest challenges confronting the reform agenda.

The persistence of allegations of police abuse since #EndSARS has continued to raise questions about accountability.

This year, Amnesty International alleged that officers attached to the Tiger Base anti-kidnapping unit of the Imo State Police Command were involved in

extrajudicial killings, torture, ill-treatment of detainees and extortion.

The organisation said its investigation uncovered allegations that detainees were taken from their cells and killed, while others were allegedly tortured to extract confessions.

Such allegations do not establish that the entire Nigeria Police Force operates in this manner, but they illustrate why accountability remains central to the debate on police reform.

The same challenge was evident during the August 2024 #EndBadGovernance protests.

Amnesty International alleged that the police used excessive force against protesters, including live ammunition and tear gas. It also reported that at least 24 people were killed during demonstrations across several states.

The police and other authorities disputed aspects of the allegations.

These events were significant because they occurred years after #EndSARS and revived

concerns about the policing of demonstrations and the use of force.

Unlawful arrests, torture persist, says lawyer

THE Convener of the Criminal Justice Network of Nigeria (CJNN), Nathaniel Ngwu, has said that unlawful arrests, torture, extortion and the use of excessive force remain concerns in police operations six years after the #EndSARS protests.

He warned that reforms would remain ineffective unless the Nigeria Police Force embraced and implemented them in its daily operations.

Ngwu said the failure to translate reform policies into operational practices, coupled with corruption, inadequate funding, poor training and weak accountability mechanisms, had continued to undermine efforts to transform the police into a service that protects citizens' rights.

According to him, meaningful reform must begin within the police institution, with officers

CONTINUED ON PAGE 26

Reps to probe NNPCL downstream operations, review PIA

From Joel Oladele, Abuja

HOUSE of Representatives has launched a preliminary investigation into a petition accusing the Executive Vice President, Downstream, of NNPC Limited, Dr Mumuni Dagazau, of money laundering and abuse of office.

The House Committee on

Amnesty Int'l seeks sanctions against sponsors of electoral violence, vote-buying

By Waliat Musa

AMNESTY International Nigeria has called for trial for sponsors of electoral violence and vote-buying, warning that political influence must not shield those responsible from prosecution.

The organisation said it would identify, document and expose perpetrators and sponsors of electoral offences, regardless of their political influence, and present credible evidence to national and international authorities for accountability and possible targeted sanctions.

In a statement issued by its Chairman, Auwal Musa Rafsanjani, Amnesty International Nigeria said electoral violence and vote-buying violated human rights and undermined democracy.

NMA laments doctors' shortage, salary deductions, seeks better pay

By Musa Adekunle

THE Nigerian Medical Association (NMA), Kwara State chapter, has raised concerns over doctor shortages, poor welfare and alleged unauthorised salary deductions affecting medical practitioners in the state.

The NMA Chairman, Dr Sulaiman Rotimi, disclosed this during activities marking the 2026 Physicians' Week in Kwara, calling for urgent government intervention.

Rotimi said Nigeria's doctor-to-patient ratio stood at approximately one doctor to more than 9,000 patients, while some general hospitals had only one or two doctors, forcing them to work long hours and increasing burnout risks.

He alleged that some doctors suffered monthly salary deductions of between N30,000 and N50,000 despite unpaid allowances and poor remuneration, urging the state government to address the concerns.

The NMA chairman called for improved mental health support, confidential medical services, safer workplaces and protection against violence.

- Move to strengthen laws protecting local refineries
- Task FG on timely release of pipeline surveillance funding to attain 3mbpd target

Petroleum Resources (Downstream) has given a sub-committee seven days to investigate the allegations and report back, as lawmakers move to tighten legislation on crude oil supply and strengthen protections for domestic refineries.

The committee Chairman, Ikenga Imo Ugochinyere, announced the decisions yesterday, during a technical briefing marking the end of Downstream Week 2026 in Abuja.

The panel investigating the

petition is chaired by Aliyu Ibrahim Al-Mustapha, with Cyril Hart serving as deputy chairman.

Ugochinyere stressed that the committee had not reached any conclusion on the allegations against Dagazau, adding that all parties would have an opportunity to present their positions.

He said the committee would treat complaints affecting the integrity of the downstream petroleum sector seriously and communi-

cate the outcome of its investigation to Nigerians.

The petition against Dagazau is one of two complaints the committee referred to sub-committees for preliminary investigations.

The other seeks the investigation, suspension and cancellation of gas distribution licences issued to NIPCO Plc for Lagos, Ogun, Oyo and Osun states, as well as the Lagos and Lekki Free Trade Zones.

The committee appointed a

separate panel, chaired by Mathew Nwogu and assisted by Shehu Dalhatu, to examine the NIPCO petition and report its findings to the main committee.

Beyond the petitions, the lawmakers said they were pursuing legislative measures to address concerns over crude oil supply to domestic refineries, warning that inadequate feedstock could undermine investments in local refining.

Ugochinyere said the committee was working to advance amendments to the Petroleum Industry Act

to strengthen provisions on crude supply obligations, licensing, protection of domestic refiners and the regulation of petroleum imports.

"A refinery without reliable crude is an investment at risk," he said.

MEANWHILE, the House of Representatives yesterday tasked the Federal Government with increasing funding for pipeline surveillance as part of ongoing efforts to achieve crude oil production of three million barrels per day.

Africa's clean cooking drive threatened by energy financing

From Kingsley Jeremiah, Abuja

AFRICA'S efforts to expand access to clean cooking may be undermined by inadequate investment in fuel supply infrastructure and a heavy reliance on debt to finance energy transition, industry stakeholders have warned.

The concerns come as about 970 million people in sub-Saharan Africa lack access to clean cooking, while approximately 80 per cent of international public clean energy finance to developing countries in 2024 was provided as debt, against just five per cent in the form of guarantees.

The figures, presented in a briefing for the 25th WPC Energy Congress in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, highlight the financing and infrastructure challenges confronting African countries seeking to expand access to cleaner energy while keeping it affordable for households and businesses.

Debt securities account for 76% of Nigeria's \$6.5lb portfolio investment

By Isaac Chibuike

DEBT securities accounted for 76.3 per cent of Nigeria's \$6.51 billion portfolio investment in the second quarter (Q2) of 2026, reflecting the dominance of fixed-income assets in foreign portfolio investors' holdings.

Data from the Central Bank of Nigeria's (CBN) Q2 2026 statistical bulletin showed that total portfolio investment rose by 45 per cent to \$6.51 billion from \$4.49 billion in the first quarter.

Investment in debt securities increased to \$4.97 billion in June from \$4.28 billion in March, representing an increase of \$690 million, or 16.1 per cent.

Equity and investment fund shares, however, recorded marginal growth, rising to \$1.54 billion from \$1.53 billion over the same period.



Senator Tokunbo Abiru (left); Director-General, All Progressives Congress (APC) Governorship Campaign Council for Dr Obafemi Hamzat's 2027 Campaign, Musiliu Obanikoro; Member, House of Representatives, James Faleke; APC Deputy Governorship candidate, Damilola Sonayon James; Governorship candidate, Obafemi Hamzat; Lagos State Governor, Babajide Sanwo-Olu; National Youths Leader, Dayo Israel; APC National Chairman, Prof. Nentawe Yilwatda; and Lagos State APC Chairman, Cornelius Ojelabi, at the opening of President Tinubu and Obafemi Hamzat Campaign Council Retreat in Lagos, yesterday.

PSN seeks N25m minimum fine, 20-year jail term for fake drugs peddlers

By Ijeoma Nwanosike

PHARMACEUTICAL Society of Nigeria (PSN) has called for a minimum fine of N25 million and a jail term of up to 20 years for counterfeit drug peddlers, urging the National Assembly to expedite amendments to the law to deter offenders and strengthen medicine security.

The PSN President, Ayuba Tanko, disclosed this during a press conference ahead of the society's 99th Annual National Conference, tagged Ijele 2026, arguing that existing penalties were inadequate to discourage the

lucrative trade in fake medicines.

Tanko, who attended a Senate public hearing on the proposed legislation, said the amendment provides for a fine of not less than N25 million, imprisonment of between five and 20 years, or both, alongside forfeiture of assets traceable to convicted offenders.

Beyond tougher penalties, Tanko called for full implementation of the National Drug Distribution Guidelines, approved by the Federal Ministry of Health in 2015 to facilitate the relocation of open drug markets to

Coordinated Wholesale Centres.

He identified Idumota in Lagos, Headbridge in Onitsha, Sabongeri in Kano and Ariaria in Aba as the markets targeted in the first phase. He urged the Federal Government to collaborate with Lagos, Anambra and Abia states to remove obstacles delaying their projects and accelerate plans for centres in Ibadan, Enugu and Maiduguri.

MEANWHILE, the National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control (NAFDAC) has destroyed fake, expired and substandard products worth

N2.6 billion in Rivers State, as part of a nationwide crackdown on counterfeit and unwholesome goods.

The products, which included pharmaceutical items, chemicals, tomato paste, biscuits and other consumer goods considered unsafe for use or consumption, were seized by the Nigeria Customs Service (NCS) at the Onne Port between 2025 and 2026.

The destruction took place over the weekend at the Rivers State Waste Management Agency (RIWAMA) dumpsite along the Oyigbo Expressway, Elenwo, Port Harcourt.

Alausa tightens varsity recruitments, seeks justification for requests

From Owede Agbajileke, Abuja

MINISTER of Education, Dr Tunji Alausa, has directed vice chancellors of federal universities to justify manpower requests with evidence of labour market demand, graduate employability and alignment with Nigeria's human capital development priorities.

In a directive dated October 19, 2026, with reference number FME/HME/27/TED/Vol.IV/104 and seen by *The Guardian*, Alausa expressed concern over the rising volume of manpower requests from tertiary institutions, warning that many failed to consider the financial implications for the Federal Government.

The directive, addressed to vice chancellors of all federal universities, requires institutions to subject all manpower requests to stricter scrutiny, with recruitment primarily targeted at filling vacancies created by staff attrition or meeting additional staffing needs supported by demonstrable evidence.

The minister identified retirement, resignation, death, dismissal and transfer as circumstances that could justify recruitment to fill existing vacancies.

For requests beyond attrition, including recruitment for new courses, programmes or institutional expansion, universities must provide clear evidence of market demand, graduate employa-

bility and the programmes' relevance to Nigeria's human capital development.

They must also demonstrate that proposed courses are unique and do not duplicate programmes already offered by other institutions.

Dr Alausa said the existing process for manpower requests was disconnected from the additional personnel costs they imposed on the Federal Government, which he said bore the entire financial burden.

He also expressed concern that some requests for additional personnel were intended to support courses without significant labour market demand in the country.

To address the concerns, the minister directed universi-

ties to ensure that all recruitment requests are assessed against clearly defined criteria.

Under the new directive, requests for additional recruitment must be supported by evidence that the proposed programmes respond to actual labour market needs and would improve Nigeria's human capital development.

Institutions must also establish that the courses are not duplications of programmes already available elsewhere in the university system.

The minister urged the institutions to comply fully with the directive, which was copied to the Minister of Finance, Minister of State for Education, Accountant-General of the Federation.

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Two rescued with severe burns as tanker explodes under Otedola Bridge

By Eniola Daniel

TWO persons sustained severe burns yesterday after a diesel-laden tanker plunged from Otedola Bridge in Lagos and burst into flames beneath the bridge.

Emergency responders from the Lagos State Fire and Rescue Service battled the inferno to prevent it from spreading and causing further casualties or damage to nearby infrastructure.

The two victims were rescued from the danger zone and evacuated for urgent medical attention by the Rescue Unit of the Lagos State Emergency Management Agency (LASEMA).

They were taken to the Lagos State Accident and Emergency

Centre, Toll-Gate, where they were admitted for treatment.

The Lagos State Traffic Management Authority (LASTMA) said its emergency response team worked with other agencies to rescue the victims and support efforts to contain the fire.

Other agencies involved in the operation included the Federal Road Safety Corps (FRSC), Lagos State Neighbourhood Safety Agency, police personnel from the Alausa Police Division and LASEMA's Rescue Unit.

Commending the responders, LASTMA General Manager, Olalekan Bakare-Oki, praised their promptness and professionalism, saying their coordinated efforts



Scene of the incident under Otedola Bridge yesterday.

facilitated the rescue and evacuation of the injured victims.

He wished the victims a

speedy recovery and stressed the importance of rapid emergency response and inter-agency collaboration in

saving lives during road accidents.

Bakare-Oki also reaffirmed LASTMA's commitment to

traffic management, enforcement and emergency coordination across Lagos State.

He urged operators of heavy-duty and articulated vehicles to conduct regular mechanical inspections, comply with prescribed safety standards and drive responsibly to prevent avoidable accidents.

The Controller-General of the Lagos State Fire and Rescue Service, Margaret Abimbola Adeseye, also reaffirmed the agency's commitment to protecting life and property through prompt emergency response.

She urged motorists to exercise caution around emergency scenes and obey safety instructions issued by responders.

NAFDAC destroys N2.6b fake, expired products in Rivers

From Ann Godwin, Port Harcourt

THE National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control (NAFDAC) has destroyed fake, expired and substandard products worth N2.6 billion in Rivers State as part of a nationwide crackdown on counterfeit and unwholesome goods valued at more than N5.3 billion.

The products, which included pharmaceuticals, chemicals, tomato paste, biscuits and other consumer goods considered unsafe for use or consumption, were seized by the Nigeria Customs Service (NCS) at the Onne Port between 2025 and 2026.

The destruction took place at the weekend at the Rivers

State Waste Management Agency dumpsite along the Oyigbo Expressway, Elenwo, Port Harcourt.

Speaking during the exercise, NAFDAC Director-General, Prof Mojisola Adeyeye, represented by the Director of Investigation and Enforcement, Martins Iluyomade, said the exercise

marked the first phase of the destruction of the seized products.

Iluyomade, who is also chairman of the Federal Task Force on Counterfeit, Fake Drugs and Unwholesome Processed Foods, said more seized consignments were expected to be evacuated from the port for destruction.



Destroyed counterfeit and unwholesome goods yesterday.

Police arrest six suspects over killing of Adeleke's aide, Emir

From Oluwale Ige, Osogbo

THE Osun State Police Command has arrested six suspects in connection with the killing of Olalekan Oyeyemi, popularly known as Emir, a political appointee of Governor Ademola Adeleke.

Emir was reportedly killed on September 13, 2026, during an ambush by suspected hoodlums at Mayfair Motor Park in Ile-Ife, Osun State.

Addressing a press conference in Osogbo yesterday, the state Commissioner of Police, Ibrahim Zungura, said the arrests marked significant progress in the investigation. He added that a locally made, cut-to-size firearm had been recovered from one of the suspects.

The suspects were identified as Tijani Ismail, Akinsola Ekundayo, Sijuade Moruf Oyinlola, Ayeni Adegbola Olalekan, Hammed Olalekan Dauda, also known as Jagban, and Waliu Adejare, popularly known as Jayjay.

Zungura said the command received a distress call on September 13 reporting that armed men had invaded Mayfair Garage, Ile-Ife, and fired sporadically, resulting in Emir's death. A fatal motor accident was also reported at Energy Filling Station along the Ile-Ife-Ibadan Road.

He said sustained investigations by the homicide section led to the arrest of four suspects, with assistance from the Amotekun Corps.

Further investigations reportedly led to the arrest of Dauda, who was allegedly found in possession of a cut-to-size firearm.

According to the commissioner, Dauda allegedly confessed during interrogation that the firearm had been given to him by Nurudeen Alowonle, another political appointee of Adeleke.

Zungura said the police subsequently arrested Adejare, identified as Alowonle's personal assistant, in connection

with the killing. He added that the suspects were allegedly mobilised by Alowonle and Adeyemi Ojo, also known as Sibi. The commissioner said efforts were ongoing to apprehend Alowonle, Ojo and other suspects still at large who were allegedly involved in the killing.

Kidnapped Catholic priest, three others rescued in Benue

From Felix Uroko, Makurdi

A Catholic priest, Rev. Fr. John Otache, who was abducted along the Otobi Amejo-Ajegbe Road in Ohimini Local Council of Benue State, has been rescued alongside three other victims in a joint operation involving security operatives and local vigilantes.

Otache, the parish priest of St. Margaret's Parish, Ajegbe-Awume, was abducted on Tuesday, October 13, 2026, while travelling home from Otukpo.

The victims were freed following sustained search operations across the area and were subsequently taken to a medical facility for examination and treatment. A community source familiar with the operation said the police and local vigilantes had been working to secure the victims' release over the past few days.

"The priest and three other persons were rescued by a team of local vigilantes and the police, who have been working on the matter in the last few days. It was a

successful operation, and the victims have been taken to hospital for medical attention," the source said.

Confirming the rescue, the Benue State Police Public Relations Officer, DSP Peter Aondongu, said the joint operation had secured the release of the priest and the other victims.

Residents along the Otobi Amejo-Ajegbe axis called on security agencies to sustain patrols and strengthen surveillance to prevent further abductions in the area.

Zulum consoles APC deputy chairman, Kashim Ibrahim's family over deaths

From Njadvura Musa, Maiduguri

BORNO State Governor, Babagana Zulum, has commiserated with the Deputy National Chairman (North) of the All Progressives Congress (APC), Ali Bukar Dalori, over the death of his daughter in Abuja on Sunday. Zulum visited Dalori at his Abuja residence, where he described the loss as painful and urged the family to find strength in their faith.

The governor noted that death was inevitable, particularly for Muslims who

believe that every soul must taste death.

He prayed to Allah to grant the deceased Aljannatul Firdaus and give the family the strength to bear the loss.

Zulum also extended his condolences to the family of the late Sir Kashim Ibrahim, the first indigenous governor of Northern Nigeria, following the death of his eldest son, Shettima Mohammed Kashim.

The governor was accompanied on the visits by the APC governorship

candidate, Mustapha Gubio; the member representing Marte/Monguno/Nganzai Federal Constituency, Bukar Talba; and the Secretary to the State Government, Bukar Tijani.

Others in the delegation included the acting Chief of Staff to the Governor, Dr Babagana Mustapha Malumbe; the APC candidate for Abadam / Kukawa/Guzamala / Mobbar Federal Constituency, Fati Kakenna; and some state commissioners.

Ogun communities protest alleged land allocation to Chinese investors

From Segun Ayinde, Abeokuta

RESIDENTS of Fere and Oniporogun communities in Obafemi Owode Local Council of Ogun State have protested the alleged allocation of their ancestral land to Chinese investors, appealing to Governor Dapo Abiodun to intervene and prevent the displacement of hundreds of people.

The residents, who staged a peaceful protest, expressed concern over the alleged deployment of security personnel and bulldozers to clear portions of the disputed

land, including areas where houses had already been built.

They questioned why village heads and traditional rulers were not consulted before the exercise began.

The Baale of Fere, Chief Okesola Alani, said the communities were not opposed to industrial development but insisted that it should not come at the expense of residents' homes and properties.

He lamented that some residents had invested their life savings in acquiring land and

building houses, while others had contributed resources to

provide basic amenities, including electricity.



Protesting community members yesterday.

Four passengers suffer fractures in Lagos crash

By Benjamin Alade

FOUR passengers yesterday sustained multiple fractures during a collision involving a Toyota Highlander and a commercial Mazda bus at Otedola, inward Berger, near Jubilee Gate, Lagos. Lagos State Traffic Management Authority (LASTMA) said the injured passengers were rescued by officials of the Lagos State Ambulance Service (LASAMBUS) and taken to the Lagos State Accident and Emergency Centre at Toll Gate for treatment. In a statement by its Director of Public Affairs and Enlightenment

Department, Adebayo Taofiq, LASTMA said the crash occurred on the main carriageway, prompting an emergency response by traffic management and medical personnel. LASTMA operatives and LASAMBUS officials worked together to evacuate the victims and manage traffic around the scene to prevent further accidents. Personnel from the Isheri Police Division also provided security during the rescue and recovery operations. The agency said the two drivers involved in the collision were apprehended and handed

ed over to the police for investigation and possible prosecution. The vehicles were also transferred

to the relevant security authorities for further investigation. General Manager of LAST-

MA, Olalekan Bakare-Oki, commended the agency's operatives, the Federal Road Safety Corps (FRSC), LASAMBUS and the police for their swift response and cooperation. He said prompt emergency intervention and collaboration among relevant agencies were essential to reducing the impact of road crashes, particularly on busy routes during peak periods. Bakare-Oki urged motorists to obey traffic regulations, maintain safe speeds and remain attentive while driving to prevent avoidable accidents. LASTMA, however, reiterated

ed its commitment to strengthening emergency response operations, improving traffic surveillance and enforcing road safety regulations across Lagos State.



Scene of the incident

Fire razes 15 shops in Oyo

From Rotimi Agboluaje, Ibadan

FIRE has razed 15 shops in Oyo State, with no casualties recorded. The Oyo State Fire Services Agency said the incident occurred in the early hours of yesterday, October 19, 2026, after it received a distress call at about 4:34 a.m. from a caller identified as SFS Lawal. According to the agency, a fire-fighting team, led by an assistant chief fire superintendent, was immediately deployed to the scene. On arrival, the firefighters discovered that 15 of the 44 shops in a row had been engulfed by flames, with thick smoke billowing from the affected premises. The team immediately began firefighting operations and brought the blaze under control, preventing it from spreading to the remaining shops. The agency said no casualties were recorded during the incident. However, it did not provide details of the extent of damage to the affected shops but attributed the fire outbreak to a suspected electrical surge, with faulty wiring identified as a possible cause.

Ogun takes wandering Adebayo into custody

From Segun Ayinde, Abeokuta

Ogun State Government has taken Mistura Adebayo, a young girl reportedly found wandering on two occasions, into its custody and begun medical investigations to assess her health and determine the appropriate care she needs. Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development said the intervention followed reports brought to the attention of the former Commissioner for Women Affairs and Social Development, Adijat Adeleye, by Adetoun Adejobi. According to the ministry, Adeleye contacted the Permanent Secretary, Adebimpe Folusho Obieniu, who coordinated the deployment of social workers to the police station where the girl had been taken. However, when the social workers arrived, they were in-

formed that Mistura had already been released to her grandmother. The ministry said it received another report the following day that the girl had been seen wandering again, prompting a fresh intervention that resulted in her being taken into government's custody. It added that medical investigations were ongoing to establish her health status and identify any underlying concerns requiring further attention. The ministry assured the public that it would take the necessary steps to protect Mistura and develop a sustainable care arrangement in her best interests. It also urged residents to report cases of gender-based violence, child abuse, neglect, exploitation and other threats to the safety and welfare of women and children.

The ministry said that prompt reporting could help save lives and protect vulnerable people, urging residents to speak up whenever they encountered situations that threatened the safety and welfare of women and children.



Adebayo

Lagos task force arrests dismissed operative over alleged impersonation

By Eniola Daniel

THE Lagos State Task force has arrested a former operative, Yahaya Salami, popularly known as Adams, over allegations that he continued to impersonate agency personnel and extort motorists and traders months after his dismissal. The arrest at Oshodi Bus Stop followed the circulation of a viral video showing operatives apprehending Salami, who the agency said had been dismissed over alleged gross misconduct. According to the task force, the former paramilitary operative was dismissed several months ago over allegation of theft, use of a fake identity card, extortion, indiscipline and other breaches of its regulations. However, despite his dismissal, he allegedly continued to present himself as a serving official. The agency said its operatives had made previous attempts to track him down, saying that when they eventually approached him and invited him for questioning, he reportedly declined to cooperate and resisted arrest. The operatives subsequently apprehended him after bringing the situation under control. Director of Public Affairs of the Task force, Gbadeyan Abdulraheem, quoted the agency's Chairman, Adetayo Akerele, as saying that the individual in the viral video was a former operative who no longer had any affiliation with the agency. Akerele said the alleged impersonation was a serious concern because it could mislead members of the public and undermine confidence in le-

gitimate law enforcement operations. He said the arrest demonstrated the agency's resolve to prevent dismissed personnel and unauthorised individuals from exploiting its name and authority for unlawful purposes. The chairman added that the suspect was expected to be charged before a competent court subject to the completion of the necessary procedures. He warned dismissed personnel and other individuals against falsely presenting themselves as serving task force officers or engaging in activities capable of damaging the agency's reputation.

So-Safe Corps arrests plumber over alleged theft in Ogun

From Segun Ayinde, Abeokuta

OPERATIVES of the Ogun State Community, Social Orientation and Safety Corps, popularly known as the So-Safe Corps, have arrested a 21-year-old plumber, Adebayo Pelumi, over alleged theft of two iron pots and a power bank in Iyesi, Ado-Odo/Ota Local Council of the state. The suspect was arrested on Sunday, October 18, 2026, around Abiola Gas Line in Iyesi, following efforts by operatives of the Corps' Canaan City Division to locate him in connection with a theft case reportedly reported from Arobi Eye. The Corps' Commander, Dr Soji Ganzallo, confirmed the arrest in a statement yesterday

by the Director of Information and Public Relations, Ade-



Suspect

gunwa Adegbuyi, in Abeokuta. Ganzallo said the arrest followed information received by the Divisional Officer, Tajudeen Abdulkereem, and his team during a routine patrol. He said the operatives initially sighted the suspect on a motorcycle but lost sight of him before they could apprehend him. A subsequent search of the surrounding area led to the recovery of the two iron pots, while the suspect was later found hiding nearby. According to the commander, the suspect allegedly attempted to evade arrest by jumping over several fences but was eventually apprehended.

NAFDAC probes possible drug link to corps member's death in Enugu

By Ijeoma Nwanosike

THE National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control (NAFDAC) has launched an investigation into whether medicines administered to a National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) member may have contributed to his death at the orientation camp in Agwu, Enugu State. The probe follows reports suggesting a possible link between the death and the use of sub-standard or falsified medicines. However, the agency said preliminary clinical findings had not established whether the medicines played any role in

the incident. In a statement signed by its Director-General, Prof. Mojisola Adeyeye, NAFDAC urged the public to avoid speculation about the cause of death pending the outcome of the investigation. According to the agency, preliminary information indicated that the corps member was taken to the camp clinic on Wednesday, October 7, with symptoms suggestive of severe malaria and a history of peptic ulcer disease. He was treated and stabilised before being discharged the following morning with oral medications. However, he returned to the clinic on Saturday, October 10,

complaining of right thigh pain and profuse sweating, alongside recurrent episodes of low blood pressure. NAFDAC said his condition subsequently deteriorated, with reduced urine output despite fluid resuscitation. He was then referred to the University of Nigeria Teaching Hospital (UNTH), Ituku-Ozalla, where he became comatose. Efforts to resuscitate him were unsuccessful. A preliminary clinical assessment identified acute kidney injury secondary to severe dehydration and shock as the suspected cause of death. The agency stressed, however,

that the findings did not establish whether the medicines administered to the corps member contributed to his death, adding that further investigation was necessary to determine any possible connection. As part of the probe, NAFDAC said its officers had visited the camp clinic, interviewed the medical personnel who attended to the deceased and other staff, and collected samples of the medicines for laboratory analysis. The agency said appropriate regulatory action would be taken if warranted by the findings.

