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