Provision of Logistics Support and Armed Escort Services for GIZ Nigeria Staff & Delegations



The Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH; through its Risk Management Office in the Country Office, Co financed by the European Union (EU) and the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) invites qualified companies to express their interest to provide the below:

Provision of Logistics Support and Armed Escort Services for GIZ Nigeria Staff & Delegations

Accordingly, GIZ invites interested and qualified companies to **express their interest** by furnishing GIZ Nigeria Country Office with the following:

- a. An official letter expressing interest on the Company Letterhead.
- b. Comprehensive Company Profile.
- c. Evidence of registration with Corporate Affairs Commission (CAC), and Memorandum of Association.
- d. The organization must have employed at least 50 staff members (including managers) over the past three calendar years.
- e. Bank Introductory letter specifying account number not later than three months
- f. Evidence of Tax payment for 2023, 2024 and 2025 or more recent with a minimum average annual turnover of NGN 122,252,000.00 (80,000 EUR).
- g. Documented Proof of the capacity to network with security partners to provide Government Security armed Personnel when requested.
- h. Provide Documentary proof and capacity of execution of similar services in NE, NW, NC, SS, SW, SE parts of Nigeria.
- i. Provide copy of operating licence by relevant professional bodies such as NSCDC/ NPF.
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For consideration, all interested & qualified Companies should submit the aforementioned documents only as hard copy in a sealed envelope to GIZ Nigeria Office reception at No. 12 Charles de Gaulle Street, Asokoro, Abuja and kindly label as follows:

Tender Title:

Project Name:

Project No.:

Inquiry No:

Provision of Logistics Support and Armed Escort Services for GIZ Nigeria Staff & Delegations

Risk Management Office in Country Office

S-100025

10056482

Interested companies should kindly send requested documents (hard copy only) not later than **Wednesday 5pm 4th November 2026**.

Please do not send technical or price offer or not requested documents. Kindly note that complete tender documents would be sent to qualified companies that express their interest.

For clarification only, send email to procurementunitnigeria@giz.de

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**A ROYAL
TRIBUTE
ON YOUR**

10th
**Coronation
Anniversary**

On behalf of the Board, Management and Staff of Genesis Hydrocarbons Limited, we extend our profound felicitations and heartfelt homage to our revered Chairman, His Royal Majesty, Omo N'Oba N'Edo Uku Akpolokpolo, Oba Ewuare II, on the auspicious occasion of the 10th Anniversary of his glorious accession to the throne of his illustrious forebears. For a decade, Your Majesty has adorned the throne with wisdom, dignity, courage and uncommon statesmanship, demonstrating that true traditional leadership is both the preservation of heritage and the stewardship of a people, their culture and their legacy.

Under your distinguished reign, the enduring values of tradition, unity, peace and communal responsibility have found renewed expression, while your enlightened leadership continues to inspire progress, foster harmony and uphold the rich heritage and pride of the Benin Kingdom.

As our Chairman, your vision, counsel and commitment to excellence remain a profound source of inspiration to us at Genesis Hydrocarbons Limited.

Your leadership reflects the rare harmony of tradition and modernity, authority and humility, heritage and progress.

As we celebrate this remarkable milestone, we honour not only ten years of distinguished reign, but a decade of service, leadership, excellence and enduring legacy.

May the Almighty continue to grant Your Majesty long life, divine health, wisdom and renewed strength, and may your reign remain marked by peace, prosperity and accomplishments worthy of the great throne you occupy.

His Royal Majesty,
OMO N'Oba N'Edo Uku Akpolokpolo,
Oba Ewuare II
Oba of Benin

Signed:

TUNDE BANJO

MD/CEO

Genesis Hydrocarbons Limited

Congratulations

**Your Majesty, on this glorious
10th Anniversary**



UNIVERSITY OF BENIN

Happy CORONATION ANNIVERSARY

TO OUR REVERED FATHER,

HIS ROYAL MAJESTY,

**OMO N'OBA N'EDO UKU
AKPOLOKPOLOR**
**OBA EWUARE II, CFR,
OBA OF BENIN.**

On behalf of the Governing Council, Senate, Management, Staff and Students of the University of Benin, we heartily felicitate with His Royal Majesty, Omo N'Oba N'Edo, Uku Akpolokpolor, Oba Ewuare II, CFR, the Oba of Benin, on this auspicious occasion of His Majesty's 10th Coronation Anniversary.

We acknowledge His Royal Majesty's role in fostering social cohesion, peaceful co-existence and strengthening the identity and cultural heritage of the Benin people.

These have endeared His Royal Majesty to Edo people and deepened their pride and prestige.

As His Majesty marks ten peaceful and glorious years on the revered Benin throne, we pray for his sustained wisdom, robust health, strength and enduring peace in the kingdom.

Your Royal Majesty, may your inspiring leadership continue to thrive among the people, strengthen the bonds of unity and promote the progress, prosperity and development of the Benin Kingdom.

**Happy 10th Coronation Anniversary,
Your Royal Majesty!**

Long may you live and reign!
Oba gha tor Okpere. Isee



Signed:
Professor Edoba B. Omoregie, SAN
Vice-Chancellor

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

Editorial

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What will make more Nigerian youth embrace agriculture?

THE exhortation by eminent jurist, Chief Afe Babalola (SAN), urging more Nigerians, especially university graduates, to embrace agriculture as a profession, offers a realistic option for millions of citizens to overcome unemployment and tackle the economic hardship they are currently suffering due to some government policies and economic downturn.

With so much hunger in the land and the astronomical increase in the prices of food items, the arrogance that often attends white-collar jobs should make space for honest earnings with dignity. But admonitions alone are insufficient. The government has a role to play by making farming safe and worthy of graduates' talents; otherwise, it will be a hard sell as long as terrorism, banditry and kidnapping for ransom continue to scare current farmers from their fields. Besides, poor infrastructure, the high cost of agricultural materials, financial constraints, and weak storage systems discourage many Nigerians from going into farming and constitute a hindrance to achieving national food security.

The government should make a more conscious effort, which can be in collaboration with the private sector and even relevant foreign bodies, to encourage more Nigerians, particularly the youths, including young graduates, to see agriculture as a viable means of achieving their life ambitions and to go into it, rather than roaming the city streets for white-collar jobs that are currently difficult to find.

At the 2026 edition of the Afe Babalola University, Ado-Ekiti (ABUAD) agricultural expo recently, the popular jurist who is the Founder and Chancellor of the institution advised more Nigerians to embrace agriculture as a profession, pointing out the potential to greatly help in poverty reduction and achieving self-reliance. At the event, the strong promoter of agriculture announced plans for an Ekiti Farmers' House, where farmers would have access to modern agricultural equipment. And as part of the promotion, ABUAD has reduced tuition for students studying agriculture and provided seed money for its agriculture graduates. The university also awarded N11.2

million to outstanding farmers at the ceremony.

Babalola's advocacy came as the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) estimated that nearly 36.3 million Nigerians faced acute food insecurity during the June-August 2026 lean season, including about 2.1 million people in emergency, and approximately 10,300 in catastrophe. Conflict, economic hardship and climate pressures were reported to have combined to weaken the capacity of vulnerable households to secure adequate food. Against this backdrop, Babalola's exhortation and interventions deserve commendation, particularly because the appeal extends far beyond ABUAD or Ekiti State.

There is an environment that should be established to encourage more people to embrace agriculture and for the profession to thrive in the country. According to World Bank estimates, agriculture accounts for about 24 per cent of Nigeria's GDP and employs roughly 36 per cent of its labour force. These statistics show that the problem is not only a shortage of people in agriculture but also low productivity, vulnerability and weak commercial organisation that are crippling the sector. The graduates being wooed, therefore, should be able to see a business that is more attractive to ambitious young people. The attractions must include predictable markets, opportunities for expansion, logistics, storage, commodity trading, technology or export. This is one of the areas where government must intervene.

Security is central to Babalola's agro vision. Securing rural roads and ensuring farmers can safely access their land are indispensable. Graduates who are justifiably afraid of travelling to the farm cannot be expected to cultivate consistently, let alone invest in expansion or employ workers. The World Bank's recent analysis of agricultural losses in Nigeria revealed that the proportion of plots experiencing partial crop losses increased from about six per cent in 2018/19 to more than 20 per cent in 2023/24. While climate shocks played a big role, the contribution of conflict also increased significantly.

Babalola's provision of N250, 000 seed money to ABUAD agriculture graduates is commendable because it gives the youths something to begin with. The government at all levels are expected to lead in

this regard and be consistent, especially at every planting season. However, ensuring the nation's graduates embrace agriculture would require much more than individual grants. There is a need for a broader financing architecture that involves credit guarantees, agricultural insurance, cooperatives, and other state-backed incentives. Willing graduates are unlikely to appreciate the humiliation of running from pillar to post, cap in hand, to obtain financing.

Nigeria's agricultural policy must strive to embrace the entire value chain, even as practical realities demand a rethink of what is meant when agriculture is mentioned. Farming does not end when a crop leaves the field. A farmer may produce food, but another enterprise must store it, another must process it, another must transport it, another must finance it and another must take it to the consumer.

There is, therefore, a need for linkages capable of turning agriculture into an industrial growth sector, like the African Development Bank-backed Special Agro-Industrial Processing Zones initiative. The programme intends to connect agricultural production with processing, markets and industrial activity. In Oyo State, for instance, the planned processing hub is projected to host as many as 40 agro-processing industries and create more than 100,000 direct and indirect jobs.

Nigeria has no shortage of agricultural policies. The National Agricultural Technology and Innovation Policy identifies mechanisation, irrigation, extension services, agricultural finance, youth participation, processing and agribusiness among its priorities. The Federal Government's new mechanisation policy adds another layer to this policy framework. What remains inadequate is implementation.

The government must, therefore, resist the temptation to celebrate every new agricultural programme as though it were a transformation. The country is

better with tangible results. Farmers should know what support is available, when it will arrive and what conditions truly apply, whether it concerns tractors, fertilisers or loans. Universities, too, have a responsibility. Agricultural education should be connected more directly to commercial production, technology, research and enterprise.

The ABUAD's decision to reduce tuition for agriculture students and provide financial support to graduates is an instructive model. The principle should spread beyond one institution. Also, universities should establish demonstration farms, agricultural technology laboratories, incubation centres and partnerships with processors and agribusinesses. Students should graduate knowing how to calculate production costs, assess markets, manage risk and build viable enterprises. The objective should not be to produce more graduates holding agricultural certificates. It should be to produce graduates capable of creating productive agricultural businesses.

Babalola's call should be taken seriously, but its responsibility must be shared. Young Nigerians should be encouraged to recognise agriculture as a field of professional opportunity, while the government must create the conditions that make such a choice rational. Secure farms, functioning rural infrastructure, irrigation, mechanisation, affordable finance, storage and processing infrastructure, reliable markets and accountable institutions are the foundations on which the appeal to graduates must rest.

Nigeria does not need young people merely to be persuaded to love farming. It needs an agricultural economy in which young persons can enter the sector with ambition, deploy education and technology, build a profitable enterprise and expect the economy to work reasonably in their favour. The country must move from asking its youth to embrace agriculture to building an agricultural system that is appealing and deserving of their embrace.

LETTER

Subsidy as right reform, missed opportunity

SIR: Nigeria must be careful not to allow the current political debate over fuel subsidy to become a distraction from the deeper question before the country: Are Nigerians better off today, and are we building a country that gives Nigerians a fair chance to prosper tomorrow?

I believe the removal of the fuel subsidy was, in principle, the right economic decision.

For years, Nigeria maintained an expensive and increasingly unsustainable system that consumed enormous public resources, distorted the market, encouraged arbitrage, and disproportionately benefited those who consumed more fuel.

The World Bank had warned that maintaining the subsidy would continue to impose a significant fiscal burden, while its removal could create much needed fiscal space.

So, let us be honest with ourselves. The problem was not necessarily the decision to remove the subsidy. The problem was that we did not adequately prepare the country for the consequences of removing it.

A reform of this magnitude should never be treated as merely an accounting exercise.

When you remove a subsidy in an economy where transportation costs affect the price of food, where businesses depend heavily on diesel and petrol, where electricity

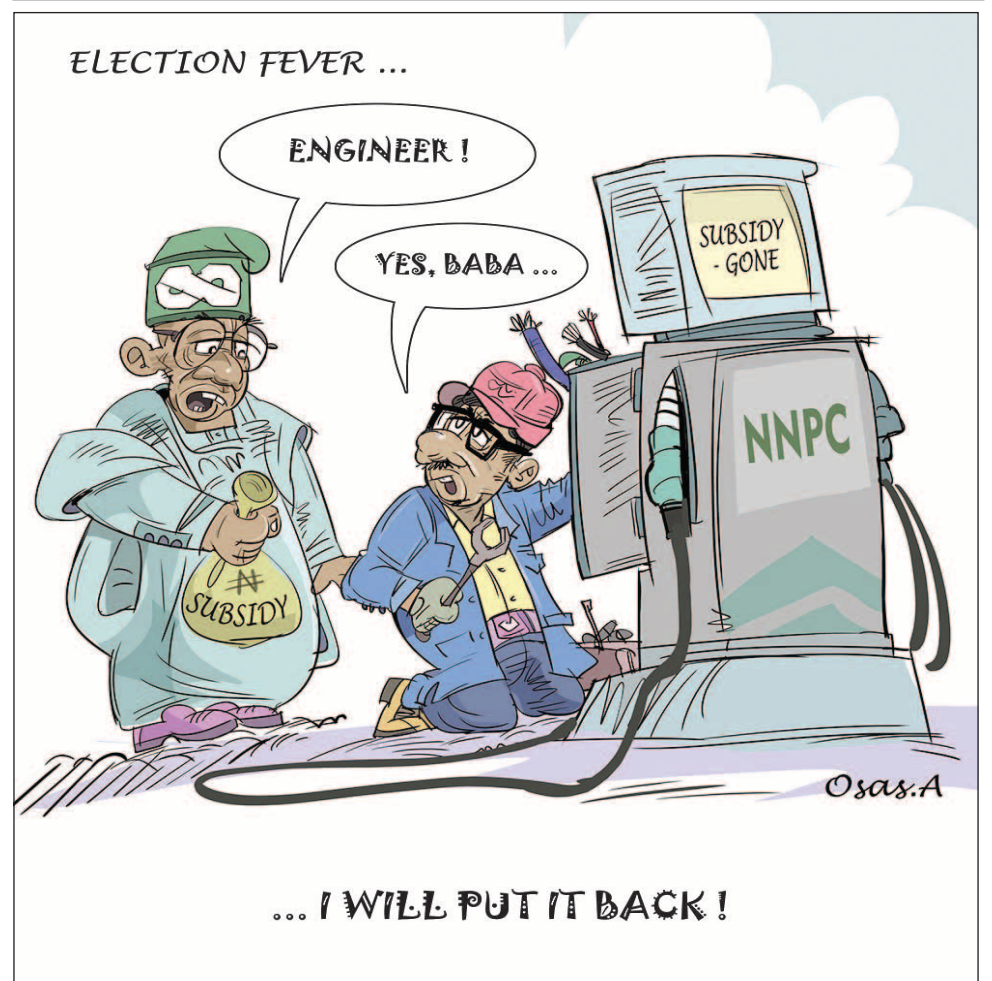
supply remains inadequate and where millions of households have little financial cushion, you are not simply changing the price of petrol. You are changing the cost structure of the entire economy.

That requires preparation. It requires targeted social protection. It requires mass transit. It requires food production and distribution reforms.

It requires support for small businesses. It requires stronger local refining capacity. It requires a deliberate programme to reduce the cost of logistics and energy. And, above all, it requires trust.

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Kelvin Uwaibi, an investment and economic strategist, wrote from Abuja.



Opinion

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President Tinubu's unfinished business to restructure Nigeria

By Tunji Olaopa

ONE of the fundamental diagnoses of the Nigerian state is that its constitutional framework for governance is at variance with its plural reality. In other words, the Nigerian Constitution recognises Nigeria as a federation with three tiers of government—federal, state and local. Unfortunately, the structural and institutional mechanisms of governance are so centralised and seemingly unitary in ways that deny the realities for all practical purpose. This is one key anomaly that explains why the local government structure has remained comatose since the Ironsi administration. It also explains one of the crucial reasons why the democratic governance since 1999 has not really translated into a decisively significant positive and hence impactful package of democratic dividends especially in terms of local governance at the grassroots.

And this makes the challenge of restructuring the Nigerian constitution to achieve the essence of a genuine federation all the more cogent for any administration willing to make sense of the Nigerian predicament and find adequate resolution that unburden developmental and governance targets on behalf of millions of Nigerians. This agenda is most significant for the Tinubu administration for two fundamental reasons.

The first comes from Tinubu's ideological attachment, to the task of restructuring the Nigerian governance system even before becoming the president, and even as he was never in the habit of playing to the gallery about it. One of the rallying points of his connection with the progressive elements in the Nigerian state is the imperative of constitutional restructuring of the Nigerian federation. The second reason derives from some of his key governance policies since assuming the position of the president of the federal republic of Nigeria.

A few examples of significant governance policies have been enacted that seem to signal that the administration has come to terms with the necessity of restructuring as a pathway to impactful governance reform. One significant policy is the creation of the Ministry of Regional Development that is meant to instigate socioeconomic and infrastructural progress across the six geopolitical zones in Nigeria. The ministry makes it possible to measure policy convergences and divergence across these zones in ways that facilitate harmonisation. This policy is followed by a correlative one:

the establishment of six regional development commissions (RDCs) that would serve as the arrowhead of the policy initiatives, formulation and design. Next in line, and beyond all expectations of its possibility, the Tinubu government has pushed the bill legislating the creation of state police closer to realisation. Signing the 2023 Electricity Act significantly decentralised electricity generation, transmission and distribution away from the exclusive to the concurrent list, a policy which enables state to take charge of power generation. There are three separate amendments ongoing to the Nigerian Minerals and Mining Act 2007 which are meant to undermine its rigid centralisation of the ownership of solid minerals and other natural endowments in the hand of the federal government to the exclusion of the other tiers of government.

Fundamental to all these sweeping legislative overhaul and policy transformation, and coterminous with the Supreme Court ruling of July 2024 concerning the financial autonomy of local governments, is the urgency of incentivising the subnational elements and entities in the Nigerian federation to commence the project of actively investing in their own regions and achieve governance distinction. All these speak to the challenge of restructuring to unlock the governance potentials inherent in laying the foundation for a true federalism in Nigeria. How then can this trajectory towards restructuring the Nigerian federation become a significant plank in the Tinubu administration that yield solid governance reform and bring home the impact of the Renewed Hope Agenda, post-2027?

The endgame for that restructured federation is the objective of installing a framework of structurally permanent competitive federalism among the federating units and regions. This is the overall agenda that all the preceding policy initiatives must reach for; this is the blueprint that must structure the restructuring process in the next administration cycle.

Once we understand the brilliant strategy of piecemeal legislative approach that privileges decentralisation through gradual policy advancement, then we see the significance of, for instance, the Ministry of Regional Development and the six regional development commissions. This is a pivotal transition that connects federalism to developmental local governance. The policy development serves as a cogent prelude to a full-fledged creation of local and regional economic

corridors and growth poles that unravels the binding constraints around wealth generation at the grassroots level.

This is a fundamental consideration and pivot because the grassroot is what enables democratic governance. Democratic governance becomes meaningful when local governance is empowered. It is significant development at the local level—the level of the local government—that speaks to the connection of governance to the people.

We had a very palpable demonstration of this relevance of local governance in the immediate post-independence period when the local government areas were significant spaces both for sociopolitical mobilisation as well as efficient public works, and service provision and delivery. Local governance therefore facilitates the grassroots participation of the people who are the most fundamental factor in governance. Indeed, the local governments constitute the framework for testing the transparency and responsiveness of government institutions.

This is where the concepts of subsidiarity and social capital become fundamental in understanding local governance. The subsidiarity principle is targeted at undermining the centralisation dynamics that is at work in the lopsidedness of the Nigerian federal constitution. The principle demands that whatever policy and development issues can be handled at the local and grassroots level must not be denied the third tier of government.

How then must the initial policy initiatives of the Tinubu administration be strengthened to push the restructuring blueprint towards its ultimate objective of a competitive federalism? There are five policy and structural pathways that could serve as the basis of institutionally grounding the task of decentralising the Nigerian governance systems. The first is legal and constitutional, and it is meant to ensure that the regional bodies already established do not become mere appendages pushing the centralising logic of the federal government.

Thus, the regional bodies and frameworks already set in place must be constitutionalised into significant economic spaces that reinforce Nigeria's governance architecture. The government must also legislate on the policy significance of streamlining the regional development plans, in the shape, for example, of the North Central 20-Year Economic Infrastructure and Social Development Plan. This allows for each of the six regions (or more) to develop

along the line of their comparative advantages in terms of agriculture, trade, mining, fishing, and more.

The second reform consideration piggybacks on the first: the structural responsibilities that will unlock the economic growth and progress of the regional governance corridors must be attended by fiscal and financial autonomy. One immediate means of consolidating the financial strength of the Ministry and the regional development commissions is to allocate some specific empowering percentage to them from the Consolidated Revenue Fund. They can also leverage alternative funding especially through public-private partnership or even through the Renewed Hope Infrastructure Development Fund (RHIDF). Without some concrete sources of revenues, the regional initiatives will regress into routine activities and eventually collapse. A critical dimension of this fiscal autonomy and responsibility must necessarily be the need to devolve management of resources to the regions. This is critical if the comparative advantages of the regions would become competitive, and if the regions would truly take ownership of their development. The federal government can then be the recipient of some percentages benchmarked against the first republic modified model rather than be the one doling out peanuts to the regions.

The third reform pillar the Tinubu administration must explore is, as we have hinted, the pursuit and institutionalisation of developmental local governance. True federalism is only meaningful when it is founded on a bedrock of local and self-sustaining governance. The administration can jumpstart this by submitting a comprehensive local government autonomy legislation that will leverage the landmark Supreme Court ruling on the financial autonomy of local governments.

This ensures that there are readily available funds that the local governments receive directly for developmental purposes. But then, a follow up legislation must make oversight and accountability possible by establishing structural procedures to track expenditures and tangible developments in terms of road networks, healthcare services, sewage maintenance, small businesses and enterprises, basic education, etc.

Read the remaining part of this article on

www.guardian.ng
Olaopa is Chairman, Federal Civil Service Commission and Professor of Public Administration.

Similarities between Benin and Opobo

By Eric Teniola

OPOBO Kingdom in Rivers State now has a new King. He is King Charles Douglas MacPepple Jaja, Jeki VI. The king was crowned as the sixth Amanyabo of Opobo and the coronation which was held at Jaja Square, Opobo Town, marked the climax of activities that began on September 17, 2026, to celebrate the emergence of the new monarch and the rich cultural heritage of the historic Opobo Kingdom.

The colourful ceremony was attended by former President Goodluck Ebele Jonathan and his wife, representatives of Rivers State Governor, Siminalayi Fubara; the Obi of Onitsha, Nnayeugo Alfred Nnaemeka Achebe; representatives of the Bayelsa State Government; the Amanyabo of Grand Bonny Kingdom; representatives of the Rivers State Council of Traditional Rulers; the Olu of Warri; the Dean of Agbor; the Obong of Calabar; members of the Ijaw National Congress and other dignitaries.

King Charles was born in 1959 into the royal family of Opobo. He was crowned by Emmanuel Oko-Jaja, Bishop of the Niger Delta Diocese.

The coronation comes more than 150 years after the establishment of Opobo Kingdom, one of the historic Ibani kingdoms of the Niger Delta.

The kingdom emerged from a political conflict in Grand Bonny in 1869, when Chief Jack Jaja Annie Pepple, known in Ibani tradition as Juwojuwo, and members of the Opubo Annie Pepple group departed Bonny and established a new settlement near the Imo River estuary. December 25, 1870, is traditionally recognised as the date of the establishment of Opobo Kingdom, with Jaja becoming its first Amanyabo.

Under King Jaja, Opobo developed into a major political and commercial power in the Oil Rivers region, particularly through the palm produce trade.

I expected a more huge crowd at the coronation because of the importance of Opobo, especially in the South South region. The Opobo/ Nkoro LGA of Rivers State is made up of two Ijaw Clans known as Opobo and Nkoro Clans with different communities under them.

The Opobo Clan is of the Ibani- Ijaw subgroup of the Ijaw tribe. Nkoro Clan is of the Okrika- Ijaw subgroup of the Ijaw tribe. Bonny

Clan have 75 villages and settlements. Opobo Clan have 20 villages and settlements. Both are of the Ibani subgroup of the Ijaw tribe. Ijaw have 86 Clans and the single largest Ijaw Clan is Egbema Clan with over 350 villages and settlements under it.

Opobo has the highest literacy rate in Niger delta. Opobo has the highest concentration of professors in Niger Delta. The first set of graduates from university of Ibadan had many Opobo people. Over 60 per cent of the families in Opobo send their kids overseas for studies and this behavior started far back as 18th century when the children of nobles were sent to England to acquire western education through Opobo seaport.

Their men are well mannered because in Opobo culture, mannerism is imbibed. Secondly, they are mostly educated and polished. They behave like the British because of their long relationship with the British centuries ago and thirdly, they excel in life on the average, Opobo people have quality human resources.

Prominent Opobo indigenes include Governor Amaopusenibo Siminalayi Fubara, the current governor of Rivers state, General (rtd) Kenneth Minimah, former Chief of Army Staff, Chief Atedo Peterside, founder of Stanbic IBTC Bank Plc, Adawari Pepple, businessman and former Senator, Professor Millar Jaja, the first Orthopaedic Surgeon in West Africa, Professor Sylvanus Cookey, retired Vice Chancellor of the University of Port-Harcourt, Chief Dagogo Jaja, former Managing Director of Daily Times, Captain Horace Millar Jaja, an Airline Captain and many more.

The history of Opobo is similar to that of Benin Empire. They had rulers who resisted the British Empire many years ago.

Ovonramwen, Oba of Benin was the independent ruler of the Edo Kingdom of Benin. Ovonramwen is renowned for his brave stand against the colonisation of his Kingdom by the British, for which he is generally regarded as the last great king of Southern Nigeria in nineteenth century who attempted to stem the tide of British occupation and conquest.

During the nine years (1888-1897) he reigned, he sought to preserve the sovereignty of the Edo empire as well as its economic interests which, in the end, led to the British armed invasion of Benin in 1897. The Oba lost the battle and was dethroned and banished into exile for life, while his Kingdom was merged into a wider political unit under the British administration. By 1912 that unit, the Protectorate of Southern Nigeria, has been fused with the Protectorate of North-

ern Nigeria to become the entity of Nigeria.

"Ovonramwen fell for the same reasons as other great African rulers of the late nineteenth century who represented an age that was fast fading away under the determined thrust of the white man resolved to take over the political and economic control of the African coast and the interior—Pepple of Bonny in 1854, Jaja of Opobo in 1887, Nana the Itsekiri in 1894, King Prempeh of Ashanti in January 1896" writes the Professor of History, Philip A. Igbafe in his book "Benin Under British Administration".

Indeed, by the late 1880s during Ovonramwen's father Adolo's reign, Britain had already mapped out Benin state as its area of influence. That was reflected in the visit of Captain H.L. Gallway, the British Commissioner and Vice-Consul of the Benin District of the Oil Rivers Protectorate, to Benin in 1892, four years after Ovonramwen succeeded his father as Oba.

During that visit the British officer signed a treaty with Ovonramwen, for commercial relations between Benin and Britain. Among other clauses the 1892 treaty requested the Oba to co-operate with Britain in the interest of "order, good government and the general progress of civilisation".

The implications of these, as later events were to show, were not fully explained to the Oba of Benin. Because for several years after the treaty Oba Ovonramwen continued to rule his state in the tradition of his ancestors, refusing to "compromise his independence in order to pander to the needs of British officials and traders", says Igbafe, adding that "relationship between Benin and the traders on the coast as well as with the British officials during those last two decades of the nineteenth century was particularly productive of friction from the British standpoint. This stage was thus being set for the overthrow of Benin".

It was against that background that Vice-Consul James R. Phillips, going against warnings about the provocation such a visit would cause in Benin, embarked on a mission to assess the strength of the Benin Army, and visited Oba Ovonramwen on 18 January, 1897. Phillips and a large number of his men were ambushed outside the city, to which the British responded with the punitive expedition of February 1897. Benin fell in that battle and its Oba was dethroned and deported to Calabar where he died seventeen years later, 1914.

To be continued tomorrow.
Teniola, a former director in the Presidency, wrote from Lagos.

Opinion

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Nigeria's health partnership with U.S. : Sovereignty and domestic financing

By Muhammad Ali Pate

The MoU is legally non-binding, recognises the application of Nigerian law and permits either participant to discontinue cooperation under its terms. Implementation must remain within the country's legal and institutional authority. Any citizen, journalist, researcher or civil-society organisation wishing to examine the instrument is encouraged to request a copy formally under the Freedom of Information Act, so that public discussion proceeds from the text itself and from the commitments and safeguards it contains.

FOR more than two decades, Nigeria and the United States have worked together on major public-health challenges. Through the U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), the President's Malaria Initiative, polio eradication, laboratory development, disease surveillance, health security and contributions through the Global Fund and Gavi, that partnership has saved lives and strengthened institutions on which millions of Nigerians depend.

Nigeria values this record of cooperation, but the next phase must serve a clear national purpose. No country of our size can indefinitely finance essential health services through external assistance. Our responsibility is to preserve the gains built with partners while expanding domestic financing, strengthening Nigerian institutions and ensuring that critical services remain available as the international financing environment changes.

A national framework for transition

That direction was established before the current bilateral arrangement. In December 2023, President Bola Ahmed Tinubu presciently launched the Nigeria Health Sector Renewal Investment Initiative and the Health Sector Renewal Compact, bringing the Federal Government, the 36 states, the Federal Capital Territory and development partners behind a common reform agenda. Through the Sector-Wide Approach, fragmentation and duplication are being reduced, while public and partner resources are, for the first time, being aligned behind one plan, one budget and one report, with clearer responsibility for results and a deliberate transition towards national ownership.

When the United States revised its global health approach in 2025 under the then new Adminis-

tration of President Donald Trump, its emphasis on country ownership, country systems and government-to-government cooperation converged with reforms Nigeria had already begun. The immediate task was to protect continuity of treatment and prevent reversals in HIV, tuberculosis, malaria and other essential services while strengthening the domestic foundations on which those services must ultimately rest.

The health MoU signed by Nigeria and the United States on 19 December 2025 was negotiated within that policy framework and should be understood in that context. Covering April 2026 to December 2030, it provides a managed transition from externally financed implementation towards stronger use of Nigerian institutions, government systems and domestic resources, while preserving essential services as Nigeria assumes a larger share of their financing and management.

Financing the transition

The financing structure under the MoU makes this purpose clear. Planned United States support is nearly \$2 billion over five years and declines over the period, while Nigeria plans nearly \$3 billion in additional domestic health financing. Nigeria's contribution is not transferred to the United States; it remains in Nigeria and is applied to priorities determined by Nigeria, including HIV, tuberculosis, malaria, maternal and child health, laboratories, health workers, surveillance, commodities, primary healthcare and health information systems. There is no credible path out of aid dependency that does not require Nigeria to invest more of its own resources in the health of its people.

The Federal Government had already begun to translate this commitment into the budget. The 2025 federal health budget rose by nearly 60 per cent, increasing health's share of the national budget to 5.2 per cent from just over 3 per cent. In presenting the 2026 Appropriation Bill, President Tinubu proposed N2.48 trillion for health and described health investment as 6 per cent of the budget net of liabilities. The 2026 Appropriation Act was subsequently signed into law with an aggregate expenditure of N68.32 trillion. Under the MoU, however, Nigeria's co-investment is measured by actual expenditure: at least 6 per cent of executed annual Federal and State budgets for health, not by budget announcements alone.

The MoU is broader than medicines or vaccines. It covers outbreak surveillance and response, laboratory capacity and biosafety, frontline health workers, health commodities, data systems and strategic investments in service delivery, while supporting procurement reform and increased

local manufacturing. Its performance framework includes viral suppression among people living with HIV, tuberculosis outcomes, malaria deaths, maternal and child survival, immunisation, and the speed with which public-health threats are detected, reported and controlled.

Sovereignty, law and public scrutiny

Nigeria negotiated the framework through a whole-of-government process involving the ministries responsible for Health, Foreign Affairs, Finance, Budget and Economic Planning, together with relevant health agencies. The Attorney-General of the Federation reviewed and cleared it confirming that it did not undermine Nigeria's national interest. The MoU is legally non-binding, recognises the application of Nigerian law and permits either participant to discontinue cooperation under its terms. Its implementation remains within the country's legal and institutional authority. Any citizen, journalist, researcher or civil-society organisation wishing to examine the instrument is encouraged to request a copy formally under the Freedom of Information Act, so that public discussion proceeds from the text itself and from the commitments and safeguards it contains.

Regulatory authority and health security

NAFDAC continues to exercise its statutory responsibility for medicines, vaccines and diagnostics. The MoU refers to NAFDAC's existing regulatory-reliance framework, under which the agency may consider assessments by recognised stringent regulatory authorities while retaining responsibility for Nigeria's own decision. Regulatory reliance reduces unnecessary duplication and accelerates access to quality-assured products; it does not remove NAFDAC's authority to evaluate applications, inspect products and facilities, undertake risk-based testing, release vaccine lots and conduct post-market surveillance where required.

The same principle governs cooperation involving health data and pathogens. Nigeria must be able to detect an emerging pathogen, sequence it rapidly and share scientifically useful information when that serves public health. Requests for access remain subject to Nigerian law, data-protection requirements, scientific and ethical review and agreement on benefits arising from collaboration. Building domestic genomic-sequencing capacity, secure data systems and a national genomics repository strengthens sovereignty by enabling Nigeria to participate in global science from a position of competence. The bilateral MoU does not displace Nigeria's position in the continuing multilateral negotiations on pathogen access and benefit sharing under the Pandemic Agreement.

Faith-based service delivery and accountability
The MoU also provides that, to the maximum extent permitted by law, approximately ten per cent of planned U.S. support is intended for eligible faith-based health providers. The provision does not designate or confer preference on any religion or denomination. At the signing, the United States Ambassador acknowledged Nigeria's Christian and Muslim traditions, making clear that eligible providers from both could receive support. This recognises the longstanding contribution of faith-based institutions to healthcare delivery, particularly in communities where access remains limited.

Beyond financing and service continuity, the framework changes how external support is managed and accounted for. Much previous assistance was implemented through non-governmental channels that delivered important results but sometimes limited government's direct visibility over expenditure and made integration with national systems more difficult. To the maximum extent permitted by United States law, the new arrangement moves financing towards government-to-government and on-budget mechanisms, with audits, performance reviews and tracking of co-investment. This strengthens national oversight, reduces fragmentation and makes both countries accountable for their commitments.

The measure of success

The partnership will ultimately be measured in the lives and institutions it protects. People living with HIV must continue to receive treatment; deaths from malaria and tuberculosis must fall; mothers and children must receive better care; and outbreaks must be detected and contained faster. Nigeria's laboratories, workforce, supply chains and data systems must also become stronger as Federal and State governments assume a larger and more durable share of the cost.

By 2030, the proper measure of success will not be how much external assistance Nigeria received, but how much more capable and self-reliant our health system became while that assistance declined. Nigeria will continue to work with the United States and other partners in pursuit of shared health, security and development objectives, while strengthening the domestic foundations on which lasting progress depends. The destination is clear: a health system financed increasingly by Nigeria, governed through Nigerian institutions and able to sustain better outcomes for Nigerians.

Pate is Nigeria's Coordinating Minister of Health and Social Welfare.

The storm in Nyesom Wike's teacup

By Aladesohun Sola

POLITICS in Nigeria, particularly Rivers State has been fraught with icy relationships: one conflict today, another tomorrow, all more about self-interest than governance. Thus, some of the problems associated with Nyesom Wike's office constitute the source of his worries and anger, as seen in his reactions when you get his goat. From Rivers, Bayelsa to other States, the storm in Wike's teacup rages and breaks every barrier in order to safeguard his political interest.

Wike became the first Nigerian politician to belong to two, if not four, political parties simultaneously and controls what he's christened 'Rainbow Coalition', comprising the AA, APC, LP and PDP. His new political style is controversial, symbiotic and janus-faced. Borrowing William Shakespeare's words, I'll say Wike '...doth bestride the narrow world like a Colossus, and we petty men walk under his huge legs and peep about...' (Julius Caesar, Act 1, Scene 2).

If this is the new, acceptable style in Nigeria's politics, Wike remains the Founding Father of a new political order. He's the chief financier of a party he's fought hard to salvage in difficult times, so he's decided to support the APC rather than dump the PDP. Whether this decision is good or bad, one knows better two years into President Tinubu's second tenure when the APC's plate tectonics begin to shift.

In 2024 shortly after he'd settled in the FCT, conflict arose between him and his protege—Gov. Siminilayi Fubara—over the rightful owner of the oil-rich Rivers. For Wike, possession is the nine tenths of the law, and what's unknown to many is that the Armed Rhinoceros loves Elephant Fubara and is actually fighting Fubara's prompters i.e., the anti-Wike who want to take control of the state. Blazing storms howled across the state and, swiftly the Fubara government had disappeared, taking months to resurface.

In Bayelsa State, Wike's anger was confirmed when he's threatened by those demanding immediate reinstatement of the ousted Fubara. In September 2024 in Edo, the FCT Minister, in his traditional swashbuckling manner, effortlessly delivered the state to the APC. Moreover and very interestingly, the storm that flung Gov. Obaseki out of office literally rose from Wike's Shanghai-made ceramic teacup, meaning that the Renewed Hope agenda of President

Tinubu resonates with Nigerians.

In Oyo State is a gulf between two formerly close friends who are now separated, because one wants to run for president and is trying to reject what he sees as a growing dictatorial tendency, whilst the other is on his high horse, insisting on party leadership control. Hard-headedly, the Oyo State governor, Gov. Seyi Makinde, relying on some magic wand, is daring Wike and able to withstand the storm. In this friendly strife, Wike has kept a weather eye on Makinde whose tenure expires 29 May 2027.

The stab Wike received from Aminu Tambuwal during the 2022 presidential primaries in Abuja may be forgotten in a hurry in Sokoto State but not in Rivers, and the experiences plus the residual, hard feelings got by both men who now avoid each other, is a concern to Wike. Then there's more to the attitude of Bauchi State Gov. Bala Mohammed than meets the eye. It's on record that Wike stood by Gov. Bala, whose tenure also expires 29 May 2027, until he disappeared Wike.

The storm is felt in Abuja where residents speak with anger due to land grabbing. There'd been cases of illegal acquisition of government properties before Wike arrived and the FCT was losing its grandeur until Wike said it's time sanity was restored. His November 2025 brash brush with Lieutenant A.M Yerima was one of the demonstrations of such sanity.

Government before Wike's arrival in the FCT had a skeleton in the cupboard, the cupboard which the Minister has now prised open by going after Abuja land grabbers and recovering illegally acquired government properties. Wike is against illegality: a mindset that doesn't let him align with corrupt people. In few months in the FCT as Minister, he'd remitted over 38 billion naira IGR; built roads, halls, hospitals and schools; built Vice-President Shettima a ritzy mansion of 10 billion naira; built homes for Judges; and massively developed Area Councils of Abuja.

During his tenure as governor, Wike was above board and notched a sterling administrative success, blazing the trail with 12 solid flyovers within a short time. Who's ever achieved this feat in Nigeria? Wike would be rich forever if he decided to divert funds meant for 2 flyovers out of the 12 he built in Rivers. It's very illogical indeed how people criticize Wike and ignore the good things he's done for Nigeria. President Tinubu lauds Wike, Goodluck Jonathan

hailed Wike, Dame Patience Jonathan appreciated Wike, Sergeant Awuse adores Wike, Kingsley Chinda reveres Wike, Felix Obuah respects Wike, the Late Barinada Mpigi loved Wike, Northern Almajirai want Wike.

In my over 33 years in Rivers State, I haven't seen Wike physically yet I like his leadership style—he proclaims his tigrity by pouncing. Wike is feisty, and so decides to be clean and refuses to sleep whilst on duty, knowing very well that enemies are waiting for him to slip. However, I'm sad that the FCT Minister hasn't completed the mono-rail and school projects started by Amaechi. Along Azikwe Road in Port Harcourt, I saw the middle part of the abandoned monorail cave in, begging for renovation. The rural parts of Rivers I've visited crave development and groan under the crushing weight of neglect: no electricity at Okaka in Ahoada; Rumuogodo in Emouha; no good roads and affordable housing in Onne despite the huge revenue Onne fetches the FG.

Now that campaigns for the 2027 general elections have started and Wike is around, storms will definitely morph into cyclones. In Rivers there'll be Typhoon Wike which will be followed nationally by 'Hurricane Tinubu'. But I'm of the opinion that Wike should eradicate the cane culture in the Nigerian police; ban the collection of fees by motor park and house agents; reduce the prices of everything, and end land grabbing in Rivers; work with the NUC to tackle the rot in Rivers' tertiary institutions; outlaw Rabelaisian exhibition of female photographs at Choba Junction; reconcile with his enemies; and establish Relief and Skill Acquisition Centres in all 23 LGAs where the poor will receive stipends, the sick treatments, the hungry foods and the unemployed get something doing.

In conclusion, Wike was keeping a pussycat as pet until the cat grew into a lion and wanted to devour him. Now he's got multiple degrees from the university of life and the 'storm' in his 'teacup' is powerful enough for him to roar to victory in a presidential election—you can't keep a good man down. I pray that Wike emerge Nigeria's president because his government will emancipate Nigeria. I pray Peter Obi, Omoye Sowore and Olu James Omosule get there too. But these last three Nigerians can only get there if God, who is my preferred candidate, refuses to be Nigeria's president because of corruption and rigging.

Sola wrote from Port Harcourt.

CRUDE OIL PRICE UPDATE

Brent crude: \$110.2 | WTI crude: \$103.5

FOREX MARKET UPDATE

I&E window: N1,330.47

Nigerians decry declining power supply amid disruption to 29 plants

By Waliat Musa

NO less than 29 power plants became idle, leaving businesses and households stranded as the nation's electricity generation collapsed. The shutdown has affected industries, disrupted daily life, and underscored the fragility of the country's energy infrastructure.

Specifically, the electricity crisis deepened yesterday, as power generation plunged from about 3,840 megawatts (MW) in the morning to a reported 230.30MW by 4:00 p.m., with 29 of the 33 generating stations listed on the real-time dashboard recording zero output, raising fresh concerns over the cost of doing

CPPE warns of rising costs, shrinking margins

NISO declares stable grid despite slump in generation to 567MW

Ikeja Electric, AEDC cite grid shortfall for reduced hours of supply

business and electricity supply to households.

The sharp drop left only four stations with non-zero output in the plant-by-plant data from the real-time generation dashboard of the national grid operator, nigrigrid.org. It showed that Odukpai NIPP recorded 204MW, Omotosho gas plant generated 174.80MW, Sapele steam plant produced 24.60MW, while Trans-Amadi gas plant recorded 1.70MW.

The figures for the four plants, however, added up to 405.10MW, exceeding the dashboard's reported total of

230.30MW. The affected stations recording zero output included major generating facilities such as Egbin, Geregu, Jebba, Kainji, Shiroro, Afam VI, Delta, Okpai, Rivers IPP, Alaoji NIPP and Trans-Afam, alongside other gas-fired and hydroelectric plants.

The development comes as electricity distribution companies report supply constraints, leaving businesses and households vulnerable to reduced public power supply and greater reliance on alternative sources of electricity.

However, the Nigerian

Independent System Operator (NISO) has declared the national grid stable following earlier multiple trippings on the 330-kilovolt (kV) transmission network. Checks however, showed that real-time electricity generation figure was just 567.10 megawatts (MW) as of 7:00 p.m. yesterday.

In addition, the generation figure, displayed on the NISO's NIGGRID platform, showed that only four generation companies (Gencos) were reporting output at the time, raising questions about the state of electricity supply hours after

the operator announced that restoration efforts had been completed.

NISO claimed the incident occurred at approximately 12:40 p.m. on Monday, October 19, 2026, adding that it worked with the Transmission Company of Nigeria (TCN) to stabilise the power system and restore normal operations.

"Following the incident, NISO, working with TCN, immediately implemented appropriate corrective measures to stabilise the power system and restore normal operations. Restoration efforts have been successfully completed, and the national grid has returned to normal operation," the operator said.

Shareholders task listed firms on corporate governance, strong earnings

As Firstholdco, Seplat, Union Dicon others gain nearly 150% YTD

By Helen Oji

SHAREHOLDERS have urged companies listed on the Nigerian Exchange Limited (NGX) to strengthen their corporate fundamentals, improve earnings and deliver better returns to investors to sustain the strong performance of their stocks in the equities market.

They noted that although several listed companies have recorded remarkable share price appreciation, the long-term sustainability of the rally would depend largely on their financial performance, profitability, dividend payments and ability to create lasting value for shareholders.

According to them, the next major test for the market is whether the impressive gains recorded by stocks will be supported by improved corporate earnings and stronger business performance at the end of the financial year.

They stressed that rising share prices alone were not enough to guarantee sustainable wealth creation, adding that investors would be looking for tangible evidence of

growth in the financial results of companies as they assess the value of their investments.

A look at the share price movement of some listed firms across sectors as of October 16, 2026, showed that in the banking sector, Zenith rose from N61.80 kobo at the beginning of the year to N122.20 kobo by last Friday, representing a 104 per cent gain. FirstHoldCo stock also rose by 188 per cent from N47.90 kobo to N137.30 kobo.

Similarly, Union Dicon under the FMCGs sector appreciated from N6.90 kobo to N23.75 kobo, representing a 244 per cent increase. HBM Nigeria also moved from N134 50 kobo to N355, representing a 164 per cent rise.

For the Oil&Gas sector, Seplat rose by 175 per cent to N16, 000 from N5, 809.00. Aradel also appreciated to N1, 499.90 kobo from N670, an increase of 124 per cent.

In addition, for May&Baker under the pharmaceutical sector garnered 109 per cent from N19 to N39.75 kobo while Fidson rose from N50.10 kobo to N83.50 kobo representing 66.67 per cent gain.



Group Head, Retail Banking Group, FirstBank, Aderonke Benson (left); Regional Head, Retail Banking Lagos and West, FirstBank, Adebajo Olaniyan and President and Managing Director, The Asian Banker, Foo Boon Ping at the Asian Banker Regional Awards 2026 where FirstBank was announced winner of the Best Retail Bank in Nigeria in Lagos, recently.

Credit to manufacturers shrinks further as banks favour traders

By Tobii Awodipe

BANK credit to Nigeria's manufacturing sector fell by 26.8 per cent year-on-year to N5.19 trillion in June 2026 from N7.09 trillion in the corresponding period of 2025, raising concerns over access to financing for industrial production and investment.

Data sourced from the Central Bank of Nigeria's (CBN) Q2 2026 statistical bulletin showed that outstanding credit to manufacturers also declined by about 21 per cent between January and June, reflecting a sustained contrac-

tion in lending to the sector during the first half of the year. The figures come amid persistent complaints by manufacturers over high borrowing costs, rising production expenses, electricity tariffs, logistics constraints and exchange-rate pressures, which continue to weigh on industrial operations.

Monthly data showed that credit to the sector declined from N6.57 trillion in January to N6.37 trillion in February, before falling further to N5.77 trillion in March and N5.32 trillion in April. It dropped to

N5.02 trillion in May before recovering marginally to N5.19 trillion in June.

Despite the slight month-on-month increase in June, outstanding credit remained significantly below the level recorded a year earlier.

Trade and commerce credit surged roughly 62%-63.4% to N6.30 trillion, construction rose 53.7% to N2.88 trillion, and agriculture increased 30.4% to N4.16 trillion. Power, finance, and mining also posted notable credit expansions.

The figures reinforce concerns raised earlier by the

Manufacturers Association of Nigeria (MAN) at their recent yearly general meeting, over the availability and cost of credit, with the association warning that expensive loans are limiting manufacturers' ability to expand production, modernise equipment and create jobs.

In June, MAN raised concerns over a separate comparison showing that bank credit to the sector declined from N8.53 trillion in December 2024 to N6.61 trillion in December 2025, representing a reduction of N1.92 trillion, or 22.5 per cent.

NIMASA dismisses banks' cargo guarantee requirement demand for \$700m CVFF

By Adaku Onyenucheya

THE Nigerian Maritime Administration and Safety Agency (NIMASA) has denied claims that some of the Primary Lending Institutions (PLIs) involved in the disbursement of the \$700 million Cabotage Vessel Financing Fund (CVFF) are demanding cargo guarantees from indigenous ship owners.

The Director-General of NIMASA, Dr Dayo Mobereola, disclosed this on the sidelines of the 2026 World Maritime Day held in Lagos.

Recall that one of the board members of NIMASA had stated that many ship owners may not get the money due to their inability to pass the credit assessment of PLI, such as the lack of cargo guarantee.

According to her, cargo guarantees were essential because they demonstrated the viability of the cash flow that applicants presented to their banks and provided assurance that the financed vessels or businesses would have sufficient cargo to generate revenue.

"Technically, they cannot qualify for CVFF if they don't have a cargo guarantee. Because it is the cargo guarantee that will back up or show the viability of their cash flow that they're presenting to their banks," the board member said.

The NIMASA boss said none of the 12 banks involved in the disbursement of the \$700 million CVFF was requesting cargo guarantees from indigenous ship owners.

"For the CVFF disbursement, we have made it very easy. We have ensured that everybody who is an indigenous ship owner can apply for the fund.

"As a ship owner, you will have to apply through the NIMASA CVFF Portal. After that, you have to go to your bank because there is a need for a bank guarantee so that when NIMASA releases the fund to you, the agency will be able to recoup its fund after the loan tenor expires so that other ship owners too can benefit from the loan application," he stated.

W'Bank urges FG, states to strengthen N658.9b cash transfer scheme

By Abigail Ikaghughu

THE World Bank has urged Federal and State governments to strengthen Nigeria's social protection system with regular funding, wider coverage and more consistent cash transfers after the government disbursed N658.9 billion to 10.46 million poor and vulnerable households as of September 2026.

The bank said the reported disbursement marked progress in providing financial support to vulnerable Nigerians but stressed that the programme's impact on household welfare would depend on reaching more people, providing adequate assistance and ensuring

that payments were regular.

The recommendation was contained in the latest Nigeria Development Update, titled: "Beyond the Federal Purse: How Higher Revenues Shaped State Priorities," which examined economic conditions and government interventions to cushion households against financial hardship.

According to the report, the Federal Government used biometric and digital verification systems to identify beneficiaries and deliver payments under its direct cash transfer programme.

"Social protection and service delivery can help cushion households against these pressures, though their effectiveness will

continue to depend on coverage, adequacy, and continuity," the report stated.

The bank called for faster implementation and improvements in the reach, value and consistency of cash transfers, noting that these measures were necessary to strengthen the programme's contribution to household welfare.

"These efforts need to be accelerated and deepened, with continued progress on coverage, adequacy, and consistency of transfers necessary to broaden and strengthen their contribution to household welfare," it added.

Beyond expanding the programme, the World Bank said Nigeria needed to move away

from relying mainly on emergency interventions towards a sustainable system that provides predictable support to poor and vulnerable households.

It recommended dedicated budget allocations for social protection at both federal and state levels, alongside a gradual increase in government funding to sustain the programme.

"Building on this progress, the next step is to move from an emergency response toward a regular, sustainable social protection system, with dedicated budget lines at the federal and state levels, gradually increasing financing from government resources, and a shared overarching vision," the report stated.

NGX Group wins Africa’s Best Exchange award as turnover hits N7.82tr

By Helen Oji

NIGERIAN Exchange Group Plc (NGX Group) has been named Africa’s Best Exchange at the Euromoney Markets Awards 2026, in recognition of its contribution to market infrastructure, digital innovation and capital

formation.

The award, presented at the Mandarin Oriental Hyde Park, London, on October 15, 2026, recognises achievements in market development during 2025, amid sustained growth in Nigeria’s equities market.

The Group’s performance has

been supported by efforts to improve access to investment opportunities through digital platforms, strengthen market infrastructure and expand participation in public offers and rights issues.

A major part of this drive is NGX Invest, the Group’s electronic

public-offering platform, which simplifies the process of subscribing to public offers and rights issues. The platform played a significant role in the banking sector recapitalisation exercise, facilitating more than N2.8 trillion in capital raising.

By September 2026, the plat-

form’s distribution network had expanded to more than 180 channels, including stockbrokers, banks and fintech companies. Its WhatsApp subscription channel has also provided investors with another avenue to participate in public offers.

Nigeria’s equities market recorded strong growth in 2025, with the Nigerian Exchange All-Share Index rising by 51.19 per cent. In addition, equities turnover increased by 109.48 per cent to N5.96 trillion, while market capitalisation reached N99.38 trillion.

The positive trend has continued in 2026. As of October 16, the All-Share Index had gained 59.07 per cent year-to-date, while equities turnover rose to N7.82 trillion, representing a 73.78 per cent increase from N4.50 trillion recorded in the corresponding period of 2025.

Market capitalisation also reached N160.73 trillion, reflect-

ing the expansion in the value of listed equities.

Commenting on the award, Group Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of NGX Group, Temi Popoola, said the recognition reflected the Group’s commitment to strengthening the infrastructure and technology needed to support capital formation and investment.

He said the Group appreciated the support of regulators, policy-makers, issuers, investors, stockbrokers and other market participants in advancing the development of Nigeria’s capital market.

Popoola said NGX Group would continue to widen digital access to investment opportunities, improve market efficiency and strengthen connections with other African markets to make Nigeria’s capital market more accessible, resilient and competitive.

‘Commercial air passengers bear unequal burden of aviation funding’

By Olusegun Koiki

THE former Rector of the Nigerian College of Aviation Technology (NCAT), Zaria, Samuel Caulcrick, has raised concerns over an imbalance in Nigeria’s aviation funding and regulatory framework.

Caulcrick, in an interview with *The Guardian* yesterday, said that commercial air passengers bear a disproportionate share of the cost of sustaining the industry.

Caulcrick said while passengers travelling on scheduled airlines contribute to aviation funding through statutory

charges embedded in their tickets, private jet operators using the same airspace and airport infrastructure do not make equivalent contributions.

He declared that the situation places additional financial pressure on commercial airlines and ultimately contributes to higher fares and reduced access to air travel.

Caulcrick, who is the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Express Cargo Ltd, mentioned the five per cent Ticket Sales Charge (TSC), collected from airline ticket sales to support aviation agencies, as one of the

major funding mechanisms through which commercial passengers contribute to the sector.

According to him, private business jet operators do not pay the charge because they do not sell tickets, relying instead on fuel-related taxes and landing and parking fees.

He said: “Your ticket is keeping the entire system alive. Yet you are the one who gets policed, delayed, and squeezed the most. This arrangement is structurally unfair to ordinary travelers.

“Commercial airlines and private aircraft operators benefit from common aviation infrastructure, including air traffic control services, runways and the national airspace, despite differences in their financial contributions to the system.”

Caulcrick maintained that the disparity deserved closer examination by the Federal government and aviation regulators, particularly as the industry continued to grapple with high operating costs and expensive airfares.

Lagos trains senior civil servants on AI governance, transformational leadership

By Isaac Taiwo

THE Lagos State Government has trained senior civil servants on artificial intelligence (AI) governance, ethical technology adoption and transformational leadership as part of efforts to improve public service delivery and productivity.

The two-day Executive Development Programme, organised by the Office of the Head of Service in collaboration with the Ministry of Establishments and Training, was themed: “Executive Leadership MasterClass in Artificial Intelligence (AI) Governance and Economic Transformation (AI-GET).”

The programme, anchored by J. Soji-George Consulting Nigeria Limited in partnership with the University of Kigali, Rwanda, was held at the Education Resource Centre, Ojodu, Lagos.

Declaring the programme open, the Director of Administration, Ministry of Establishments and Training, Adedolapo Ajayi, who represented the Commissioner, Afolabi Ayantayo, and the Permanent Secretary, Olubusola

Abidakun, urged participants to maximise the opportunity to acquire knowledge that would enhance their professional effectiveness.

He encouraged the participants to engage actively, ask questions and apply the lessons learnt to improve their contributions to governance.

Speaking at the opening session, the Chief Executive Officer and Senior Partner of J. Soji-George Consulting Nigeria Limited, Prof. Olusoji George, stressed the importance of emotional intelligence in leadership, particularly among senior public servants responsible for decisions affecting citizens.

He said effective leadership required self-awareness, social awareness, motivation and an understanding of the emotional climate within society.

According to him, public officials must consider citizens’ concerns and perceptions when formulating and implementing policies, warning that failure to understand public sentiment could undermine government initiatives and erode public trust.

FCMB commits N20b to private healthcare financing

By Abigail Ikhaghau

FIRST City Monument Bank (FCMB) has committed N20 billion to financing private healthcare businesses in Nigeria, as the Federal Government seeks greater private-sector investment to strengthen healthcare infrastructure and expand access to essential services.

The financing will support eligible healthcare providers with business expansion, equipment purchases, infrastructure, working capital and technology investments. It will also cover businesses across the eye-care value chain, helping providers increase capacity and improve service delivery.

FCMB’s Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer, Yemisi Edun, said the bank’s financing solutions could help viable healthcare businesses invest in their operations and extend services to more Nigerians.

She encouraged providers across the healthcare value chain, including eye-care businesses, to explore the available financing options.

The commitment comes amid calls for stronger collaboration between the public and private sectors to address healthcare financing and infrastructure needs.

Speaking at a public-private partnership roundtable organised by FCMB in Abuja, the Minister of State for Health and Social Welfare, Dr Iziaq Salako, advocated blended finance, social impact bonds and corporate co-funding as mechanisms for strengthening healthcare infrastructure and expanding access to services.

Salako also commended FCMB and the Tulsi Chanrai Foundation (TCF) for their sustained partnership in eye care, urging more businesses to adopt similar approaches to support healthcare delivery.



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Something extraordinary has happened to Nigerian banking.

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Transactions that once required queues, forms and physical branches now happen on phones in seconds i.e. transfers, bills, airtime, investments, account opening, credit, payments, collections and commerce.

The transformation has been remarkable.

Nigeria has built a digital banking revolution, but has it built customer trust?

NIGERIA has built one of Africa’s most dynamic digital financial ecosystems. But for the next phase of that revolution, we must ask and answer the question, Has convenience produced trust?

Nigeria Now Moves Enormous Value Digitally

The scale is significant and the infrastructure is still evolving. NIBSS reported in July that Nigeria’s electronic-payment ecosystem had processed approximately ₦1.07 quadrillion in transactions over the preceding year, while transaction volumes on its instant-payment platform had reached 11.2 billion.

The new National Payment Stack had already processed 26.55 million transactions valued at ₦1.4 trillion across 48 participating institutions during its rollout, according to NIBSS.

These figures illustrate extraordinary adoption; but volume is only one measure of digital performance.

As more economic life becomes dependent on digital finance, other measures become equally important i.e. reliability, security, interoperability, resolution, inclusion and most of all, trust.

Trust Is Now Infrastructure

This is why the CBN’s Payments System Vision 2028 is significant. Its six guiding principles are interoperability, security, inclusion, innovation, trust and collaboration. The stated ambition is a secure, inclusive, innovative and interoperable payments ecosystem capable of supporting Nigeria’s economic development.

Notice one word in that architecture—Trust.

Trust used to be built through

marble banking halls, vaults, familiar managers and visible institutional presence but digital banking changes that.

Today, trust may be tested at 2:13 a.m. when a customer presses “send”. Did the transaction work? Was the beneficiary credited? Is the application available? If something goes wrong, can the transaction be traced? Is my identity safe? Will the institution recognise fraud quickly? Can I reach somebody? Will I get my money back?

These apparently small moments are where institutional trust is now created or destroyed.

Digital Convenience Can Also Multiply Friction

Technology has solved enormous problems but technology can also scale problems.

A poor manual process might frustrate hundreds of customers but a badly designed digital process can frustrate hundreds of thousands almost immediately.

This is why digital transformation cannot be measured simply by how many services have moved online. It must also be measured by what happens when the technology does not behave as intended.

The regulatory direction is already moving accordingly.

CBN measures taking effect in 2026 require financial institutions to strengthen identity verification, deploy real-time enterprise fraud monitoring and apply stronger controls around digital transactions and mobile-banking access.

These rules acknowledge a central reality that as financial systems become more digital, oper-

ational resilience and cybersecurity become part of customer experience.

Innovation Without Reliability Is Incomplete

From new Apps to AI to Chatbots to Contactless payments to Virtual cards to APIs to Instant onboarding to Embedded finance to Personalised offers, financial institutions understandably celebrate innovation.

These developments can improve performance enormously but innovation should not become theatre.

A beautifully designed application that frequently fails at important moments is not superior customer experience. A chatbot that prevents customers from reaching a human being when the problem is complex is not necessarily efficiency. Faster transactions without stronger fraud prevention can introduce new risks. More digital channels without integrated complaints resolution can multiply customer frustration.

Performance Leadership™ asks simple questions about innovation i.e. What outcome has improved? Has the transaction become faster, safer, easier, cheaper, more reliable, more inclusive? Has customer effort reduced? Has fraud fallen? Has trust increased?

If we cannot answer those questions, we may be measuring deployment rather than performance.

The Customer Should Not Carry the Complexity

There is an important design principle Nigerian financial institutions should embrace. The customer should not have to understand the internal architecture of

a bank to get a problem solved.

The customer does not care whether responsibility lies with operations, technology, a switching company, another bank, a fintech partner or a payment processor. Those distinctions may matter internally but externally, the customer sees one experience.

This is where organisational silos become dangerous. When each unit performs its own task but nobody owns the customer’s complete outcome, the institution can be operationally busy while the customer remains stranded.

Performance Leadership requires ownership across the entire chain.

Digital Inclusion Must Also Mean Usability

There is another dimension to trust. Nigeria’s digital-finance revolution cannot be judged solely by the experience of sophisticated urban users with expensive smartphones and stable connectivity.

Inclusion requires products that work for different levels of income, literacy, connectivity and technological confidence. It requires protection for vulnerable customers, clear communication, accessible channels, reasonable recovery mechanisms and technology that expands participation rather than creating new forms of exclusion.

Visit www.tppafrica.com for the full article

Dr. Abiola Salami is a World-Class Performance Strategist and the developer of Performance Leadership™. His work focuses on enabling leaders and organisations close the gap between investment, capability, execution and measurable outcomes.



CHIEF S.L. EDU NOW OPEN PhD RESEARCH GRANT CALL 2027

The Nigerian Conservation Foundation (NCF) invites applications from qualified Nigerians for the 2027 Edition of the Chief S.L. Edu Memorial Ph.D. Research Grant, sponsored by Chevron Nigeria Limited (CNL). The grant supports research in natural sciences, social sciences, environmental law, and related fields to promote sustainable natural resource management in Nigeria.

The award aims to recognise and reward scholarly contributions that enhance habitat restoration, resource management, climate resilience, and biodiversity conservation for the benefit of nature and humanity.

This year's theme is: **"Conserving Species, Restoring Landscapes and Supporting Livelihoods".**

NCF is the foremost, membership based environmental Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO) dedicated to the promotion of nature conservation, natural and environmental resource management and sustainable development issues in Nigeria.

Please Note:

Candidates will be selected based on (among others) the quality of their research proposals and the following requirements:

- Candidates must be Nigerian citizens.
- Candidates must have an MSc degree or its equivalent in Natural Sciences, Social Sciences or Law (Environmental Law/Protection), but related to natural and environmental resource management.
- Candidates must have secured admission into a Nigerian university towards a Ph.D. degree in any of the fields stated in (ii) above.
- Candidates' research proposals must be in line with the theme and must be tailored to the achievement of NCF's vision and mission statements.
- Candidates must be members of the Nigerian Conservation Foundation. To become a member, click here.

Grant Sponsored by:



vi. A progress report (on letterheads) from the applicant's Project Supervisor(s) stating how far he/she has gone in his/her research work and his/her role in the initial review, as well as the relevance to the objectives of the grant, is a very essential condition for considering any application. Please note that a reference letter is not equivalent to a progress report from the Project Supervisor(s).

vii. 200-word justification in line with the theme and with relevance to biodiversity conservation, natural and environmental resource management issues.

viii. A 3,000-word project proposal to be submitted should contain the Title, Introduction/Statement of Problem, Objectives, Methodology and Expected Outputs, etc.

ix. Curriculum vitae (not more than 2 pages detailing research and work experience).

x. Scanned copy of admission letter.

xi. Applications are encouraged to be in file format or folders for uniformity and easy retrieval.

Method of Application:

Applicants should complete the grant application form online here:

bit.ly/SLEduGrant2027

To become a member of NCF, visit:
<https://ncfnigeria.org/individual/>

Deadline for Application:

11 December 2026.

No paper application(s) will be considered. Applicants should not submit more than one proposal for consideration.

Please note that all applications received will be acknowledged, while only the successful candidates/applicants will be contacted by the Foundation.

Ensure you read, understand and meet all requirements before applying

VACANCIES

A growing aquaculture and fish processing company in Port Harcourt, Rivers State, seeks qualified, experienced and results-driven individuals to fill the following positions:

1. FACILITY MANAGER – AQUACULTURE & FISH PROCESSING

- Relevant qualification in Fisheries, Aquaculture, Food Science, Business Management or a related discipline.
- Proven experience in facility management, production supervision, inventory control and staff coordination.
- Ability to oversee fish farming, processing, packaging, quality assurance and daily operations.
- Strong leadership, organisational and problem-solving skills, with a focus on efficiency and profitability.

2. SALES & MARKETING EXECUTIVES

- Experience in sales, marketing and business development, preferably in food processing, aquaculture or related industries.
- Ability to identify new markets, develop customer relationships and achieve sales targets.
- Strong communication, negotiation and customer service skills.
- Must be proactive, resourceful and results-oriented.

3. DRIVERS / LOGISTICS ASSISTANTS

- Valid driver's licence and good knowledge of Port Harcourt and surrounding routes.
- Minimum of three years' professional driving experience.
- Ability to ensure safe and timely deliveries, maintain vehicles and keep accurate delivery records.
- Must be responsible, punctual and trustworthy.

GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

Applicants must demonstrate integrity, professionalism, commitment to excellence and the ability to work with minimal supervision.

LOCATION: Peter Odili Road, Trans-Amadi area, Port Harcourt, Rivers State.

METHOD OF APPLICATION

Interested and qualified candidates should send their CVs, indicating the position applied for as the email subject, to: support@fishtank.com.ng

APPLICATION DEADLINE: 31ST OCTOBER 2026

Only shortlisted candidates will be contacted.



REQUEST FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST (REOI)

Subject: Supply of Promotional Items
Date of the REOI: 20/10/2026
Closing Date for receipt of EOIs: 02/11/2026
Reference: EOI/047/2026

Background

MSI Nigeria Reproductive Choices is a social enterprise established in Nigeria in 2009 and is a leading provider of family planning and a range of contraceptive options to women, girls, and families across the 36 states of Nigeria and the FCT. With a mission to ensure children by choice not chance, MSI Nigeria envisions a world where every birth is wanted. Through collaborations with government at the national, state, and community levels, MSI Nigeria offers accessible and comprehensive reproductive healthcare services using operational approaches, such as Marie Stopes Medical Centres, community outreach teams, public sector strengthening support, and a toll-free contact centre.

Description of requirements:

MSI Nigeria invites Expression of Interest (EOIs) from eligible and qualified suppliers for the supply of the items listed below.

S/N	Description of Item	Quantity
1	Branded Silicone Wristband Specification: - Material: High-quality, skin-friendly silicone rubber - Branding: Embossed MSI Logo with Color filled lettering - Colours: Assorted MSI campaign colours as specified in the artwork - Packaging: Individually or bulk packed in clean protective packaging	10,000
2	MSI Logo Stickers Specification: - Finishing: PVC / Platisol Ink - Size: 1.5 inches - Round Blue - 2500, Round White -2500, Square Blue -2500 , Square Blue- 2500 - Full color print	10,000
3	MSI Keyholder Specification: - Product: Custom Die-Cut Hard Enamel Metal Keyholder - Material: Premium Zinc Alloy - Finish: Mirror Polished Gold Plating - Enamel: Premium Hard Enamel (Smooth, Glossy Finish) - Shape: Custom die-cut following the unique outline of the logo, including the arched top. Not a standard rectangle. - Background: White enamel background with polished gold borders around all elements. - Size: Approximately 55 mm (H) x proportional width - Thickness: 2.0 mm - 3.0 mm - Key Ring: 30 mm premium gold split ring with matching gold connector - Back: Smooth polished gold	6,000
4	Strap Bag Specification: - Material: Canvas - Style type: Messenger, Chest Bag, Shoulder Bag - Closed way: Zipper - Color: Color (Navy blue, cyan blue, black, grey) - Size: 17cm(L)*9cm(W)*31cm(H)/6.69(L)*3.54(W)*12.99(H)"	400

Note: A 2% applicable Withholding Tax (WHT) rate will be deducted from the total quoted amount at the point of payment. Vendors are also required to clearly indicate the Value Added Tax (VAT) amount applicable to their quotation on a separate line.

Delivery Location: Plot 59 Anthony Enahoro Street, off Okonjo -Iweala Road, Utako District, FCT, Abuja, Nigeria.

See link to mock-ups: <https://bit.ly/4hJLfj9>

Potential Suppliers

This REOI is addressed to corporate branding vendors. Applicable due diligence will be carried out on successful vendor before award.

Mandatory Documents for Submission: (ALL DOCUMENTS MUST BE VERIFIABLE)

- Quotation
- Company Profile
- Certificate of Incorporation
- Memorandum of Association
- Status Report OR CAC Form CO2 and Co7
- Evidence of tax clearance from 2023 – 2025

All mandatory documents should be submitted to: MSI Nigeria Reproductive Choices Nigeria, Plot 59 Anthony Enahoro Street, off Okonjo-Iweala Road, Utako District, FCT, Abuja, Nigeria.

All documentation should not exceed 25 pages as this will be strictly adhered to during selection process.

For all your family planning services and reproductive health questions, concerns, and referral services, call our toll-free numbers: 22252 or 08000022252 and WhatsApp/SMS 09099022252. Follow us on all social media platforms @msichoicesng.

Signed:

For: MSI Nigeria Reproductive Choices
Country Director

Politics

www.guardian.ng

‘We have positioned Ekiti for industrialisation phase’

Following his second-term inauguration, Ekiti State Governor Biodun Oyeibanji speaks with journalists on his administration’s priorities, including security, infrastructure, industrialisation, job creation and women’s development, outlining plans to attract investment, process agricultural produce locally and strengthen the state’s economy, **AYODELE AFOLABI** was there.

Security remains a major concern across the country. What should the people of Ekiti State expect from your administration in your second term?

SECURITY is not something I like to discuss openly in detail. I would rather assure the people that we will continue to do everything possible to protect them and secure the state.

I do not want to go into operational details, but I can assure you that the safety and security of our people will remain a priority. We understand the importance of creating an environment in which residents can go about their lawful activities without fear. Security is also essential to economic development because businesses and investors need a stable environment to operate.

Residents continue to face challenges with water supply, while recent flooding in Ado-Ekiti has raised concerns about urban planning and drainage. What is your administration doing to address these problems?

Ekiti State is blessed with substantial water resources. We have four major functioning dams, and the World Bank has supported the rehabilitation of these dams and other interventions in the water sector.

We have replaced pumps, procured generators and undertaken several repairs, but the challenges go beyond the dams and pumping equipment. Some of the distribution pipes were installed many years ago. These include asbestos pipes that are no longer suitable, and we have started replacing them.

When we began some of these interventions, water supply improved in certain areas. However, the major challenges remain the cost of electricity and pumping, the condition of the distribution network and the cost of getting water to consumers.

In some instances, we have to pump water continuously for 24 to 26 hours to fill the reservoirs. Running generators on diesel for that length of time is expensive, particularly when some consumers are unwilling to pay for the water they use.

We have also discovered cases of consumers bypassing their meters. Some have

made underground connections to the water supply system without following the proper metering process. These practices undermine the system and make it difficult to recover the cost of providing the service.

The dams are in good condition, and the pumps are functioning. The major challenge is the distribution network. Once water reaches the reservoirs, it must be conveyed through pipes, many of which are old, damaged or no longer fit for purpose.

In this second term, we have a comprehensive programme to address these challenges, with particular emphasis on replacing old pipes. We have also established water consumers’ committees in communities to help ensure that the system works effectively.

On flooding, Ado-Ekiti continues to expand, with development spreading into new areas. Unfortunately, some buildings have been approved on waterways, while others have been erected without proper authorisation.

Apart from the 2022 flooding incident, we had not experienced flooding of comparable magnitude in the first year of this administration or in subsequent years. We have been proactive in dredging waterways and taking other preventive measures. However, indiscriminate refuse disposal and construction on waterways remain serious problems.

The recent flooding was largely man-made because some buildings obstructed natural waterways. I have directed the Ministry of Environment to conduct a comprehensive inventory of houses built on waterways. Structures obstructing waterways will be removed. We cannot allow the situation to continue because we may experience a worse disaster in the future.

I have also informed members of the State House of Assembly that, after the inventory, we will distinguish between buildings that obtained formal approval and those erected illegally. Where applicable, compensation may be considered for affected properties that were formally approved, while illegally constructed buildings must be removed.

Transportation costs remain a burden on households, particularly in Ado-Ekiti and other towns. What specific measures are you introducing to reduce fares, attract private investment and improve inter-state transportation?

The government must be mindful of existing operators. Members of transport unions and other associations have invested in their business-

es, and we should not introduce policies that unnecessarily drive them out of the market.

Our approach is to encourage fair competition and provide alternatives that benefit residents. We are currently testing a pilot mass transit scheme to assess its effectiveness and determine its potential impact before deciding on the scale of any further investment.

If the pilot scheme succeeds, the government will invest in more vehicles that can compete with existing operators. I do not want to drive transport operators out of business. That is important because many commercial drivers acquired their vehicles through instalment payments and other credit arrangements. They have financial obligations to meet.

I understand their challenges, and I will not introduce policies that create hardship for one group simply to win applause from another. We must balance the need for affordable transportation with the need to protect legitimate businesses.

However, we must also recognise that reducing transportation costs significantly requires a gradual transition to Compressed Natural Gas (CNG)-powered and electric vehicles. As

long as commercial vehicles depend entirely on petrol, operating costs will remain a challenge.

For CNG vehicles, we must develop the necessary infrastructure, including conversion centres and adequate gas-refuelling stations across the state. Without these facilities, it will be difficult to achieve a wider transition.

Electric vehicles also offer opportunities. With appropriate charging points, users can charge their vehicles at designated locations and, where facilities permit, at home. This would reduce their dependence on petrol.

We are already discussing the rollout of such an initiative with a company. It will not be limited to cars; we are also considering tricycles and motorcycles as part of our broader transportation strategy.

Our objective is to provide more affordable transport options, encourage private investment and create employment without undermining existing businesses. We will continue to examine how best to improve transportation within Ekiti and connectivity with other states.

Your administration has been emphasising industrialisation in the second term. Which industries do you intend to attract, what products will they manufacture, and how many jobs do you expect them to create?

The best thing the government can do is establish the structures needed to attract investors. Capital will flow to places where it is treated well. That is why we have invested in infrastructure and introduced executive orders and other measures to improve the ease of doing business.

Ekiti has performed well in

recent assessments relating to the ease of doing business.

We have simplified processes for obtaining approvals and conducting business, and we are reforming our land administration system to make transactions more efficient and investor-friendly. We are streamlin-

ing taxation to prevent excessive burdens on businesses and residents.

We are establishing a one-stop shop where prospective investors can obtain information, approvals and other services without unnecessary bureaucratic delays.

Beyond these reforms, we are working to secure the environment and build an ecosystem in which businesses can thrive. Our agricultural interventions have already attracted investment into Ekiti State.

At the Special Agro-Industrial Processing Zone, several players in the agricultural sector have committed billions of naira to investments. A number of organisations and businesses are operating there, although many people may not be aware of the scale of the activity.

Arog Agro-Allied and other agricultural businesses are part of this emerging investment landscape. Agbeyewa Farms, for instance, operates a large cassava farm in Ekiti State. Yet, many people are unaware of the scale of the operation.

To improve access to these investments, we have awarded a contract for the Ayetoro-Iyemero Ekiti road. The project will open up the area and facilitate the movement of people and agricultural produce.

The African Development Bank has also selected Ekiti as a Tier-2 state under the Special Agro-Industrial Processing Zone programme. Studies are being conducted on Itapaji Dam to determine the possibility of providing irrigation facilities.

Our responsibility is to create an enabling environment for investors to establish businesses and create jobs. The government does not necessarily have to establish industries itself; rather, it must create conditions that encourage the private sector to invest. We are reforming our investment promotion agency to make it more effective in attracting businesses.

Our next major focus is to ensure that more of the agricultural products grown in Ekiti are processed locally and converted into finished goods. This will allow us to derive greater economic value from our agricultural production rather than relying solely on the sale of raw produce.

Farmers must also be able to produce on a larger scale and have reliable off-takers who will purchase their produce and supply it to companies for processing. This relationship between farmers, processors and investors is essential to building a productive agricultural economy.

We are therefore concentrating on industrialisation and support for small businesses. The objective is to create an environment in which investment can expand production, generate employment and improve household incomes.

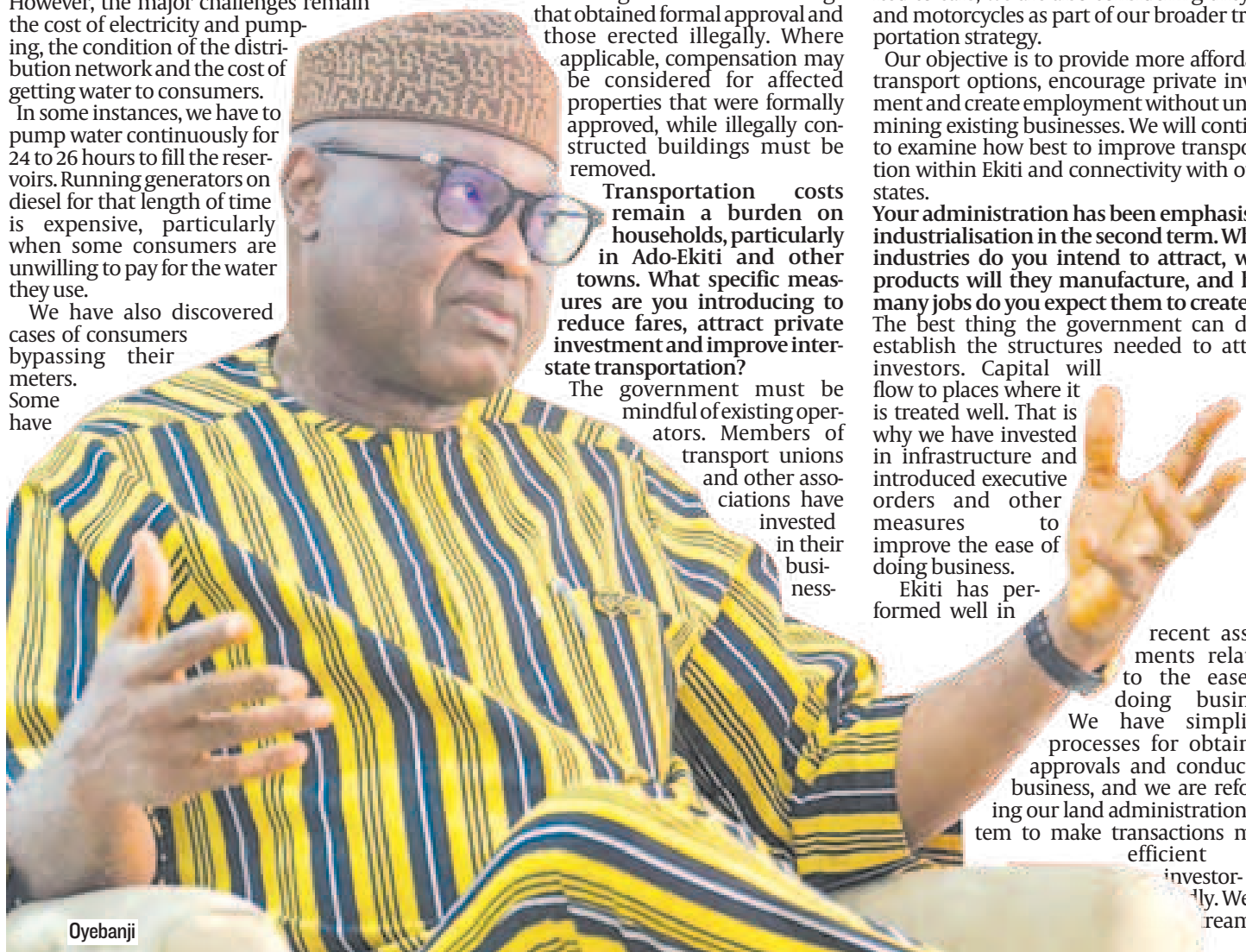
How will you ensure that these investments translate into tangible benefits for ordinary residents and small-scale entrepreneurs?

During the first three years of our administration, we concentrated on laying the foundation for increased productivity. We constructed roads, connected previously unserved communities to electricity, improved township roads and developed farm roads. By the end of this year, we expect to have constructed close to 400 kilometres of roads.

We have also invested in agriculture, while our internally generated revenue has grown significantly over the past three to four years. These interventions were necessary to create the foundation for economic growth.

The next phase is to translate these investments into greater productivity and economic prosperity. We will not abandon infrastructure development, but we will give greater attention to industrialisation and supporting small businesses.

Welders, tailors, hairdressers, barbers and other small-scale entrepreneurs need access to affordable financing to expand their businesses. They are important to the local economy because their businesses provide livelihoods and employment within communities.



Oyeibanji

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‘Minimum wage hike won’t solve economic crisis without lower prices’

The Director-General/Chief Executive of the Nigeria Employers’ Consultative Association (NECA), Adewale-Smatt Oyerinde, discusses the minimum wage debate, inflation, fuel prices, job creation, artificial intelligence, casualisation, and the economic commitments political parties should make ahead of the 2027 elections in this interview with GLORIA NWAFOR.

As NLC and government clash over minimum wage talks, what is NECA’s stance given shrinking worker purchasing power and employer capacity?

THE minimum wage process is governed by tripartite engagement involving government, labour and employers. Neither labour nor government should make decisions they expect to bind the third party without proper consultation.

The law was amended three years ago, and we believe the statutory timetable should be respected. However, the private sector remains open to negotiations when the appropriate committee is constituted. Workers’ needs, economic conditions, productivity and employers’ capacity to pay must guide the process. Increasing wages alone will not solve Nigeria’s economic problems. Even if the minimum wage were raised to N1 million today, inflation could erode its value.

We must collectively push for lower inflation, reduced production costs and fewer regulatory bottlenecks. Employers and workers in many private-sector industries already negotiate wages and conditions through collective bargaining. Announcing a wage figure before negotiations is counterproductive because the eventual amount must reflect workers’ welfare, employers’ capacity and the country’s economic circumstances. I prefer negotiations to begin after the general elections, when the governance environment may be more stable.

As Nigeria enters an electioneering year, what should political parties do to protect business confidence, private investment, and economic stability?

Governance must not grind to a halt as elections approach. Political patronage must not come at the expense of the stability achieved in some areas, particularly the foreign exchange market. Although the naira remains below where we believe it should be, we must examine what has supported its relative stability and what needs to change. Government and the organised private sector must deepen their engagement.

Regulatory agencies should not introduce contradictory policies that undermine broader economic objectives. Government must also address persistent electricity challenges. Power supply improvements have not met business and household expectations. Nigeria must continue reviving its industrial base, including implementing the National Industrial Policy. Political parties and candidates should explain how they intend to sustain these priorities.

Inflation eased in September, but prices remained high. What is needed to restore workers’ purchasing power and reduce employers’ operating costs?

We commend the Central Bank of Nigeria for the relative macroeconomic stability reflected in declining inflation. However, macroeconomic improvements do not automatically translate into better living conditions.

What matters to workers is what their earnings can buy. Many spend their entire disposable income on necessities. They need to see reforms reflected in the prices of goods and services, not merely hear that inflation is declining. Government must address production costs and the inconsistencies between the tax framework and existing laws that empower some agencies to impose additional charges.

More fundamentally, government must reduce the cost of doing business. When businesses become competitive, they can expand production, employ more people and generate higher tax revenues. Workers and households will benefit, while traders, landlords, food vendors and school proprietors will gain from increased economic activity. Reducing the cost of living and the cost of doing business should therefore remain a national priority. Can the Federal Government’s intervention to reduce petrol prices through an ex-gantry price of N1,350 provide meaningful relief to businesses and workers?

Fuel is essential to economic activity, and demand remains relatively inelastic. People must travel to work and conduct business regardless of price increases. Someone living on the Lagos mainland and working on the island cannot shorten the distance because petrol has become more expensive. Any intervention that reduces this burden without returning Nigeria to the problems associated with the former subsidy regime is worth exploring as a short-term measure. However, Nigeria does not control developments in the international oil market, and global supply disruptions can quickly influence domestic prices.

The government should combine immediate relief with measures to expand public transportation, promote compressed natural gas (CNG)-powered vehicles and encourage electric vehicles and renewable energy. This would reduce households’ and businesses’ vulnerability to fuel-price fluctuations.

How can Nigeria make alternative energy more affordable? Would NECA support import waivers for solar-panel and battery manufacturing equipment?

Nigeria’s crude oil production should count for something for its citizens. The government could explore selling petroleum products at cost price, without excessive profits. Selling at cost price is not necessarily the same as subsidising a product. However, lower domestic prices could encourage smuggling into neighbouring countries. The government must weigh the risks of every option while seeking meaningful relief for Nigerians. In the long term, we need investment in CNG-powered transport, electric vehicles, solar power and renewable energy manufacturing.

Import waivers can support domestic production if carefully targeted at machinery, equipment and raw materials needed to establish or expand local industries. Governments must monitor such incentives to prevent abuse.

Governments must also ensure consumers benefit from public support. Some CNG buses, despite receiving government assistance, charge fares comparable to petrol-powered vehicles. Effective monitoring should ensure passengers benefit from such interventions. Supporting local manufacturers of solar pan-

els, batteries, and other renewable energy equipment would create jobs, reduce dependence on imports, and make alternatives more accessible.

What inflation target should Nigeria pursue, and what should political parties promise voters ahead of the 2027 elections?

Nigeria should aim for single-digit inflation. Achieving this requires addressing the fundamentals, particularly production and manufacturing. Countries such as China and the Asian Tigers demonstrate the importance of productive capacity. Nigeria cannot rely too heavily on imports and expect sustainable economic growth without building its domestic industrial base. Political candidates should state their inflation targets and explain the specific measures they intend to adopt. They must also explain how they will tackle insecurity, which undermines production, investment and economic activity. Voters should demand clear commitments, not general promises. How can local production strengthen the naira, and reduce foreign exchange pressures?

Currency value is influenced by demand and supply. Nigeria must reduce demand for dollars by producing locally what it currently imports.

Improving domestic manufacturing will reduce import dependence and the demand for foreign exchange. Strengthening education and healthcare will also reduce the need for Nigerians to travel abroad for services that should be available domestically. We must attract genuine foreign direct investment that establishes factories, builds businesses, and creates jobs, rather than relying excessively on portfolio investments. Our population should be an economic advantage, supported by conditions that enable Nigerians to produce, innovate and compete. Without stronger local production and investment, pressure on the naira will persist.

With the IMF warning AI could deepen unemployment in Nigeria, how is NECA equipping employers and workers to adapt? AI is a development we cannot wish away. Workers must acquire the skills needed to remain relevant. Practical experience and the ability to use AI effectively give someone an advantage in the labour market.

NECA partners with the Industrial Training Fund to provide free AI training for young Nigerians. However, workforce development is a shared responsibility involving individuals, employers and government.

Government should establish a clear legal and governance framework for AI without unnecessarily restricting innovation. Businesses need reasonable freedom to choose technologies that improve efficiency, as long as their use complies with applicable laws and regulations. Beyond individual responsibility, what should government do to establish a national framework for AI adoption while protecting jobs and allowing businesses to innovate?

Government can establish an appropriate legal and governance framework, but it must be carefully designed to accommodate the different circumstances in which AI is used. The framework should provide clear guidance without unnecessarily restricting innovation or creating new economic problems. Protecting jobs matters, but we must also recognise



that businesses need the freedom to decide how best to deploy technology to improve their operations.

The government cannot expect businesses to generate employment and tax revenue while imposing restrictions that undermine their ability to operate efficiently.

Businesses should therefore have reasonable discretion to choose the AI tools that suit their needs, provided their use complies with the applicable legal and regulatory framework. With 70% of Nigerian primary pupils unable to read simple texts, what reforms can build a future-ready workforce?

Inadequate infrastructure and poor learning conditions have made public schools unattractive, while rising private-school fees have made quality education less accessible. Businesses increasingly have to train and retrain workers through graduate trainee programmes, technical centres and vocational initiatives. Ideally, the education system should equip graduates with the skills employers need, rather than leave businesses to bear the full cost of workplace preparation. Nigeria needs a national policy that keeps children in school and develops relevant competencies. We advocate a dual education system combining classroom learning with practical training in structured workplace environments.

With proper regulation and supervision, this approach can produce graduates who are academically sound, technically competent and better prepared for employment. If Nigeria fails to develop the required skills today, who will operate its industries in the coming years? Casualisation remains a concern for organised labour, particularly in banking. What is NECA’s position?

We do not support casualisation, but we support legitimate outsourcing recognised under the International Labour Organisation’s framework. This distinction matters because outsourcing should not become a way to deny workers appropriate employment protections.

The Ministry of Labour can conduct inspections, while regulators such as the Central Bank of Nigeria have responsibilities within their respective sectors. Organisations engaging in casualisation should be identified and held accountable. Workers must report violations, while organised labour should educate members about their rights. The solution requires effective enforcement, accountability and cooperation among government, employers and unions.

“

The government should combine immediate relief with measures to expand public transportation, promote compressed natural gas (CNG)-powered vehicles and encourage electric vehicles and renewable energy.

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ILO warns economic growth not delivering better jobs

By Gloria Nwafor

THE International Labour Organisation (ILO) has warned that economic growth is failing to translate into better jobs and higher incomes for millions of workers, calling for stronger collective bargaining, adequate minimum wages and improved protection of workers' rights.

The ILO Director-General, Gilbert Houngbo, warned the joint World Bank-International Monetary Fund (IMF) Development Committee

that productivity gains were not reaching workers equitably, particularly in low-income countries.

He said labour market stability was masking deeper problems, as economic shocks increasingly affected workers through weaker recruitment, falling real wages, persistent informal employment and deteriorating working conditions.

According to Houngbo, about 2.1 billion workers, representing 58 per cent of the global workforce, remained

in informal employment, while progress in reducing informality has stalled. He said the disconnect between productivity growth and workers' incomes remained a major concern, warning that limited bargaining power, weak collective bargaining coverage and labour market imbalances were constraining wage growth, particularly for women, young people and rural workers.

The ILO chief also identified the concentration of economic activity and capital among a relatively small number of large companies as a factor that could prevent

workers and smaller businesses from sharing fully in productivity gains.

He noted that small and medium-sized enterprises, which account for a substantial share of employment, continued to face barriers to accessing finance, technology and markets, limiting their productivity and capacity to create better jobs.

On artificial intelligence, Houngbo warned that technological change could widen existing inequalities if productivity benefits were concentrated among a few companies and countries while workers and smaller enterprises bore the costs of

adjustment.

He said about one-quarter of global employment was in occupations exposed to generative artificial intelligence, adding that in many developing countries, the technology's pressures could emerge before its productivity benefits were fully realised.

The ILO director-general said low-paying, low-productivity jobs could constrain skills development, domestic demand and the tax base, leaving households more vulnerable to economic shocks.

He stressed that workers were more likely to invest in new skills when these were rewarded with better pay, job

security and career prospects, noting that the quality of first jobs could shape young people's expectations about their future.

To address these challenges, Houngbo called for respect for international labour standards and workers' rights, along with collective bargaining and adequate minimum wages set through evidence-based processes and social dialogue.

He also advocated competition policies that expand workers' employment options, as well as improved access to finance, skills and technology for small and medium-sized enterprises.

Insurer wins BAFI award for third year

By Victoria Nwachukwu

LEADWAY Assurance has been named Insurance Company of the Year at the 2026 BusinessDay Banks and other Financial Institutions (BAFI) Awards for the third consecutive year.

The insurer received the award at the 14th edition of the ceremony in Lagos, following its wins in 2024 and 2025.

The recognition acknowledges the company's performance in the insurance industry, including a 30 per cent increase in insurance revenue to N225.3 billion in 2025, from N173.2 billion in 2024.

Its total assets rose from N1.024 trillion to N1.155 trillion during the period, while claims paid increased by 17 per cent to N137 billion from N117 billion.

Leadway Assurance's Man-

aging Director and Chief Executive Officer, Gboyega Lesi, said the award reflected customers' confidence in the company and its commitment to service delivery, accountability and claims settlement.

He said the insurer would continue to strengthen its offerings to meet customers' evolving needs and provide broader financial protection for individuals, families and businesses.

In August 2026, the company introduced the Leadway Lifetime Plan, a whole-of-life insurance product designed to provide long-term protection for policyholders and their families.

It also launched the Arrival Pack in September to provide insurance cover for short-term visitors to Nigeria and businesses serving them.

'Why exhibitions, fairs must target job generation'

From Collins Olayinka, Abuja

EXHIBITIONS and fairs must expand employment opportunities through stronger collaboration among manufacturers, government institutions, and investors, the Director-General of the National Automotive Design and Development Council (NADDCC), Oluwemimo Osanipin, has said.

Osanipin explained that the NADDCC and BKG Exhibition Limited Motor Fair, scheduled

to be held in Abuja, would provide a platform for manufacturers, assemblers, component producers, and technology companies to showcase their products, establish business partnerships, and explore opportunities across the automotive value chain.

He said Nigeria's automotive development must extend beyond vehicle assembly to include local production of components, spare parts and

other essential inputs, alongside investment in research, technical skills and emerging mobility technologies.

He said the country has the human capital and market potential to build a competitive automotive industry that supports industrialisation, conserves foreign exchange, and generates employment.

The NADDCC chief identified electric mobility, compressed natural gas (CNG), battery technology, digital manufacturing and intelligent vehicle systems as areas offering opportunities for Nigerian businesses and technical professionals.

He added that the council would continue to support

technical training and capacity development to equip young Nigerians with the skills required for automotive maintenance, CNG conversion and emerging mobility technologies.

Osanipin urged industry participants to use the fair to establish technical partnerships, facilitate knowledge transfer and develop local solutions suited to Nigeria's transportation needs.

Also speaking, BKG Exhibitions Limited representative William Agwu called on automobile manufacturers, assemblers, component producers, financial institutions, and state governments to participate actively in the exhibition.

'Labour outsourcing must not become a tool for casualisation'

By Gloria Nwafor

THE immediate past president of the Chartered Institute of Personnel Management of Nigeria (CIPM), Olusegun Mojeed, has warned employers against using labour outsourcing to replace permanent employees with casual workers, insisting that workforce flexibility must not become a means of promoting unfair labour practices.

Mojeed said some companies laid off full-time employees only to re-engage them as casual workers through labour contractors, often without the benefits attached to permanent employment.

He stated this while delivering a presentation on strengthening professional standards and managing labour outsourcing and workforce flexibility at the

12th yearly national workshop of the Employment Agencies of Nigeria (EAPEN) in Lagos.

Mojeed said that although outsourcing was a global trend, Nigeria often misunderstood and misused it, particularly when employers outsourced permanent positions and kept workers at the same desks under different employment arrangements.

He identified outsourcing core, permanent roles; denying employment benefits; and repeatedly moving casual workers between clients as examples of abusive workforce flexibility.

According to him, legitimate flexibility should accommodate seasonal workload increases, project-based employment, non-core support functions, and specialised skills, rather than cover casualisation.

Dons warn students against career choices under pressure

From Rotimi Agboluaje, Ibadan

STUDENTS have been urged to resist parental pressure, peer influence and societal expectations when choosing careers, with educationists stressing the need for self-discovery and professional counselling to help young people make informed decisions about their futures.

The Government College Ibadan Old Boys' Association

(GCIOPA) and university dons advised the association's 2026 Career Day Expo and University Admission Seminar held at Government College Ibadan, Oyo State.

They warned that choosing careers based on popular trends, financial considerations, or other people's expectations could lead students into paths that do not align with their abilities and interests.

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French PM directs cities to impose curfews after violent weekend protests

PRIME Minister of France, Sébastien Lecornu, has given local mayors the power to introduce partial curfews to protect people and shops after a weekend of riots and looting across the country.

The country's second-largest city, Marseille, has already banned public gatherings between hours of 12:00 and 20:00. Interior Minister, Laurent Nuñez, whose resignation offer was rejected by President Emmanuel Macron, earlier admitted that police had lost control in some cities as about 1,000 police officers were injured and more than 2,500 people arrested, officials said.

The disorder began last month with students demanding better school conditions, but protests later escalated following demands for broader range of concerns.

Protesters were also hurt during clashes with police, with one demonstrator's hand blown off by a police crowd-control grenade, according to the AFP news agency.

Following a crisis meeting yesterday, the Prime Minister said

local Mayors were given the power to implement curfews where necessary, without specifying which cities would be impacted.

Lecornu, who did not rule out imposing a state of emergency in the country, said the government will also set aside money to help affected areas recover from the damage, and the funding would be recovered from those behind the violence.

"A law would be put in place to ensure that those who damaged properties pay", the prime minister said as he announced a partial unemployment fund for those who could not work because of the riots and looting.

Meanwhile, Nuñez said some 200 investigators were analysing Closed-Circuit Television(CCTV) footage to identify possible ringleaders of the violent protests.

"Nuñez attempted to resign on Sunday, but Macron refused given the need for continued command of law enforcement", the Élysée Palace said.

Over 2,000 shops and other businesses have been directly

impacted by the weekend's violence, the head of France's Chambers of Commerce and Industry (CCI) said.

Some 550,000 demonstrators took to the streets over the weekend against rising fuel prices, high cost of living and deteriorating public services, including schools.

Groups of rioters, some dressed in black and wearing masks and balaclavas, were seen setting fire on cars and buildings and looting businesses in Paris, Marseille and other cities and smaller towns.

Tear gas and stun grenades were fired at hundreds of people in Paris, according to the AFP, and bottles and rocks were hurled at police.

In the central city of Limoges, the ornate 19th Century city hall was gutted by a fire started by rioters on Saturday, its clock tower and roof collapsing as the flames took hold.

"It is awful and unbelievable. We are very sad and I think it will be a long time to put it back as it was before", said a local resident.

Kenya confirms eighth Ebola case as regional outbreak spreads

KENYA has confirmed its eighth Ebola case as the outbreak, which originated from the Democratic Republic of Congo continues to spread across the Central African region.

Health Director General, Patrick Amoth, says the latest patient is a 49-year-old man, who developed fever, headaches and muscle pain. He worked as a hospital patient attendant, cleaning utensils and linens, and is believed to have been exposed to Kenya's first Ebola patient, who died in Nairobi on October 5.

The man developed symptoms at the weekend, was placed in quarantine and

tested positive.

Kenya has stepped up surveillance as health authorities work to contain further transmission.

Meanwhile, in the DRC, the outbreak has spread to an eighth province, North Ubangi, where two cases, including one death, have been confirmed.

The outbreak caused by the Bundibugyo strain of Ebola, has killed thousands in Congo and spread beyond its borders, raising concerns about further infections across the region.

Health authorities are continuing contact tracing and other containment measures as they seek to limit the spread of the deadly virus.

Exiled critic of Rwandan President found beheaded

FORMER Rwandan Army Sergeant Major Robert Kabera, who became an outspoken critic of President Paul Kagame, has been found beheaded in the neighbouring Uganda. Kabera, 50, fled Rwanda after being accused of sexual assault, which he denied. He sought asylum in the neighbouring Uganda, citing political persecution.

Ugandan police spokesperson, Kituuma Rusoke, yesterday said that while Kabera's body was discovered by residents on the outskirts of Kampala over the weekend, his head is yet to be recovered.

The Rwandan government has not publicly commented on the killing, but several critics of Kagame have been killed, both in Rwanda and abroad.

His widow, Jeanne d'Arc Rwigema Uwizeye, told BBC Great Lakes in a written message that she now feared for her family's safety. "It is scary. I feel crazy, the children and I don't have security", she said.

According to his family, Kabera had travelled to inspect a construction site about 45 km (30 miles) outside Kampala before his

death.

Kabera built a public profile as a musician and YouTuber, attracting over 144,000 subscribers to his channel, which featured over 800 videos, many criticising Kagame and his administration.

Reacting to news of his murder, exiled opposition group Rwanda National Congress (RNC), called for a thorough investigation and for those responsible to be brought to justice.

In a statement on X (formerly Twitter), RNC said: "Today, his family is grieving, his voice is gone and Rwandans in exile are confronting a terrifying question, 'where can we be safe?'"

His death adds to concerns about the safety of Rwandan dissidents living in exile.

In 2014, a former Rwandan intelligence chief, Patrick Karegeya, who helped set up the RNC, was found dead in his hotel room in Johannesburg, South Africa.

Karegeya fell out with President Paul Kagame and was arrested twice, serving an 18-month prison sentence for insubordination and desertion before fleeing to South Africa in 2007, where he became a vocal critic of the government.



Houthi supporters rally in Sanaa, Yemen, while carrying Iranian flags and posters featuring former Iranian Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei.

Iran support for Houthis probed as Yemen war re-erupts, Saudi cities hit

NEW claims about Iranian support for Yemen's Houthis have emerged in media reports and official comments, highlighting the unclear nature of the alliance.

Media outlets have reported that Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) aided the Houthis as they seized swaths of western Yemen and launched their most potent and sophisticated attacks yet on Saudi Arabia, which supports the internationally recognised Yemeni government fighting the Houthis.

Iranian support for the Houthis as reported in the media includes training,

intelligence, tactical guidance and assistance in targeting for drone and missile attacks.

If true, this will undoubtedly escalate tensions between Iran and Saudi Arabia, given that the kingdom has been targeted by dozens of Houthi drones and missiles in recent weeks, including an attack on King Khalid International Airport in Riyadh killing 13 people.

Saudi energy facilities and oil tankers have also been targeted by the group.

Iranian backing, according to the reports, contributed to a September offensive by the Houthis, an armed group also

known as Ansar Allah (Arabic for Supporters of God).

Those battles saw the Houthis win control of Yemen's Red Sea coastline and the strategically important Bab al-Mandeb strait.

The Wall Street Journal reported that Iranian Mahan Air flights ferried IRGC paramilitary officers, drone parts, missile guidance systems and impact detonators to the Houthis in Yemen. IRGC officers were also reportedly on the front lines directing Houthi attacks.

The spokesperson for the Saudi-led coalition supporting Yemen's government, Major-General Turki Al-Maliki,

confirmed the presence of an external state actor behind the Houthis' evolving arsenal but did not mention the state in question.

Al-Maliki noted that the Houthis, who have been at war with the government since 2014, have acquired advanced technologies with regional assistance.

The support, Al-Maliki said, has made Houthis the first nonstate armed group to deploy ballistic missiles, offensive and suicide drones as well as explosive-laden, high-speed boats, although other Iranian allies, such as Hezbollah and Iranian militias, also possess such weaponry.

Personal attacks fire up debate before Brazil's run-off vote

BRASIL'S left-wing President, Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, and his right-wing rival, Senator Flávio Bolsonaro, have clashed in a debate held one week before the run-off presidential election.

Polls suggest the two candidates are neck and neck, and the televised debate was hailed as a chance for both to sway undecided voters.

The showdown was however marked by personal attacks, and analysts have warned that its aggressive tone may increase the abstention rate further.

In the first round of voting held on October 4, Bolsonaro defied opinion polls by securing a narrow lead over Lula.

The debate was the first of two before the vote. The second is planned for Friday, just two days before polls open. Senator Bolsonaro is standing for the Liberal Party after his father, Jair Bolsonaro who governed from 2018 to 2022 was sentenced to over 20 years in prison for plotting to overthrow Lula after the latter beat him in the 2022 election.

The younger Bolsonaro won 47 per cent of the vote in the first round, compared to

Lula's 45.2 per cent, with both falling short of the 50 per cent of the valid votes needed to stave off a decisive second round.

Since the return to democracy in 1988, there has been no instance where the candidate who lost in the first round went on to win in the second, but Lula has told his supporters that he will win in extra time.

Yuri Sanches from pollsters AtlasIntel said it was a debate in which no policies were discussed and there were no rational arguments.

The independent voter, who

is sometimes against Bolsonaro and sometimes against the Workers' Party of Lula, came out of it with a very negative impression.

Lucas Aragão from political analysis firm, Arko Advice, said Bolsonaro had appeared calmer during the debate and seemed to have managed to get under Lula's skin.

Rafael Cortez from consulting firm, da Tendências Consultoria, however, argued that Lula had managed to score a goal when he said he would open up his financial and phone records and those of his family to judicial scrutiny.



‘Electoral justice must respect voter intent rather than technicalities’

Olu Ojedokun is a Professor of Law at Lead City University, Ibadan and the Vice-Chancellor of the Protestant University of Rwanda (PUR). In this interview with ROTIMI

AGBOLUAJE, the Fellow of the Nigerian Institute of Management (Chartered) examines the Electoral Act 2026 and its implications for the 2027 general elections. He warned that the provision allowing a reversion to manual result sheets when electronic transmission fails could create room for result manipulation, while calling for reforms to strengthen INEC's independence, improve enforcement of electoral laws, restore voter confidence and enhance the credibility of Nigeria's electoral process.

As a Nigerian law professor based in Rwanda, how would you assess the Electoral Act 2026 and its capacity to deliver credible elections in Nigeria?

THE Electoral Act 2026 represents a transformative moment in the evolving framework of Nigerian electoral law. It introduces appreciable reforms aimed at enhancing transparency, strengthening internal party democracy and improving the use of technology in the electoral process. However, there are critical legal and practical questions regarding its consistency with constitutional provisions, enforceability and the potential for unintended consequences. The introduction of new technological requirements, for instance, is commendable, but technology by itself cannot guarantee credible elections. Its effectiveness depends on the capacity of the institutions responsible for implementing the law.

Therefore, the capacity of these innovations to ensure credible elections in Nigeria will depend on how effectively they are implemented, the institutional capacity available to enforce them and how the courts interpret the provisions of the law.

The law must be clear enough to minimise uncertainty and discretion, particularly in areas that can directly affect the credibility of election results. Where there are ambiguities, those ambiguities could become the subject of litigation after the

elections.

In the previous elections, vote-buying was commonplace. Does the Electoral Act 2026 adequately address vote-buying, electoral violence, voter intimidation and other forms of malpractice?

The Act certainly seeks to address these problems, but implementation presents several challenges. There are a few requirements relating to voter identification, including the use of passports, National Identification Numbers, birth certificates and other forms of identification, as well as requirements relating to the downloading of voter cards from the website. There is also the requirement for electronic transmission of results to IReV, with a provision for reverting to the EC8A result sheet where electronic transmission fails. This is where one of the major problems lies. Many people are concerned that the electronic system could easily be made to fail, thereby removing some of the safeguards intended to prevent manipulation. If the electronic transmission process is allowed to fail without an independent mechanism for establishing whether the failure was genuine, the system could create opportunities for manipulation.

There are therefore concerns about the hierarchy and legal status of electronically transmitted results. These are issues that should be addressed before the 2027 elections. Another concern is the reduction in the timeline for releasing funds to INEC from 12 months to six months. This could affect the commission's financial independence, its ability to plan adequately and its preparedness for elections.

What are the implications of not making real-time electronic transmission of polling-unit results mandatory for the 2027 elections?

There are concerns about the hierarchy and legality of electronically transmitted results if real-time transmission is not made mandatory. The old practice of manipulating election results between the polling unit and the final collation stage could return. The whole essence

of introducing electronic transmission is to reduce the opportunities for human interference and manipulation between the polling unit and the final collation of results. If the law permits a reversion to manual result sheets whenever electronic transmission is said to have failed, there must be a clearly defined procedure for determining what constitutes failure. Otherwise, the provision could become a loophole. The concern is not simply whether technology works or does not work. The big

g e r

question is who determines that the technology has failed, what evidence is required to establish that failure and what happens to the affected results afterwards. These issues need to be clearly addressed to protect the credibility of the electoral process.

Does the new Act sufficiently strengthen INEC's independence, or does it give the Commission excessive discretion in critical areas such as result transmission?

I rather think that the reduction in the time required to release funding for INEC's operations from 12 months to six months could hamper the commission. Yes, discretion is given to INEC, but this is partly because the Act seeks to consider the unreliability of our network infrastructure. However, this discretion could be subject to abuse since INEC alone determines whether the network is stable or not. There should be an independent mechanism for determining whether a network failure has genuinely occurred. If INEC is both the institution conducting the election and the institution determining whether the technology used to transmit the results has failed, there could be questions about accountability. The law should therefore provide sufficient safeguards to ensure that the discretion given to INEC does not undermine the integrity of the process.

What weaknesses in the new Act could become major sources of electoral litigation after the 2027 elections?

Many people are concerned that the electronic system could easily be made to fail, thereby removing some of the safeguards intended to prevent manipulation. If the electronic transmission process is allowed to fail without an independent mechanism for establishing whether the failure was genuine, the system could create opportunities for manipulation

There are several weaknesses that Nigeria needs to address urgently if we are to create a free and fair voting system. One is the perceived lack of independence of the electoral commission. The difficulties surrounding the candidate selection process have also not been fully addressed. Voter apathy is another concern. Although voter apathy is not necessarily justiciable, it could affect the credibility and legitimacy of elections if sufficient safeguards are not put in place to curb violence and other factors that discourage citizens from participating. There is also a weakness in the punishment for vote-buying and the tendency for law enforcement agencies to turn away from prosecuting it. If people engage in vote-buying and are not adequately prosecuted and punished, the law loses its deterrent effect. These issues could generate litigation after the 2027 elections, particularly where political parties and candidates believe that the electoral process has not been properly administered.

From your experience in Rwanda, are there aspects of its electoral and legal system that Nigeria could adapt to improve election administration and credibility?

I think there is little basis for direct comparison because Rwanda is a much smaller country, with a population of about 13.4 million, and without the level of divisions and complexities that Nigeria has. However, what helps Rwanda is the intentionality of government in ensuring transparency and citizen participation through initiatives such as Umuganda. Umuganda is a monthly national community service day

where citizens gather to build infrastructure and clean neighbourhoods. It encourages citizens to participate directly in the development of their communities. There is also Umushyikirano, the yearly National Dialogue Council, which acts as a form of participatory democracy where citizens and leaders discuss national issues. I have taken part in this initiative, representing my university, the Protestant University of Rwanda.

Another initiative is Ubudehe, a community-driven system used to classify households according to vulnerability levels to facilitate the fair distribution of social benefits. There are also power-sharing rules. The national Constitution provides that the political party with a majority in the Chamber of Deputies cannot hold more than 50 per cent of cabinet seats. All these initiatives contribute to credibility, participation and sustainability within the system. While Nigeria cannot simply copy Rwanda because of the differences in our political, demographic and constitutional circumstances, there are lessons to be learned from the intentionality with which institutions and citizens are encouraged to participate in governance. Does the 2026 Act strike the right balance between the use of technology and the need to protect electoral integrity?

I think the Act assumes the worst of Nigerians by assuming that we cannot have a stable and reliable internet network. The balance and onus ought to have been placed on INEC to prove that it cannot transmit electronically when this occurs. If INEC is unable to transmit electronically, such results should be nullified. The law should not create a situation where failure of an electronic system automatically provides an avenue for reverting to a manual process without clear and independently verifiable conditions. If technology is introduced to strengthen electoral transparency, the law must also ensure that technological failure does not become a convenient route back to the weaknesses that the technology was designed to address.

Is Nigeria's problem primarily inadequate electoral laws or poor enforcement of existing laws?

I think it is the enforcement of the laws and, sometimes, inconsistency in their interpretation by the courts. Elections are sui generis, meaning they are of their own kind. There is considerable leeway for the courts not to follow particular precedents, and sometimes this minimises our adherence to the electoral laws. The existence of good laws is not enough. Institutions must be willing and able to enforce those laws consistently. Where electoral offences are committed but the offenders are not prosecuted, or where provisions of the law are interpreted inconsistently, citizens lose confidence in the electoral process. Therefore, the challenge is not necessarily that Nigeria does not have laws. We must also ensure that those laws are effectively enforced and consistently interpreted.

If you could recommend key amendments to the Electoral Act 2026 before the 2027 elections, what would they be and why?

The credibility of any electoral process is tied to the independence and capacity of the electoral management body. The first amendment I would recommend concerns the appointment of the head of the electoral commission. The President should not be the one to appoint the head of the commission. Several suggestions have been offered, including the recommendation of the Uwais Committee that the appointment should be made by the National Judicial Council or a multi-stakeholder appointment committee. What matters is that the process should be competitive and open. The credibility of the electoral management body begins with the process through which its leadership is appointed.

Read the remaining part of this article on
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Ojedokun

Ex-envoy cautions against abuse of international laws, treaties

By Silver Nwokoro

A RETIRED Nigerian ambassador, Ayoola Olukanni, has warned against the growing disregard for international treaties and institutions by some powerful states. He expressed worries that such actions undermine the efficacy of international law and threaten the global rules-based order.

Olukanni gave the warning in Lagos at the 47th Conference of the Nigerian Society of International Law (NSIL), with a theme, 'From Obligation to Implementation: Re-assessing the Efficacy of International Law in Contemporary International Relations.'

The former ambassador said the effectiveness of international law is increasingly being tested by refusal of states to honour earlier agreed obligations, stressing that while international legal instruments abound, enforce-

ment has remained a serious challenge.

Since the Second World War, there have been existence of laws regulating conduct of wars, trade and commerce, illicit drug trafficking and nuclear proliferation. Others are the law of the sea, outer space, environment, women and development, global commons and emerging issues such as Artificial Intelligence. Olukanni, however, expressed worries that the existence of treaties and declarations has not automatically guaranteed compliance.

He cited several conflicts and international disputes to illustrate the limitations of the rules-based order.

According to him, the Genocide Convention did not prevent the Rwandan Genocide or the ongoing conflict in Gaza, while the United Nations (UN) Charter did not prevent the "invasion of

Venezuela and the seizure and incorporation of territories in Ukraine."

Olukanni also pointed to the attacks and disregard for international institutions, including the International Court of Justice (ICJ) and the International Criminal Court (ICC), noting that the situation has contributed to the perception that international law was weak and often more respected in its breach.

Despite the challenges, Olukanni argued that international law remains relevant and could serve as a moral guide for international action.

"If the UN Security Council speaks with one voice, the UN can act swiftly and effectively in dealing with serious international situations, he said.

He identified international cooperation during the COVID-19 pandemic as one example of the continuing relevance of international rules

and institutions, noting the role of the World Health Organisation (WHO) and the adoption of measures that facilitated resumption of international travel.

Olukanni also cited the development of international frameworks on AI as evidence of adaptation to emerging global challenges.

He further pointed to the success of the international agreement on the ozone layer as an indication that international agreements could be effective.

He also highlighted the increasing role of non-governmental organisations and multinational corporations in the development and implementation of international law, citing environmental activism as an example.

On Nigeria, Olukanni said the country had played an important role in the development and promotion of a rules-based international legal

order, particularly through its participation in U.N peacekeeping operations and the struggle against apartheid, describing Nigeria as a major troop-contributing country to UN peacekeeping operations and the fight against apartheid.

He, however, insists that Nigeria strengthens its knowledge and application of international law, particularly with regard to increasing international trade and foreign investment.

He recommended that Public International Law, International Economic Law and the work of the UN Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL), including electronic commerce and arbitration rules, be made compulsory in the country's legal education due to increasing involvement of subnational governments with foreign investors.

He said stronger knowledge of international law will prevent seizure of assets due to failures to honour agreements.

In her welcome address, the President, NSIL, Professor Yinka Omorogbe (SAN), admitted that the existence of treaties and conventions does not necessarily translate into compliance, accountability or justice.

She said the international legal order was tested by armed conflicts, challenges to state sovereignty, human rights violations, climate change, technological developments and growing geopolitical tensions.

"We have developed an impressive body of international treaties, conventions, principles and institutions. Yet, reality has shown that the existence of legal obligations does not necessarily translate into compliance, accountability or justice," she said.

New ECOWAS Court President, Brumskine, promises reforms

From Bridget Chiedu Onochie, Abuja

THE newly elected President of the Community Court of Justice, Economic Community of West African States, also known as the ECOWAS Court, Justice Charlyne M. Brumskine of Liberia, has assured of her administration's commitment to restore citizens' confidence in the regional court.

Aware of the challenges confronting the court, one of which is poor enforcement of its decisions, especially by the governments of the respective West African States, Brumskine vowed to protect human rights by employing every legal instrument to ensure implementation of the court's judgment.

The emergence of Brumskine and her Vice, Justice Désire Henri Aihou of the Republic of Benin, followed the recent swearing-in ceremony presided over by the Chairman, ECOWAS Authority of Heads of State and Government,

Bassirou Diomaye Faye, who is also the Senegalese President.

Some of the reforms expected of the new President include the implementation of Strategic Plan 2026-2030, also known as Justice 2030.

The reform will provide a framework for strengthening access to justice, improving judicial efficiency, enhancing institutional effectiveness, increasing the court's visibility and consolidating public confidence in the regional justice system.

She assured that during her tenure, the court will expand access to justice for community citizens, strengthen regional legal harmonisation to resolve disputes more efficiently, promote transparency and stakeholder engagement, as well as foster digital transformation in judicial processes to address emerging challenges in justice delivery.

"The plan represents a significant step towards institutional transformation and aims to consolidate past achievements



Brumskine

while addressing the evolving needs of the ECOWAS region", she said.

Adding: "I accept this responsibility, fully conscious of the obligations it entails, and the expectations that accompany leading a regional judicial institution, entrusted with interpreting and applying community law and protecting human rights."

The new leadership was elected last week by the new college of judges, and their emergence marked the beginning of a new leadership chapter for the regional judicial institution following the conclusion of the tenure of the outgoing college of judges.

The new leadership will steer the Court's judicial and institutional affairs for the next

two years of their four-year non-renewable mandate that ends in 2030.

The other three members of the Court include Justice Awa Bah of The Gambia, Justice Yaouza Ouro-Sama of Togo and Justice Henrietta Uzoamaka Didigu of Nigeria.

As the President, Justice Brumskine will provide overall judicial leadership and represent the Court in its institutional and external engagements, while the Vice President, Justice Aihou, will support the President in the discharge of the responsibilities of the office and perform other functions in accordance with the Court's governing framework.

In her inaugural address, Brumskine stated that her election was an opportunity to serve the Court, the ECOWAS Community and ultimately, the people of West Africa with commitment and a deep sense of responsibility.

"With profound humility and a deep sense of duty, I address

you as the newly elected president of this distinguished institution. I am sincerely grateful to my esteemed colleagues for the confidence they have each reposed in me.

"Today marks the beginning of a new chapter in the institutional life of the court. The formal handover of the affairs of the court from the outgoing to the incoming college represents an important moment of continuity, renewal and collective responsibility", she said.

Also, the outgoing President of the Court, Justice Ricardo Cláudio Monteiro Gonçalves of Cape Verde, said the ceremony expressed the fundamental principle of institutional continuity beyond the conventional call to service.

The new leadership will be instrumental in advancing the Court's institutional priorities and ensuring that the administration of justice remains responsive to the needs and expectations of ECOWAS citizens.

CDHR warns against selective rights advocacy, urges impartial justice delivery

By Yetunde Ayobami Ojo

HUMAN rights advocates have warned against selective defence of fundamental rights driven by political loyalties, emotions and personal interests, stressing that it could undermine justice and accountability in Nigeria.

They called for impartial advocacy, stronger institutions and widespread human rights education at a public lecture organised by the Committee for the Defence of Human Rights (CDHR) in Lagos, with the theme, 'Understanding Human Rights Beyond Emotions and Personal Interests.'

In his presentation titled, 'Understanding Human Rights Beyond Emotion and Formalism: Towards a Principled, Institutional and Cultural Approach', University of Lagos Professor Tunde Babawale said activists must defend everyone's

rights irrespective of political, ethnic or religious affiliations.

He said: "We have substituted principles for personality, and we have substituted institutions for the individual. We defend rights, as Professor Chidi Odinkalu puts it, only when our interests are affected."

Babawale advised that public anger is being used to determine guilt or justify violations of fundamental rights, stressing that accused persons are equally entitled to protection under the law.

He identified corruption as a major obstacle to human rights protection, arguing that diversion of public resources undermines access to justice, education, healthcare and other essential services.

"Corruption is the single greatest violator of human rights in Nigeria", he said, urging advocates to pay greater

attention to economic, social and cultural rights.

Babawale called for human rights education in primary schools and community spaces, including motor parks, while urging activists to prioritise evidence-based campaigns and institutional accountability over publicity.

"Defend the right of the policeman as you would defend the right of the protester. Defend the rights of herdsmen as you would defend the right of the farmer", he said.

CDHR President, Debo Adeniran, similarly criticised advocates who defended rights according to personal sympathies rather than established principles.

"In many instances, people tend to portray human rights according to what is liked rather than what is right. They vigorously defend what favours

them while condemning the same principles when those principles do not serve their interests."

Adeniran stressed that defending an individual's fundamental rights does not amount to endorsing all the person's opinions, decisions or conduct.

He cited the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, international covenants on civil and political rights and economic, social and cultural rights, African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights and the Nigerian Constitution as frameworks for protecting fundamental rights.

He urged civil society organisations, educators, community leaders and the media to intensify public enlightenment and promote principled advocacy.

The Chairman, Governing Board of National Universities

Commission and former Vice-Chancellor of the University of Lagos, Prof. Oluwatoyin Ogundipe, called for stronger institutional commitment to protecting fundamental rights and promoting equality.

In his keynote address titled, 'Human Rights Advocacy in Nigeria: Challenges and Imperatives for Justice and Equality', Ogundipe said fundamental rights belong to everyone irrespective of status or affiliation and urged the judiciary to uphold impartiality and the rule of law.

He also called on government agencies to demonstrate greater transparency and accountability. He also advocated inclusion of human rights education in school curricula and community programmes.

A lawyer and Executive Director, C21st, Lagos, Titilope Akosa, urged activists to adapt their

strategies to democratic governance, noting that approaches adopted during military rule needed to evolve.

Akosa encouraged rights advocates to participate in government and policymaking rather than rely solely on confrontation.

"A lot of us never thought that fighting for rights could also mean being part of the government. We lost that ground."

She also called for community-based human rights education to help citizens understand and protect their rights, while stressing the importance of credible information and evidence-based advocacy.

The speakers called for collaboration among government institutions, judiciary, civil society and the media to strengthen accountability and ensure equal protection of fundamental rights.

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Stakeholders seek NBC's intervention on DSO, industry challenges

By Sunday Aikulola

AS part of efforts aimed at effective implementation of the Digital Switch Over (DSO) policy, members of the Broadcasting Organisations of Nigeria (BON) have called on the management of the National Broadcasting Commission (NBC) to urgently convene stakeholders meeting with a view to moving the digital migration process forward.

They stated this at the 82nd General Assembly of the Broadcasting Organisations of Nigeria (BON) held in Calabar, Cross River State.

Recall early this year, the country officially transitioned from analogue to digital broadcasting with the launch of the DSO.

But in a communique released shortly after the event, the members noted, "the General Assembly reflected on the recent DSO exer-

cise by the NBC through which some television stations were migrated to Direct-To-Home (DTH) transmission via NigComSat."

The communique signed by BON Executive Secretary Yemisi Bamgbose added, "the Assembly calls on the NBC to convene a stakeholders' meeting in the broadcast sector as agreed before the last switchover exercise. Regular engagements will enable stakeholders to review developments in the broadcast industry with a view to moving the digital migration process forward."

In addition, the members also critically dissected the impact of the current nation's economy on the broadcast industry and the public.

They noted with concern that many radio and television stations have shut down operations, while many others have drastically

reduced transmission hours owing to excruciating operational challenges occasioned by the high cost of diesel and the unbearable tariffs of public power supply, coupled with its epileptic nature.

The Assembly further appealed to the federal and sub-national governments to come up with concrete plans that will provide noticeable relief capable of rescuing the broadcast sector from total collapse.

In addition, participants expressed serious concern at multiple taxes and levies being imposed on broadcast stations by Local Government Authorities, despite the payment of statutory licence fees to NBC.

The Assembly, therefore, urged the National Revenue Service (NRS) to holistically review the new tax regime by harmonising taxation as contained in the recently enacted Tax Act.

Noting the critical role private broadcast media play in every state as regards enhancing information flow between government and the governed, BON also urged the Federal and state governments to subsidise energy costs of private broadcast stations within their domains through support for solar energy and other alternative power solutions.

This, they said, has become necessary to ensure regular and unhindered information dissemination and public enlightenment to the nooks and crannies of the country.

Concerning coverage of the forthcoming general elections, the Assembly appealed to all Chief Executive Officers of broadcast stations to ensure credibility and accuracy in dissemination of information on the ongoing campaigns and activities relating to the forthcoming general elections.

Women journalists from Nigeria, Ghana undergo self-defence skills, safety, mental health training

By Adaku Onyenuchey

THE Public Media Alliance (PMA), with support from the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) International Programme for the Development of Communication (IPDC), has trained 21 women journalists and media managers from Ghana and Nigeria on physical and digital safety, self defence, and mental health management to enhance their capacity to manage risks associated in their professional duties.

The training, organised under the project, "COVID's Legacy: The Role of African Media in Keeping Women Journalists Safe," equipped participants, including *The Guardian* Adaku Onyenuchey, with practical safety skills to manage risks, protect their mental wellbeing and work safely.

The project activities focused on strengthening physical and online safety, wellbeing and organisational resilience across the media sector, while protecting women journalists and fostering press freedom and democracy.

The programme featured a two-day virtual mental health training, held on October 7 to 8, 2026, which focused on mental health and wellbeing, coping strategies, stress management and referral pathways for the 21 participants, drawn from different media organisations in Nigeria and Ghana.

It also included a two-day, in-person workshop covering physical safety, digital security, risk assessment, trauma-informed practices and support strategies, held on October 14 and 15, at the Ghana Broadcasting Corporation (GBC), Accra.

IPC, CEMESO deepen electoral trust ahead general elections

By Sunday Aikulola

WITH the 2027 general elections fast approaching, members of the International Press Centre (IPC) and the Center for Media and Society (CEMESO) have stressed need to strengthen electoral confidence.

Members of the organisation stated this at the opening of a two-day capacity-building engagement for Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC)'s Voter Education and Publicity (VEP) leadership in Ibadan, Oyo State.

In his welcome remarks, IPC

Executive Director, Lanre Arogundade, noted, "electoral trust is built long before election day. It depends on what citizens know, when they hear it and who they hear it from."

He urged participants to move beyond disseminating information to communication that allows citizens access, understand and verify electoral information.

With misinformation travelling faster than corrections, and Artificial Intelligence (AI) making fabricated audio, images and video more convincing, he said electoral communication systems

must withstand uncertainty, controversy and competing narratives without compromising accuracy, impartiality or public confidence.

Speaking further, Arogundade said fact-checking, though essential, must be complemented by proactive, coordinated and trusted communication. He also cautioned that solutions that work in one region may fail in another, given the nation's diverse information environments.

On his part, Executive Director of CEMESO, Akin Akingbulu said, "all eyes are on INEC, and all ears are on

VEP,' identifying clarity, promptness and efficiency as what citizens will expect of the commission's voter education and public communication."

Akingbulu highlighted information challenges, including Permanent Voter Card collection, claims and objections on the register, questions about candidate lists and changes introduced under the Electoral Act 2026. Unanswered questions, he said, can quickly become rumours, while unclear or inconsistent explanations can undermine public confidence.

Adebayo, Osagiede, others to discuss consumer connection, disruptive realities @Brandcomfest 2026

GROUP Executive Director, West and Central Africa, Omnicom Media Group, Yinka Adebayo; Group Creative Director Insight Publicis Esosa Osagiede and Co-founder and Chief Marketing Officer Piggytech Joshua Chibueze are among distinguished personalities that are expected to dissect brands, consumer connection, disruptive realities @Brandcomfest 2026.

Themed, 'Brand building, consumer connection and disruptive realities,' the event promises to be exceptional and unforgettable.

Convener of the Brandcom Awards, Joshua Ajayi, disclosed that the event brings together professionals and industry stakeholders for conversations on brand building, consumer protection and the realities shaping the communications landscape.



Participants at the event

40 years after, MRA urges FG to execute judicial order on Dele Giwa's death probe

By Sunday Aikulola

IN commemoration of the 40th anniversary of the assassination of Editor-in-Chief of Newswatch magazine, Dele Giwa, the media Rights Agenda (MRA) yesterday called on the Federal Government to comply with and fully implement the judicial order directing it to investigate the circumstances surrounding the killing of the renowned journalist and prosecute those responsible.

Recall Giwa was murdered on October 19, 1986, through a parcel bomb delivered to him at his residence in Ikeja, Lagos.

But in a statement released in Lagos, MRA's Deputy Executive Director, Ayode Longe, noted, "40 years is far too long for the assassination of a journalist of Dele Giwa's stature to remain unresolved. His killing must not be reduced to a recurring anniversary in Nigeria's media calendar, accompanied by tributes and expressions of outrage but without meaningful progress towards accountability."

Longe said on February 16, 2024, MRA secured judgment at the Federal High Court in Abuja, in a case it brought against the Attorney-General of the Federation in which the court ordered the Federal

Government to investigate Giwa's murder, along with other unresolved killings of other journalists and directed the government to ensure the prosecution of the perpetrators.

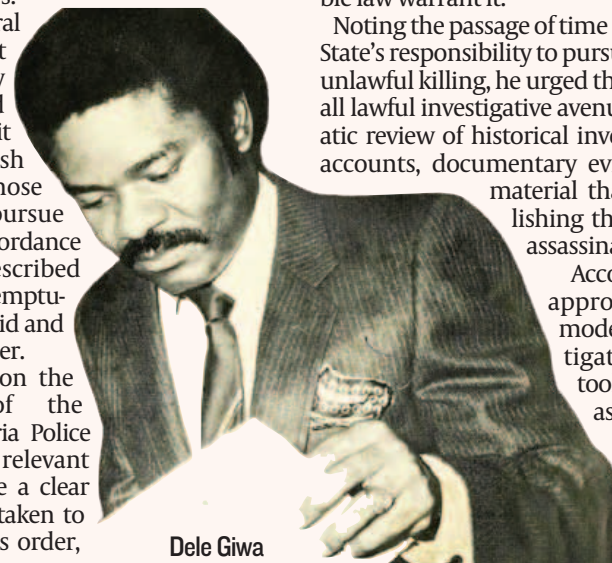
Saying that the Federal government had not demonstrated any progress or reported on any concrete steps it has taken to establish the facts, identify those responsible, and pursue accountability in accordance with the law, he described such attitude as contemptuous disregard for a valid and subsisting judicial order.

He further called on the Attorney-General of the Federation, the Nigeria Police Force and all other relevant authorities to provide a clear account of the steps taken to implement the court's order,

including the status of the investigation, the investigative measures undertaken and the plans for pursuing prosecution where the evidence and applicable law warrant it.

Noting the passage of time does not extinguish the State's responsibility to pursue accountability for an unlawful killing, he urged the authorities to explore all lawful investigative avenues, including a systematic review of historical investigation files, witness accounts, documentary evidence and any other material that may assist in establishing the circumstances of the assassination.

According to him, "where appropriate and feasible, modern forensic and investigative techniques and tools should be leveraged, as the failure to resolve the Giwa case after four decades sends a damaging message about the safety of journalists in Nigeria."



Dele Giwa

Christiane Amanpour announces exit from CNN after 43 years

VETERAN journalist, Christiane Amanpour, has announced plans to leave CNN in June 2027, ending a 43-year association with the international news network. The 68-year-old chief international anchor announced her decision on Monday, describing her time at CNN as “43 fantastic years” and expressing enthusiasm for new professional opportunities. “Remember: always be truthful, not neutral,” Amanpour said in a statement, reflecting the journalistic principle that has guided her career.

Amanpour has presented her flagship interview programme on CNN International since 2009, interviewing influential political figures and reporting from some of the world’s major conflict zones. Her departure will follow a gradual reduction in her presenting duties. She scaled back her schedule in January 2025 and is expected to transition to a weekly programme format in January 2027. The show is scheduled to end in May, while she will continue reporting for CNN until June. CNN Chairman, Mark Thompson, said he had held discussions with Amanpour about her plans for several months. He praised her standing in the profession, describing her as “one of the most trusted and beloved journalists anywhere.” Thompson also commended her decades of international reporting, adding that CNN would recognise her contributions before she leaves the network.

Looking back on her career, Amanpour cited her coverage of major global events, including the First Gulf War, the Bosnian War, the genocide in Rwanda, the conflicts in Afghanistan and Ukraine, and developments in Iran. She also acknowledged the journalists, programme teams and field crews who had worked with her over the years. According to Amanpour, their collective dedication to facts, evidence and humanity helped shape her approach to reporting. Although she is preparing to leave her regular role at CNN, Amanpour said she remained committed to the network’s mission of independent journalism as she looks towards the next phase of her career.

Prepare for exclusion from AGOA, Ramaphosa tells South Africans

SOUTH African President Cyril Ramaphosa said on Monday the country should “prepare” for the possibility of being removed from Washington’s duty-free trade programme for Africa, as ties between the two nations continue to fray. The African Growth and Opportunity Act, which grants eligible sub-Saharan African countries preferential access to the US market, has been renewed until the end of 2028. South Africa is the scheme’s largest beneficiary, but its eligibility has come under scrutiny as Washington steps up criticism of Pretoria, including false allegations of discrimination against white Afrikaners that South Africa rejects. “We are not the first and only country to be taken out of AGOA. And I believe we will not be the last,” he said in response to a question from an AFP journalist during a briefing.

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This is to notify the General Public, the Department of Land Administration, Abuja Geographic Information Systems (AGIS) as well as the Federal Capital Territory Administration (FCTA) of the loss of the original Right of Occupancy (R of O) and Offer of Grant/Acknowledgement of Plot 2729 Zone A06, Maitama, Federal Capital Territory covered by Certificate of Occupancy Number. 1a60w-637bz-c3a0u-10 registered as No. 9762 at Page 9762 Volume 40 pursuant to a loan facility covered by a Deed of Legal Mortgage between Standard Trust Bank (now UBA) Plc registered as FC.106/106/16MISC at Abuja.

All efforts to trace and recover the referenced original documents have proved abortive.



LAGOS STATE GOVERNMENT
LANDS BUREAU GOVERNOR’S OFFICE

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1. This is to inform the General Public that **AFRILAND PROPERTIES PLC** Lessee of the property located at 97/103 Broad Street, Lagos State, has applied to the Lagos State Government for renewal of the Leasehold Interest in the above name property, the property has a size of 1345.81square yard (1,125.01m²) and is registered as **LO 6062** dated **14th July, 1966** in Lagos State, Lands Registry at Lagos has applied to the Lagos State Lands Bureau for a Renewal of Leasehold Interest of the above named property.
2. In line with the Policy of Renewal of Leasehold interest; members of the public who have objection/interest or any information concerning this Application for Renewal of Leasehold should please come forward with any relevant/useful claim/objection within **21 days** from the date of this publication and address it to the Permanent Secretary Lands Bureau Block 13/14, The Secretariat Alausa Ikeja, Lagos.
3. For further enquiries, please contact the Permanent Secretary, Lands Bureau Block 13/14 The Secretariat

MR. KAMAR OWODIRAN OLOWOSHAGO
Permanent Secretary,
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APC says 12-state itinerary balances electioneering with governance

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

overextend himself after years in public service," he said.

Similarly, a female politician in Rivers State, Mrs Agnes Okwe, advised the President to prioritise his health and consider stepping aside if he could no longer cope with the demands of the presidency.

Okwe said Tinubu should honestly assess his physical capacity to travel across the country, engage with Nigerians and respond to their concerns. She argued that if his health would not permit him to fulfil these responsibilities, taking a rest would be the more appropriate decision.

For political expert Fouad Oki, a former director-general of campaign organisations in Lagos, the campaign itinerary should be considered alongside the negotiations and alliances that influence electoral outcomes.

"Campaign is not about physical presence alone. It involves a lot of negotiations behind closed doors," he said.

Citing Tinubu's political engagements ahead of the 2023 election, including his interaction with Oyo State Governor Seyi Makinde, Oki said candidates needed to manage competing interests and identify states whose voting strength and political dynamics could influence their overall performance.

He identified Lagos, Rivers, Kaduna, Kano and Katsina as states deserving close attention because of their voter populations and political influence. He also questioned the implications of overlooking states with large voter registers, noting that the value of a physical visit depended on the circumstances in each state.

Oki cautioned against using social media reactions as a reliable measure of electoral support. He stressed that although economic hardship and public dissatisfaction were important considerations, online opinions alone could not determine how the wider electorate would vote. **APC defends Tinubu's 12-state campaign plan**

THE ruling party has pushed back against criticism of the President's campaign travel plan, saying Tinubu must balance electioneering with his responsibilities as President.

The APC National Chairman, Nentawe Yilwatda, who spoke through his aide, Abimbola Tooki, maintained that an incumbent seeking re-election could not abandon governance for campaign activities.

Tooki said campaign effectiveness should not be measured solely by the number of

states a candidate visits or the time spent addressing rallies, adding that consultations with political stakeholders were equally important.

He explained that the selection of the 12 states was strategic, particularly as the APC seeks to strengthen its position in states where Tinubu lost in 2023. According to him, the campaign team also plans to hold meetings in 19 other states to engage stakeholders and canvass support.

The party maintained that the rallies formed part of a broader mobilisation strategy that combines public appearances with political consultations while allowing Tinubu to continue discharging his presidential duties.

Tinubu urges youths to defend reforms, as City Boy targets 10m votes

MEANWHILE, the City Boy Movement (CBM) has pledged to mobilise at least 10

million youth votes for President Bola Ahmed Tinubu in the January 2027 presidential election, saying its nationwide grassroots structures are ready to campaign for his re-election.

The Director-General of the movement, Francis Shoga, pledged yesterday during a meeting between the movement's national leadership and President Tinubu at the State House, Abuja.

Shoga disclosed that the organisation had registered 4.6 million members in its national database and engaged more than 50,000 young Nigerians through its Renewed Hope Youth Tour across the six geopolitical zones.

He also appealed to the President to expand youth participation in governance by considering competent and qualified members of the movement for appointments to public offices.

Speaking on the theme, "Youth, Unity, Action: Building a Stronger and More Prosperous Nigeria", Shoga said the movement was determined to translate its growing membership and grassroots presence into electoral support for Tinubu.

Addressing members of the City Boy Movement at the Banquet Hall of the Presidential Villa, Abuja, yesterday, Tinubu urged Nigerian youths to defend his administration's economic reforms ahead of the 2027 general elections, describing his re-election bid as a contest over their future and the country's economic direction.

He insisted that Nigeria could not afford to reverse the removal of petrol subsidy, arguing that the country must sustain its reforms despite the difficulties they have imposed on citizens.

Joined by Vice President Kashim Shettima and mem-

bers of the National Assembly, the President urged the youth-led political mobilisation group to take his administration's message to campuses, markets and communities.

"You are not campaigning for me. You are campaigning for your own future, and that future is Renewed Hope," he told the gathering.

Tinubu said his administration had taken difficult decisions since assuming office in 2023, citing mounting financial obligations, pressure on foreign reserves and difficulties in meeting some payment commitments as part of the economic challenges confronting the country.

He explained that petrol subsidy removal was part of broader efforts to address structural weaknesses in the economy and prevent the country from continuing along what he described as an unsustainable fiscal path.

The President maintained that Nigeria could not achieve lasting prosperity by relying on borrowing while postponing difficult economic decisions.

"We understood that a nation cannot borrow its way to greatness," he said.

He cautioned against proposals to restore the subsidy regime, insisting that Nigeria must sustain its new economic direction rather than return to the previous arrangement.

Tinubu's remarks came amid continuing public debate over the effects of subsidy removal, including rising living and transport costs, and concerns over how the benefits of economic reforms could translate into improved living conditions.

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



Director-General, Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC), Dr Emomotimi Agama (left); Minister of Finance and Coordinating Minister of the Economy, Taiwo Oyedele; Chairman, Senate Committee on Capital Market and Institutions, Osita Izunaso; Director-General, Maryam Babangida National Centre for Women Development (MBNCWD), Dr Adedayo Benjamins-Laniyi; representative of the Vice President/Deputy Chief of Staff to the President, Office of the Vice President, Ibrahim Hassan Hadejia; Chairman of the Board of the SEC, Mairiga Aliyu Katuka, and Chairman, House Committee on Capital Market and Institutions, Solomon Bob, during the 2026 National Capital Market Conference in Abuja, yesterday. PHOTO: LUCY LADIDI ATEKO

Lawyer alleges unlawful arrests, torture, extortion persist

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

accepting the need for change and applying existing legal provisions in their interactions with members of the public.

"From the look of things, the reforms have not been integrated into the system and operations. It is only written on paper," he said.

Ngwu identified inadequate funding as one of the major obstacles to effective policing, arguing that many police stations lacked the resources required to conduct investigations and perform other essential duties.

He said some officers lacked operational vehicles and basic writing materials, leaving police stations dependent on public funds to sustain their operations.

According to him, complainants were sometimes expected to provide money to facilitate investigations and arrests, a practice he said undermined the independence of police investigations and created opportunities for extortion.

"If a complaint is made, and it is not thoroughly investigated by the police independently, the truth can never be seen from the whole process," he said.

The lawyer cited cases in which disputes between neighbours had allegedly led to police intervention and arrests, describing such incidents as evidence of the continued use of coercive practices in matters that could be handled differently.

He said the practice of arresting people accused by complainants without adequately considering the circumstances raised concerns about the protection of citizens' rights and the exercise of police powers.

Ngwu also identified the continued extraction of confessional statements through intimidation as evidence that excessive force remained a challenge in police operations.

He noted that courts sometimes conduct trials within trials to determine whether confessional statements were obtained voluntarily, arguing that such proceedings underscored the

need to address allegations of coercion during police investigations.

On training, he criticised what he described as the unequal distribution of training opportunities, saying officers who interacted directly with citizens at checkpoints and during investigations should receive regular human rights training.

He argued that training should not be restricted to officers in administrative positions while those responsible for field operations lacked adequate exposure to human rights standards.

Ngwu called for compulsory and regular training for operational officers, including investigators and those responsible for taking statements, to improve compliance with the law.

He also advocated a system through which officers who received specialised training could apply their knowledge in their postings and share it with colleagues.

The lawyer further questioned the effectiveness of existing police accountability mechanisms, asking who would ensure compliance when police authorities failed to implement court orders against them.

He called for independent mechanisms to monitor police conduct and ensure the enforcement of judgments against the police, including orders requiring financial compensation for victims.

Ngwu also urged the authorities to ensure the effective implementation of legislation prohibiting torture, arguing that legal provisions would have little impact without appropriate consequences for violations.

Okeke seeks separation of AG, Justice Minister's offices

THE Managing Partner of Chris Okeke & Co., Mr Chris Okeke (SAN), called for the separation of the offices of the Attorney General and Minister of Justice as part of reforms to address police brutality and improve access to justice in Nigeria.

Okeke said the current arrangement placed excessive responsibilities on the occupants of the two offices, undermining their ability to ensure that Nigerians obtained justice when they needed it.

He identified police brutality as a major obstacle to access to justice, arguing that victims often faced the same institutional and structural barriers confronting other Nigerians, including poverty, ignorance of their rights and inadequate enforcement of existing laws.

According to him, police brutality occurs when the police, as an institution, exceed their powers and further prevent victims from accessing remedies for the violations they suffer.

He said the problem was compounded by some citizens' inability to challenge violations due to a lack of financial resources to pursue justice, while others were unaware of their rights.

Okeke also identified gaps in existing laws and the poor implementation of available legal provisions as factors undermining efforts to protect citizens from police excesses.

Citing the Administration of Criminal Justice Act (ACJA), he pointed to provisions requiring magistrates to visit police divisions within their jurisdictions at specified intervals.

He explained that the visits were intended to ensure that police officers exercised their powers appropriately and that magistrates intervened where necessary.

However, he noted reports of instances in which police officers had failed to cooperate with magistrates, raising concerns about the implementation of safeguards designed to prevent abuse.

The Senior Advocate of Nigeria also called for reforms to the process of appointing the Inspector General of Police (IGP), insisting that the current arrangement did not serve the best interests of Nigerians.

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

Sanwo-Olu, Yilwatda rally Lagos APC against 2023 defeat

By Kehinde Olatunji

Lagos State Governor, Babajide Sanwo-Olu, National Chairman of the All Progressives Congress (APC),

EAF lauds Oyebanji's commitment to sustainable development

By Opeyemi Babalola

THE Ekiti Advancement Frontiers (EAF), a prominent socio-economic and advocacy group dedicated to the progress and good governance of Ekiti State, has congratulated Governor Biodun Oyebanji and his deputy, Monisade Afuye, on the official commencement of their second tenure of office.

Convener of EAF, Dr Oso Adededeji, described Oyebanji's second-term inauguration as a resounding testament to the overwhelming trust, confidence, and mandate reposed in the governor by the people of Ekiti State following an impactful, visionary, and people-centred first term.

Oso, who lauded the governor's unwavering commitment to sustainable development, institutional peace, economic revitalisation, and infrastructural advancement across the state, said: "Governor Biodun Oyebanji's first term laid an enviable foundation of inclusive growth, fiscal responsibility and harmony across all political and socio-economic strata in Ekiti State."

Report unveils key trends reshaping property market

By Florence Utor

KNIGHT Frank's H1 2026 Lagos Market Update has identified a property market shaped by rising residential costs, infrastructure investment and increasingly selective occupier demand across Lagos, Abuja and Port Harcourt.

The report noted that Nigeria's construction sector grew by 6.38 per cent year-on-year in the first quarter of 2026, while real estate accounted for 13.10 per cent of real GDP.

Although headline inflation eased to 15.91 per cent in June from 25.29 per cent a year earlier, affordability and development costs remain important considerations for investors, landlords and occupiers.

According to the report, in Lagos, residential rents continue to rise amid limited formal supply, particularly in prime locations, including Ikoyi, Victoria Island, Banana Island and Lekki Phase 1.

With some rents more than doubling since 2023, demand is also shifting towards more affordable studios, mini-flats and two-bedroom homes on the Mainland. Transport and road projects, including expansion of the rail network and improvements along the Lekki-Epe corridor, are reinforcing interest in growth areas, such as Ajah, Sangotedo and Ibeju-Lekki.

Prof. Nentawe Yilwatda, and other party stakeholders have urged party members in Lagos State to close ranks and strengthen grassroots mobilisation to reclaim victory for the state in the 2027 general elections, following the party's loss in 2023.

The duo, who spoke yesterday during the APC Campaign Council retreat tagged "The Road to the Ballot: One Team, One Strategy, One Goal," said Lagos State is critical to the party's national electoral fortunes, given its more than seven million registered voters.

Yilwatda warned against internal divisions and selec-

tive support for APC candidates, stressing that members must work collectively to secure victory for President Bola Tinubu, the governor, and other party candidates.

The APC chairman urged aggrieved members to remain loyal to the party despite political disappointments, citing his experience of losing the 2023 governorship election before becoming a minister and subsequently the party's national chairman.

He also warned that inadequate polling-unit representation could undermine the party's electoral prospects, urging the campaign council to ensure the timely registration of election agents and effective

grassroots mobilisation.

Yilwatda further called for improved communication of the Tinubu administration's tax reforms and infrastructure projects, saying that the party must do more to explain its policies and achievements to voters.

Sanwo-Olu said the party must look beyond its registered membership and convince other Nigerians to support the administration by highlighting its achievements at the federal and state levels.

He said the APC had tangible achievements to present to voters, adding that party leaders should communicate these accomplishments

rather than rely solely on campaign promises.

According to him, developments in the economy, changes in inflation and interest rates, adjustments to the minimum wage, and improvements in workers' earnings were among the issues the party could use to demonstrate the administration's performance.

The governor maintained that Tinubu had demonstrated the capacity to lead the country, urging party members to use the forthcoming elections to show appreciation for his leadership through their votes.

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



Ewi of Ado-Ekiti, Oba Rufus Adeyemo Adejugbe (left); Ekiti State Governor, Biodun Oyebanji; Head of Service (HoS), Dr (Mrs) Folakemi Olomojobi; Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Reeve Energy Ltd., Efuru Nwakuche, and CEO of United Nigeria Airlines, Prof. Obiora Okonkwo, during the official commissioning of an aviation fuel dump at Ekiti Agro-Allied International Cargo Airport, Ado-Ekiti, yesterday.

IPC seeks fresh probe, prosecution of masterminds of Dele Giwa's assassination

From Adewale Momoh (Akure) and Silver Nwokoro (Lagos)

THE International Press Centre (IPC) has called for renewed investigations and accountability in the unresolved assassination of founding Editor-in-Chief of Newswatch magazine, Dele Giwa.

According to a statement by the Executive Director of IPC, Lanre Arogundade, which was made available to newsmen by the Press Freedom Officer, IPC-SPJ Hub, Melody Akinjiyan, the continued failure to bring the case to a cred-

Doctor reveals final moments, last words of late journalist

ible conclusion served as an indictment of Nigeria's commitment to justice, accountability and the protection of journalists.

ALSO, the Media Rights Agenda (MRA) has called on the Federal Government to comply with and fully implement the judicial order directing it to investigate the circumstances surrounding the killing of the journalist and prosecute those responsible.

The organisation described the government's failure to

bring the case to a conclusive resolution four decades later as a shameful reminder of the entrenched culture of impunity for attacks against journalists in Nigeria.

MRA's Deputy Executive Director, Ayode Longe, therefore, called on the Attorney-General of the Federation, the Nigeria Police Force (NPF) and all other relevant authorities to provide a clear account of the steps taken to implement the court's order, including the status of the investigation, the investiga-

tive measures undertaken and the plans for pursuing prosecution where the evidence and applicable law warrant it.

MEANWHILE, a medical doctor, Dokun Adededeji, has narrated the last moments of Dele Giwa.

Adededeji, while speaking yesterday, during the launch of 'Dele Giwa's Granite Journalism' at the Nigerian Institute of Journalism (NIJ), Lagos, said the late journalist did not want to die and was determined to survive his injuries.

'LASG resolved 3,000 petitions, cut N1.2b liability to N3m through ADR'

By Yetunde Ayobami Ojo

Lagos State Government yesterday disclosed that its Ministry of Justice had resolved 3,000 petitions through Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR), reducing potential liabilities of more than N1.2 billion to a settlement of N3 million.

Governor Babajide Sanwo-Olu disclosed this during the third yearly Lagos Multi-Door Courthouse (LMDC) and Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) stakeholders' summit held at the MUSON Centre, Lagos.

Sanwo-Olu, who was represented by the Attorney-General and Commissioner for Justice, Lawal Pedro (SAN), said the achievement

demonstrated the economic benefits of resolving disputes amicably rather than allowing them to proceed through prolonged litigation.

The governor said that the state accounted for more than a fifth of Nigeria's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and attracted a significant proportion of foreign capital entering the country, making an efficient justice system essential to sustaining its position as a commercial hub.

Sanwo-Olu said no business, particularly a micro, small or medium-sized enterprise, should collapse because a commercial dispute remained unresolved for years.

He, however, described settlements facilitated by the LMDC

as a means of releasing capital back into trade, payroll and production instead of allowing funds to remain tied down in litigation.

According to him, the state government has placed ADR at the centre of its ease-of-doing-business agenda and the security and governance pillars of its THEMES Plus agenda.

The governor, who reaffirmed his administration's commitment to improving judicial infrastructure, citing new court facilities in Amuwo-Odofin and Epe, urged legal practitioners to promote ADR as the first resort in appropriate commercial disputes and encouraged them to study the newly

introduced ADR practice direction to ensure its effective implementation.

The Attorney-General of the Federation and Minister of Justice, Lateef Fagbemi (SAN), in a goodwill message delivered on behalf of the Chief Justice of Nigeria (CJN), Kudirat Kekere-Ekun, said an efficient and credible dispute-resolution system was indispensable to strengthening investor confidence.

Fagbemi commended the Lagos State Judiciary, under the leadership of the Chief Judge, Justice Kazeem Alogba, for advancing ADR and improving access to justice through the LMDC.

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

Ondo, tech firm sign MoU to deploy EV buses, charging hubs

Project will crash transport costs, complement CNG drive, says gov's aide, Ogunyemi

From Adewale Momoh, Akure

ONDO State Government has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with an information technology firm, ADMINSEV, to introduce Electric Vehicle (EV) buses and charging infrastructure as part of its bid to reduce transportation costs across the state.

However, with the initiative designed to commence with the deployment of five electric buses, each valued at N180 million, the project will also involve installing charging stations at selected bus stops in Akure, the state capital, with plans to extend the facilities to other local councils in the state.

Special Adviser to the Governor on Transport, Olumuyiwa Ogunyemi, disclosed this during the MoU signing ceremony, describing the initiative as a pioneering project in the state.

Ogunyemi said that the partnership was designed to address rising transportation costs while providing charging infrastructure for individuals and organisations using electric vehicles.

According to him, the facilities will not be limited to the company's buses; other electric vehicle owners will also be able to access the charging stations.

He stressed that the state government was adopting electric mobility alongside Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) as part of efforts to address the rising cost of transportation.

Odufuwa unveils two books at 70

THE Founder of Southwestern University, Babatunde Odufuwa, has called on individuals to cultivate strong visions, remain steadfast and embrace perseverance as essential ingredients for achieving meaningful success in life.

Odufuwa made the call as he marked his 70th birthday at White Stone Event Place in Lagos over the weekend.

The celebration featured the presentation of his two books, "My Life: Exciting twists, turns, grace and triumphs" and "A Search for Unity in the African Church," the publications that explore personal experiences and the quest for unity within the African Christian community.

A professor of Molecular Plant Pathology and Vice-Chancellor of the university, Adetunji Amusa, who reviewed the books, said: "I have known the author for 20 years. He is a visionary leader, full of wisdom and remains focused once convinced of a worthy cause."

"He is a visionary leader committed to empowering millions of youths through quality education."

Rivers Assembly recalls Oko-Jombo, two other pro-Fubara lawmakers

From Ann Godwin, Port Harcourt

THREE Rivers State lawmakers loyal to Governor Siminalayi Fubara during the political crisis that rocked the state, Victor Oko-Jumbo,

Court affirms N15m fee for political campaign billboards in Enugu

From Lawrence Njoku, Enugu

A FEDERAL High Court (FHC), Enugu, has dismissed a suit by some opposition political parties challenging Enugu State Structures for Signage and Advertisement Agency (ENSSAA) authority to impose a mandatory N150 million fee for political campaign billboards or posters ahead of the 2027 general elections.

The judgment issued by Justice Mabel Segun-Bello held that it was within the legislative competence of the Enugu State House of Assembly to make laws on outdoor advertising and for ENSSAA to exercise powers donated to it by state law.

Enugu State Chairman of the Labour Party (LP), Kingsley Ugwu; that of the Nigeria Democratic Congress (NDC), Ibuchukwu Obeta; Social Democratic Party (SDP), Magnus Ezea, had dragged ENSSAA; its General Manager, Francis Aninwike; Enugu State House of Assembly; Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC); Advertising Regulatory Council of Nigeria (ARCON); and Nigeria Police Force to court over the fee.

'Three in four girls lack basic literacy, numeracy skills'

From Owede Agbajileke, Abuja

THE United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) has warned that Nigeria's girls' education crisis extends beyond school enrolment, disclosing that nearly three-quarters of girls lack foundational literacy and numeracy skills. At the same time, one in four remains out of school. The agency said poverty, insecurity, unsafe learning environments and harmful cultural practices were preventing millions of girls from accessing quality education, warning that the consequences included child marriage, adolescent pregnancy and gender-based violence.

UNICEF Education Officer in Abuja, Blessing Afuwai, raised the concerns yesterday during the 2026 commemoration of the International Day of the Girl Child, organised by the Federal Ministry of Education in Abuja.

Afuwai said expanding access to education had yet to guarantee that Nigerian girls acquired the knowledge and skills needed to secure employment, achieve economic independence and participate meaningfully in society.

Sokari Goodboy Sokari, and Orubienimigha Timothy, are set to resume legislative duties following the State House of Assembly's decision to rescind its earlier declaration of their seats vacant.

The development followed a series of peace meetings between Fubara and the Minister of the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Nyesom Wike, amid efforts to resolve the protracted political crisis in the state.

Wike had assured Nigerians

during a media interview in Abuja that he was ready for peace and that peace would soon return to the politically troubled city.

Barely hours after the third meeting, held at Fubara's private residence on Sunday, the Rivers State House of Assembly, led by Speaker Martin Amaewhule, reversed its decision to declare the seats of the three lawmakers vacant.

At plenary yesterday, Amaewhule read separate let-

ters from the lawmakers appealing to the Assembly to reconsider its decision. In the letters dated October 16, 2026, the lawmakers explained that they had not been notified of the lifting of their suspension, which they said accounted for their failure to attend subsequent sittings.

They consequently appealed to the Assembly to rescind its decision declaring their seats vacant. The lawmakers' seats were declared vacant on

October 15, 2025, following their failure to attend sittings after the lifting of their suspension imposed during the state of emergency.

The Assembly had cited Section 109(1)(e) of the 1999 Constitution, as amended, as the basis for its decision and subsequently wrote to the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), requesting bye-elections to fill the purported vacancies.

However, the Assembly said

that its decision to reverse the declaration followed the appeals by the three lawmakers. After deliberations on the letters, members voted to rescind the earlier decision, paving the way for the lawmakers' return to the Assembly.

Institute seeks collaboration to boost entrepreneurship funding

By Opeyemi Babalola

THE Institute of Entrepreneurship and Apprenticeship Management and Administration (IEAMA) has called for increased collaboration among financial institutions, investors, and entrepreneurs to improve access to funding for Nigerian entrepreneurs to scale their businesses amid the country's current economic crisis.

Speaking at the second edition of the Finance Must Meet Enterprise (FME) 2026 and Award Session, which focused on 'Financing the Future: Building Resilient Enterprises for Sustainable Economic Growth', the Director-General/Registrar of the institute, Dr Jerry Ibeh, said many entrepreneurs had viable business ideas but lacked the financing, technical knowledge and strategic partnerships required to move from survival to sustainability.

He stressed that addressing the challenge required more than providing loans, noting that businesses also needed effective management, financial discipline, innovation and an enabling environment to thrive.

According to him, the FME initiative was established to bridge the gap between entrepreneurs and capital providers and to create opportunities for collaboration among businesses, investors, financial institutions, and development partners.

He said the platform was expected to facilitate partnerships that would attract investment, create jobs and improve livelihoods.



Music artiste, Jude Abaga (M.I) (left); Managing Director/Chief Executive Officer, Dangote Petroleum Refinery & Petrochemicals, David Bird; Nollywood actor, Richard Mofe-Damijo; President/Chief Executive, Dangote Industries Limited, Aliko Dangote; Nollywood actress, Joke Silva; and Group Vice President, Oil & Gas and Fertiliser, Dangote Industries Limited, Devakumar Edwin, during a visit by stakeholders in Nigeria's creative industry to the Dangote Petroleum Refinery & Petrochemicals and Dangote Fertiliser complexes in Lekki, Lagos, yesterday.

Tinubu, Oborevori, Natasha, Mark mourn as Uduaghan dies at 71

From Monday Osayande (Asaba), Sodiq Omolaoye, Andrew Oota and Terhamba Daka (Abuja)

FORMER Delta State Governor, Dr Emmanuel Eweta Uduaghan, has reportedly died in the early hours of yesterday, October 19, 2026, after a brief illness.

Uduaghan died at 71, according to a statement issued by his family.

The family described his death as a devastating loss, noting that he was a beloved father, brother, uncle and respected patriarch whose life and service touched many people across Delta State and Nigeria.

Uduaghan served as

Commissioner for Health from 1999 to 2003, Secretary to the Delta State Government from 2003 to 2007, and Governor of Delta State from 2007 to 2015.

Delta State Governor, Sheriff Oborevori, expressed sadness over the death of the former governor, describing him as a detribalised leader whose contributions to the state's development would not be forgotten.

In a condolence message issued by his Chief Press Secretary, Festus Ekpem Ahon, Oborevori sympathised with the late governor's wife, Roli, his children, the entire Uduaghan family, the Itsekiri

nation and Deltans over the painful loss.

The governor recalled Uduaghan's years in office, noting that he made significant contributions to the state's infrastructure development. He described the former governor as a leader who looked beyond ethnic differences and worked for the overall development of Delta State.

SIMILARLY, President Bola Tinubu has also expressed grief over the death of the late Uduaghan, describing him as a public servant committed to the development of the state and the service of the nation. In a condolence message, the President extended his sym-

pathies to Uduaghan's family, the Delta State Government and the people of the state, recalling the deceased's contributions to governance and development.

According to the President, Uduaghan's administration pursued initiatives aimed at improving infrastructure, healthcare delivery, and the overall welfare of the people of Delta State.

ALSO, Senator Natasha Akpoti-Uduaghan has mourned the late former governor, describing his death as a profound loss to his family, the people of Delta State and Nigerians who followed his years of public service.

Usoro, firm deny violating court ruling, cite gaps in communication

MIDEN Systems Limited and its Managing Director, Dr Innocent Brendan Usoro, have denied violating a court ruling regarding its business relationship with Sterling Bank Plc.

According to the firm and its promoter, an investigation into the matter by the Police did not establish the allegations levelled against them.

The development arose after *The Guardian's* attention was drawn to recent developments in the dispute between Sterling Bank Plc and Miden Systems Limited. On January 25, 2025, *The Guardian* published an article titled "Sterling Bank petitions IGP over court ruling violations",

wherein we reported a petition by Sterling Bank Plc to the Inspector-General of Police.

In the said petition, Sterling Bank accused Miden Systems Limited and its Managing Director, Dr Innocent Brendan Usoro, of using the National Assembly and the Police Force CID to harass the bank, divert loan funds, commit asset misappropriation, and restructure the company's shareholding with intent to evade compliance with a binding court-ordered debt settlement, among others.

Expressing concerns over the publication in question, the duo, through their Solicitors, T.J. Aondo (SAN) & Co., described the allegations against them as false, prejudi-

cial and misleading.

According to the lawyers, Sterling Bank initiated the alternative dispute resolution process by petitioning the Inspector-General of Police. They added that the petition was investigated by the IGP Monitoring Unit, Force Headquarters, Abuja, which eventually found nothing incriminating against their clients.

"The investigation did not establish the allegations against our clients as criminal acts. Rather, the investigation identified, amongst other matters, a communication gap between the parties and concerns regarding the absence of relevant statements of account required for

reconciliation."

"The Police ultimately recommended that the Central Bank of Nigeria constitute a committee to audit the disputed accounts to determine the true state of the financial transactions between the parties."

The Investigation Report dated September 8, 2025, entitled "Re: Application for Certified True Copy of Police Investigation Reports in a Case of Sterling Bank Plc V. Dr Brendan Innocent Usoro" made available to *The Guardian* neither indicted the Company nor its Managing Director.

On the contrary, the Investigating Team found, *inter alia*, "That the inability of

Sterling Bank Plc to provide statement of accounts of Miden Systems Limited domiciled with the Bank either to the Police or to the Suspect Dr Innocent Usoro who is the MD/CEO of Miden Systems Limited; for the purpose of reconciling the accounts leaves much to be desired."

In addition, the Investigation Team confirmed a Customer-Banker relationship between the parties, but observed an attempt to obfuscate the transaction records by preventing a transparent audit of Miden Systems Limited's account to determine the total sum of money generated from the utilisation of the company's vessels.

Coalition decries states’ poor fiscal spending on agriculture

From **Joke Falaju**, Abuja

A COALITION of 31 organisations in the agrifood systems has raised concern over poor capital budget performance in the agricultural sector across the states, as a recent study revealed that 22 states spent less than 50 per cent of their agricultural capital allocations in 2023.

Working under the aegis of Community of Agrifood Systems Non-State Actors (COANSA), the organisations said the situation persisted in 18 states in 2024 and 15 states in 2025 despite

upward capital budget allocations for agriculture between 2023 and 2026.

Against this background, COANSA warned that the poor implementation of agricultural budgets could undermine efforts to boost food production.

It noted that increased public investment and effective expenditure in agriculture could raise internally generated revenue by between 6.22 per cent and 618 per cent, depending on the state, but warned that Nigeria risked losing these opportunities in 2026 if urgent action was

not taken.

In a statement to commemorate World Food Day 2026, themed “Innovate Today, Nourish Tomorrow,” COANSA called on all tiers of government to strengthen investment in the agrifood sector, improve budget implementation and ensure accountability in public spending.

It explained that while innovation is critical to sustainable food production, improved nutrition, resilient livelihoods and inclusive economic growth, these outcomes cannot be achieved without adequate

public investment, infrastructure, appropriate technologies and effective extension services.

COANSA further identified agro-ecological practices, agricultural research, irrigation development, labour-saving technologies, digital agricultural services and post-harvest loss reduction as innovations capable of addressing persistent challenges in food production, productivity and market access.

However, the organisations stressed that scaling up these solutions requires sustained financing,

stronger institutions and fully funded policies that address the needs of farmers and other actors across the agrifood value chain.

They called for increased investment in smallholder women, youth-farmers and persons with disabilities to ensure equitable access to productive resources, finance, markets, knowledge and technology.

Meanwhile, as part of efforts to address the challenges, COANSA urged the federal government to establish a credible financing framework to achieve the minimum 10 per cent

public expenditure commitment to agrifood systems under the African Union’s Comprehensive Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) Kampala Declaration for 2026–2035.

Among others, it advocated an annual dialogue between governments and the CAADP non-state actors’ group in Nigeria to strengthen collaboration and accountability, while ensuring that non-state actors participated meaningfully in joint sector reviews and CAADP biennial review processes.

Kwankwaso says Atiku can’t match Buhari’s Northern influence

• **Baba-Ahmed insists north will resist APC’s vote-buying moves**

From **Adamu Abuh**, Abuja

A CHIEFTAIN of the All Progressives Congress (APC), Dr Musa Kwankwaso, has dismissed the chances of the presidential candidate of the African Democratic Congress (ADC), Atiku Abubakar, to replicate the late President Muhammadu Buhari’s northern political appeal against the incumbent President Bola Tinubu in the 2027 general election.

Kwankwaso said in a statement that the political dynamics of Northern Nigeria had changed significantly, arguing that Atiku can no longer rely on ethnic and regional sentiments to secure widespread support among the Hausa-Fulani voters.

Nevertheless, the National Chairman of the Peoples Redemption Party (PRP), Hakeem Baba-Ahmed, said that supporters of Tinubu and his ruling APC would be making a mistake by underestimating northern voters ahead of the 2027 election.

Claimants petition EFCC over Wike’s son’s role in disputed \$2.1m land deal

From **Aneh Ochojila**, Abuja

TWO firms, Safwan Garba GY and GY Global Oil & Gas Nigeria Limited, have petitioned the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) over the alleged role of Jordan Nyesom-Wike, the son of the Minister of the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Nyesom Wike, in a disputed \$2.1 million land transaction.

Based on the allegations, the petitioners, through their lawyers, urged the anti-graft agency to investigate the allegations of fraud and obtaining money by false pretences in the alleged disputed transaction.

They also requested the EFCC to arrest Jordan Nyesom-Wike and initiate prosecution where the investigation establishes criminal liability.

Speaking to newsmen at the Federal High Court in Abuja yesterday, the claimants’ counsel, Mr Ibrahim Waru, noted that while the civil aspect of the matter was already pending before the FCT High Court, the petition was filed to enable the EFCC to investigate the alleged criminal elements.



President Bola Tinubu (middle) during an audience with a delegation from the Zamfara State House of Assembly, led by the Minister of State for Defence, Bello Matawalle, at the Presidential Villa, Abuja, yesterday.

Sowore loses bid to compel DSS DG to testify in cyberbullying trial

From **Aneh Ochojila**, Abuja

A CTIVIST and presidential candidate of the African Action Congress (AAC), Omoyele Sowore, has lost his bid to compel the Director-General of the Department of State Services (DSS), Tosin Ajayi, to personally appear in court as a witness in his trial on the alleged cyberbullying of President Bola Tinubu.

Ruling yesterday on the subpoena issued to the DSS Director-General at the request of the defence, Justice Mohammed Umar of the Federal High Court in Abuja dismissed Sowore’s application on the ground that the subpoena concerned an official act of the DSS. He added that the

• **Court dismisses el-Rufai’s N120m rights suit against AGF, EFCC, others**

expected testimony was not personal to the DG.

Still on legal matters, an Abuja Federal High Court has dismissed, for lack of merit and substance, a N120 million fundamental rights suit instituted by a former governor of Kaduna State, Nasir el-Rufai, against the DSS and three others.

Dismissing the case yesterday, Justice Sylvanus Orijio held that el-Rufai cannot use the court to stop the agencies from performing their duties.

The court also awarded N200, 000 as costs to each of the respondents, including the Attorney-General of the Federation and Minister of

Justice, the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), the Independent Corrupt Practices and other Related Offences Commission (ICPC) and the DSS.

Sowore, through his lawyer, Adeyinka Fusika, SAN, had sought a court order compelling the DG’s appearance to testify on official activities of the DSS relating to the cyberbullying case that was instituted against him.

However, the DSS, represented by Akinlolu Kehinde, SAN, argued that another official of the agency could testify on his behalf. Among others, he added that it was absurd for Sowore to insist

on the DSS DG’s appearance in an official action.

In the other case, the court further held that the letters by the federal agencies inviting el-Rufai to appear for investigation over the allegations against him met constitutional requirements and did not constitute an infringement on his fundamental rights.

On whether the DSS’ attempt to arrest the applicant at the Nnamdi Azikiwe International Airport, Abuja, violated his rights, the court upheld the DSS’ submission that it had statutory mandate to maintain a watchlist and arrest persons of interest.

JAMB warns varsities against issuing admission letters

From **Owede Agbajileke** (Abuja) and **Yusufu Aminu Idegbo** (Lokoja)

THE Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board (JAMB) has warned universities against issuing admission letters to candidates, insisting that only admissions processed through its Central Admissions Processing System (CAPS) are legally recognised.

It insisted that universities have no statutory authority to issue official admission letters, warning that candidates who accept admission offers outside the approved system risk having documents that may not be recognised for official purposes,

• **Monarch seeks revival of technical colleges for human development**

including mobilisation for the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC).

JAMB Registrar, Prof. Segun Aina, gave the warning when he received a delegation from Veritas University, Bwari, Abuja, during a courtesy visit to his office.

In another development, the Chairman of Lokoja Traditional Council and Maigari of Lokoja, Ibrahim Kabir, has urged the Federal Ministry of Education to revive and restore the old technical colleges across the country to boost the skills acquisition policy.

The monarch, who spoke at

the flag-off of a five-day intensive skills acquisition training for 120 youths in Lokoja, the Kogi State capital, also urged the federal and state ministries of work to create skills acquisition departments to train the army of Nigerian youths seeking sources of livelihood.

Meanwhile, Aina said the Federal Ministry of Education had expressly directed that all admissions into tertiary institutions be processed through CAPS, stressing that any admission conducted outside the platform was illegal and invalid.

According to him, JAMB

remains the only body statutorily empowered to issue official admission letters to candidates seeking entry into universities, polytechnics and colleges of education across the country.

Concerned that candidates often assume that admission letters purportedly issued by universities are authentic simply because they carry the institutions’ identities, he urged universities engaging in such a practice to desist forthwith and ensure that candidates obtain the appropriate admission documents from JAMB.

Bauchi NDC restrategises as gov candidate withdraws, quits party

By **Rauf Oyewole**

THE Bauchi State governorship candidate of the Nigeria Democratic Congress (NDC), Kashim Ibrahim, has withdrawn from the race, with speculations that he might join the All Progressives Congress (APC).

In a resignation letter addressed to the PDP Chairman in Bauchi Local Government Area, Kashim said the decision was personal and followed careful consideration.

Reacting to the development, however, the State Chairman of NDC, Abdullahi Misau, said the party would seek legal advice, including from the relevant legal authorities at the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), on the implications of the candidate’s resignation.

According to him, under the electoral framework, the governorship candidate and the running mate contest together, and since the running mate was still with the party, it remains in the race.

Eight Zamfara lawmakers return to APC

EIGHT members of the Zamfara State House of Assembly who recently resigned from the All Progressives Congress (APC) have announced their return to the party following their meeting with President Bola Tinubu at the Presidential Villa in Abuja.

The lawmakers were led to the meeting by the Minister of State for Defence, Bello Matawalle, alongside Aminu Jaji, who represents the Kaura Namoda/Birnin Magaji Federal Constituency in the House of Representatives, Matawalle’s media aide, Ahmad Dan-Wudil, said.

In a statement yesterday, Dan-Wudil disclosed that during the meeting, the lawmakers reaffirmed their loyalty and commitment to the APC and Tinubu.

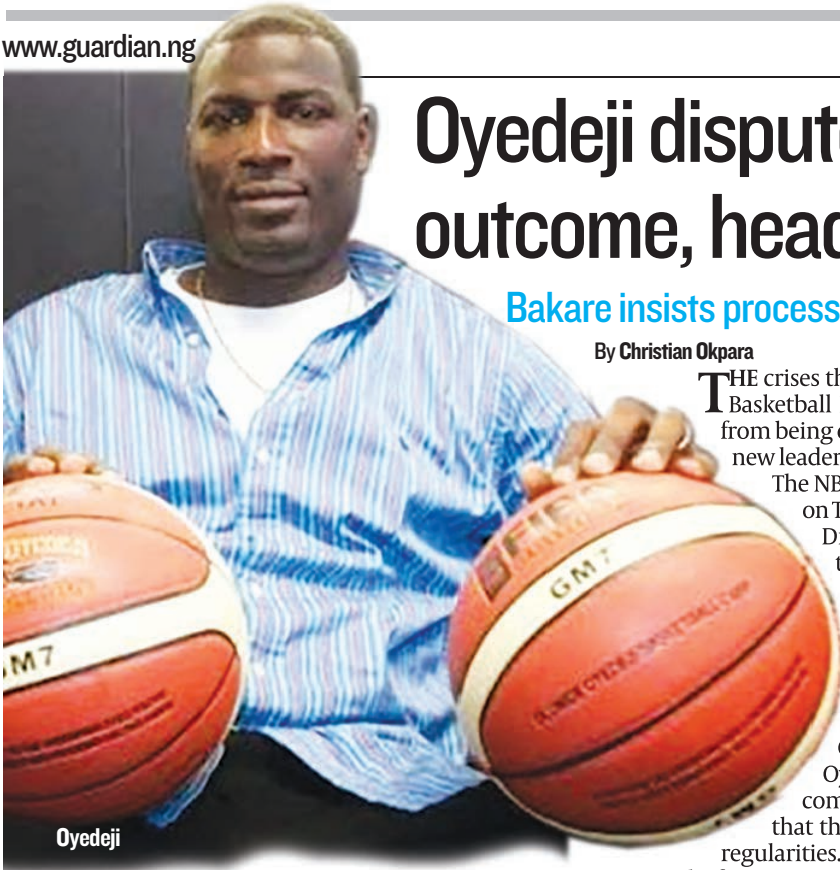
Also, Matawalle pledged to integrate the lawmakers into the Tinubu Again Movement to work collectively for all APC candidates ahead of the forthcoming elections, the media aide added.

The lawmakers had been tipped to defect to the African Democratic Congress (ADC) after announcing their resignation from the APC over internal party friction and the escalating insecurity in rural Zamfara communities.

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Oyedeji disputes NBBF elections outcome, heads to appeals committee

Bakare insists process must be cancelled

By Christian Okpara

THE crises that have dogged the Nigeria Basketball Federation (NBBF) seem far from being over despite the election of a new leadership for the federation.

The NBBF held its elective congress on Thursday, October 15, with the Director General of the National Energy Commission, Mustapha Abdullahi, elected as the board's new president.

However, one of the contestants in the polls supervised by the National Sports Commission (NSC), Olumide Oyedeji, has rejected the outcome of the elections, alleging that the process was marred by irregularities.

The former captain of the national basketball team, D'Tigers, has, thus, appealed to the Electoral Appeals Committee to nullify the exercise and order a fresh election.

In his appeal addressed to the committee chaired by Emmanuel Okibe, Oyedeji raised concerns over alleged constitutional violations and irregularities, which, he argued, undermined the credibility of the electoral process.

Oyedeji said his protest went beyond the election results or his candidacy, to the need to set a judicial precedent, protect the NBBF constitution and safeguard the game against external interests.

Among the issues raised by the founder of Hoops and Read Men's

Basketball Club of Lagos was his initial exclusion from the list of candidates for the position of South-West Representative, despite fulfilling all requirements. He noted that his late inclusion, following a widely publicised exclusion by the Dr Lanre Glover-led Electoral Committee, placed him at a disadvantage and contravened the NBBF constitution and electoral guidelines.

Oyedeji also challenged the expulsion of eight board members by the Musa Kida-led NBBF board, describing the decision as unconstitutional. He argued that their removal prevented duly elected members from participating in the processes leading to the Extraordinary Congress and Elective Congress, in violation of the federation's constitution.

The former national team captain protested the emergence of Mustapha Abdullahi as NBBF president and Babatunde Ogunade as South-West Representative.

He said both candidates benefited from electoral irregularities, while accusing the former NBBF president and secretary of circumventing the electoral process.

As part of his appeal, Oyedeji raised concerns over the arbitrary removal of state basketball association chairmen and the accreditation of individuals who did not meet the requirements stipulated in the NBBF constitution.

He is seeking the nullification of the electoral process and a fresh election, arguing that the issues raised must be addressed to protect the integrity of the federation's constitution and future elections.

Read the remaining story on www.guardian.ng

Grange School, St Saviour's win Second Pan African School Games

GRANGE School, Ikeja, at the weekend, won the U-13 and U-15 categories of the Second Pan African School Games, while St Saviour's School, Ikoyi, claimed the overall title in the U-11 class of the three-day tournament held at James Hopes College, Lekki.

Grange School received a new bus sponsored by Mikano Changan Motors after securing the highest number of points in the U-13 and U-15 categories.

The three-day event brought together more than 400 students from 11 schools.

Organised by Seun Akinbun, Busola Tejumola and Aderoju Ope Ajayi, the Games gave children opportunities to compete, develop their sporting abilities and build friendships with students from other schools.

This year's edition attracted strong support from leading corporate organisations, including Prime Atlantic, Zenith Bank, Plumtre Advisory, Mikano Changan Motors, UAC Foods, Nigerian Exchange Group (NGX), Team 33 Productions, Flytime, What Media, Kantar, Logic City and Fluttwave.

UEFA gives Infantino two-week deadline to release key documents

EUROPEAN football governing body UEFA has told FIFA it must release key documents and answer all questions relating to its governance and decision-making by a deadline of November 2, BBC reports.

At the FIFA Council on Thursday, president Gianni Infantino apologised for his World Cup sell-off plan - but failed to offer a full explanation for how the proposal was devised.

In the letter seen by BBC Sport, UEFA general secretary Theodore Theodoridis said that

world football's governing body had failed to address "several fundamental questions".

"Others remain unanswered, and the information and documentation requested have not been provided," it read.

The letter included eight pages of questions covering a number of issues, from the FIFA Forward Enterprise (FFE) private investment to the FIFA Peace Prize and the controversial suspended ban given to USA striker Folarin Balogun at the World Cup.

Calabar Marathon stakes N1.2m top prize, creates local category

From Tina Agosi Todo, Calabar

WINNERS in the men's and women's races at the 2026 Calabar Marathon will receive a top prize of N1.2 million in its national and international categories, while indigenous athletes will compete for separate prizes to encourage local talent.

Speaking on the marathon in Calabar yesterday, the Managing Director and Chairman of the Calabar Marathon Organising

Team, John Atsu, said that the organisers were working to develop the event into a world-class competition.

The marathon, themed "Run for Conscience Against Poverty," will feature three categories: a 21.1-kilometre professional race, a 10-kilometre charity and fitness walk for non-governmental organisations and other participants.

PSG-Barcelona match in Champions League to go ahead amid shock over France's violent unrest

THE showpiece Champions League match between Paris Saint-Germain and Barcelona will go ahead as planned today in the French capital city, the French Interior minister confirmed, despite a weekend of protests marred by violence and looting across the country, reports thehindu.com.

Many French citizens have been left shocked by the images of violence that have drawn worldwide attention and highlighted the country's tense social climate.

Yesterday, French Prime Minister Sébastien Lecornu said he has instructed prefects to impose "very limited" and "localised" curfews in cities to prevent more rioting and looting.

The violence targeted city halls, other public buildings and hundreds of businesses across the country, leading to more than 2,000 arrests.

Today's match between PSG and Barcelona at the Parc des Princes will require a robust security deployment, with police forces already strained following weeks of student protests. In May, Paris police detained dozens of people after violence disrupted celebrations of PSG's second Champions League title win and a group tried to storm a police station in the French capital.



CAF waits on Edo Queens, Ampen Darkoa Ladies as Egypt set for Women's Champions League

By Christian Okpara

THE Confederation of African Football (CAF) is waiting for the conclusion of the WAFU B Women's Champions League qualifier between Nigeria's Edo Queens and Ghana's Ampen Darkoa Ladies to sign off on teams for the 2026 Champions League billed to hold in Egypt.

Apart from the WAFU B and Egypt's championship, all the teams for the championship, slated to run from November 1 to 15, 2026, have been confirmed.

They are the eight zonal winners in their respective CAF Zones from across the continent, including two-time champions from South Africa, Mamelodi Sundowns, Uganda's Kawempe Muslim (representing CECFA), Cameroon's Lekie FF (representing UNIFFAC), and Mali's USFAS (representing WAFU-A).

Caledonian Charity Cup returns to Ikoyi Club 1938

By Eniola Daniel

GOLFERS, corporate bodies and supporters of the sport will converge on the Golf Section of Ikoyi Club 1938 on Friday to vie for honours in the Caledonian Charity Cup, which is returning to the club.

Organised by the Lagos Caledonian Society (LCS), the 18-hole charity golf tournament, according to the organisers, aims to raise funds for charitable initiatives and worthy causes.

This year's net proceeds will be donated directly to Foster Paradise Homes, a Lagos State-registered orphanage dedicated to caring for orphans, abandoned children, and vulnerable young people across urban and rural communities.

The return of the Caledonian Charity Cup to Ikoyi Club 1938 reflects the longstanding Scottish tradition of harnessing sport, community and fellowship to make a meaningful difference in the lives of others.

In a show of enthusiasm and commitment to the charitable cause, 25 teams have registered to participate in this year's competition. Each team bears the name of a Scottish town or location with golfing connections, celebrating Scotland's rich golfing heritage.

Read the remaining story on www.guardian.ng

SOLUTION

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24TH JUNE 1937 - 20TH OCTOBER 1986

A TRUE SON OF LAGOS. A MAN OF FAITH
A COMMUNITY BUILDER. A LEGACY OF SERVICE

Forty years after his passing, we remember a life devoted to faith, community and service. A founding father of Eko Club and a proud son of Olowogbowo, Benjamin Olubunmi Joseph left behind more than memories. He left a legacy that continues through the people, communities and institutions he helped shape.

FORTY YEARS REMEMBERED. A LIFE CELEBRATED. A LEGACY THAT ENDURES.

HIS MEMORY LIVES ON THROUGH HIS WIFE MRS ANTHONIA OLUREMILEKUN JOSEPH,
CHILDREN, GRANDCHILDREN, FAMILY, FRIENDS AND THE COMMUNITY
TO WHICH HE GAVE SO MUCH

Guest Writer

Chidi Anselm Odinkalu



Oyedemi
disputes NBBF
elections
outcome,
heads to
appeals
committee

/30



Nigeria's judiciary ahead of 2027: Between power and the people

THE annual ritual of the opening of the judicial year at Nigeria's Supreme Court is an occasion for pomp, ceremony, and celebration. It usually marks the admission of a new set of lawyers into the sequined ranks of Senior Advocate of Nigeria (SANs). This year, 68 made the cut. On Monday 12 October, at the main courtroom of the Supreme Court in Abuja, they formally joined the Body of Senior Advocates of Nigeria (BOSAN).

Amidst the backslapping and celebration, there was also room for sobriety as the Chief Justice of Nigeria (CJN), Kudirat Kekere-Ekun, delivered what has become the customary State of the Administration of Justice (SOTAJ) report.

The context of the Chief Justice's SOTAJ report this year was defined by both expectation and transition. There is expectation of an inevitable deluge of election petitions and political disputes as the country hurtles towards the 2027 general elections.

Concurrently, the courts must also adapt to what CJN Kekere-Ekun described as an inevitable "process of renewal" as senior judges retire and younger ones take their place in what she called "the most consequential of responsibilities" jointly exercised by the Judicial Service Commissions and the National Judicial Council (NJC).

This SOTAJ report was the penultimate by this Chief Justice on a judiciary in rapid transition. In the month preceding it, Ibrahim Mohammed Saulawa retired from the Supreme Court.

For at least three of the Justices, this was their last attendance at such ceremony. At the end of the first week of next month, Uwani Abba-Aji will retire. Four months thereafter, on March 23, 2027, Helen Ogunwumiju will follow. Stephen Adah will be next on June 13, 2027.

It is unlikely that any of these vacancies will be filled before the swearing in of the winners in next year's elections. For guidance, 12 new Justices of Appeal recommended for appointment in the middle of May 2026 still await the consent of the president over five months after the NJC transmitted its recommendations to him. In the middle of the active season of dispute resolution following the elections in January and February 2027, therefore, the bench of the Supreme Court will be short by at least four Justices.

This set the stage for the meat of the report delivered by the Chief Justice. It outlined some innovation, contained evidence of some progress, and also acknowledged challenges with hopeful candour. Case management emerged as a major site of attention for this Chief Justice. It is a field that could define her signature legacy. The numbers tell some of the story.

In the 2025-26 judicial year, the Supreme Court received 2,456 matters. These included 1,179 civil motions; 573 criminal motions; 13 Sharia-related motions; and 676 appeals. Of the last category (appeals), there were 433 civil appeals; 212 criminal appeals; 19 political cases; 12 Sharia appeals; and 10 originating motions.

The fact that this list omits any mention of death penalty cases is perhaps the best evidence of why the category of "political cases" remains both interesting and curious. That category first entered the lexicon of the SOTAJ under late



Chief Justice Tanko Muhammad in 2021. In that year, two years ahead of the 2023 elections, it accounted for 33 or nearly five per cent of the 681 cases reported. Two years later, following the 2023 elections, political cases had become a mainstay of the docket of a Supreme Court that "heard 388 political appeals, 215 criminal appeals and 464 civil appeals."

This year, political cases were a mere 2.8 per cent of the cases heard, a fall of about 45 per cent in comparison to five years ago. It is unlikely to remain so as the country heads into active election season. Progress in the reduction of political cases working their way up to the Supreme Court reflects the consequence of judicial doctrine that absolves courts from judicial oversight of internal management of political parties.

The demands on Nigeria's Supreme Court, however, remain unsustainable. During the year, the court rendered 411 judgments in total. This is 16.73 per cent relative to the total case intake for the year, a modest improvement on the 16.18 per cent recorded in the previous year. This represents a crippling workload that worryingly sometimes reflects in the quality of judgments issued by the court.

By contrast, during the same period, the United Kingdom Supreme Court considered 295 applications for Permission to Appeal (PTA), and issued 56 judgments. In its capacity as the highest court of the dominions in the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council, the court received another 58 cases and issued 54 judgments.

Across the Atlantic, the Supreme Court of the United States heard a mere 74 cases. Of these, it took oral arguments in 58 and delivered 67 judgments.

These numbers explain some of the innovations in managing judicial throughput reported by the CJN. For instance, the court began the implementation of the Nigerian Case Management System (NCMS), an electronic platform which will eventually be rolled out to cover all superior courts of record across Nigeria. It also now houses a Mediation Centre to encourage alternative dispute resolution where possible.

According to the CJN, 125 matters which were already concluded were discovered to be still in the court's active pool and removed. Another 178 "moribund matters", she reported, were "disposed of in chambers." She did not elaborate on the criteria that would render a case moribund. She may wish to clarify this in her next report as it could hold the key to under-

standing the possibility for expanding the scope of matters that can be disposed of in chambers.

Additionally, the report disclosed that the court has established expedited panels for cases involving the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC); Asset Management Corporation of Nigeria (AMCON); Nigeria Revenue Service (NRS); Legal Practitioners Disciplinary Committee (LPDC); and Sharia. 141 cases fell into this category, including 52 EFCC cases; 43 Sharia; 21 AMCON; 17 LPDC; and 10 NRS cases.

Five other issues flagged by the CJN in her SOTAJ report are important.

First is the withholding by the executive of funds budgeted for the judiciary, especially at the state level. This makes a mockery of judicial financial autonomy. In Edo State, a new law assented to by the governor in August 2026 turns back the clock on financial autonomy of the judiciary.

Second is the "continuing need to safeguard the integrity of judicial appointments, particularly at the state level." She can count on public support in implementing her insistence on "merit, competence, integrity and experience" in judicial appointments.

Third is the establishment of an Election Petition Proceedings Centre with a dedicated litigation registry at the Supreme Court. This is welcome and the CJN deserves credit for it.

Fourth is judicial wellbeing. In this connection, it is notable that during the past year, the Supreme Court upgraded attention to "health-care and other essential support services... intended to provide the institutional conditions necessary for judicial officers and staff to discharge their responsibilities effectively."

Fifth, in a year in which women established themselves at the highest levels of Nigeria's legal profession, it was fitting for the CJN to acknowledge the continuing need for equality of opportunities in order to ensure a country "in which talent is recognised, merit is rewarded and no young lawyer is discouraged from aspiring to leadership because of gender, background or circumstance."

These then frame the underlying challenges as this Chief Justice searches for legacy in the 19 months before the curtain falls on her tenure in May 2028. Her next report in 2027 will be the last of her tenure. By then she would hopefully have led the judiciary through the headwinds of the 2027 election season.

Curiously this time, the CJN's report was inexcusably silent on judicial discipline. The CJN is also the Chair of the NJC and reporting on one office without the other is incomplete.

Equally, the omission of death penalty cases from the categories to which her court accords priority says something not entirely complimentary about the priorities and philosophies that currently underpin the work of Nigeria's judiciary. It suggests a system inclined to prioritise power over people and property over dignity. That is a foundational flaw that the leadership of the judiciary and the legal profession must address urgently.

Odinkalu, a lawyer and teacher, can be reached at chidi.odinkalu@tufts.edu

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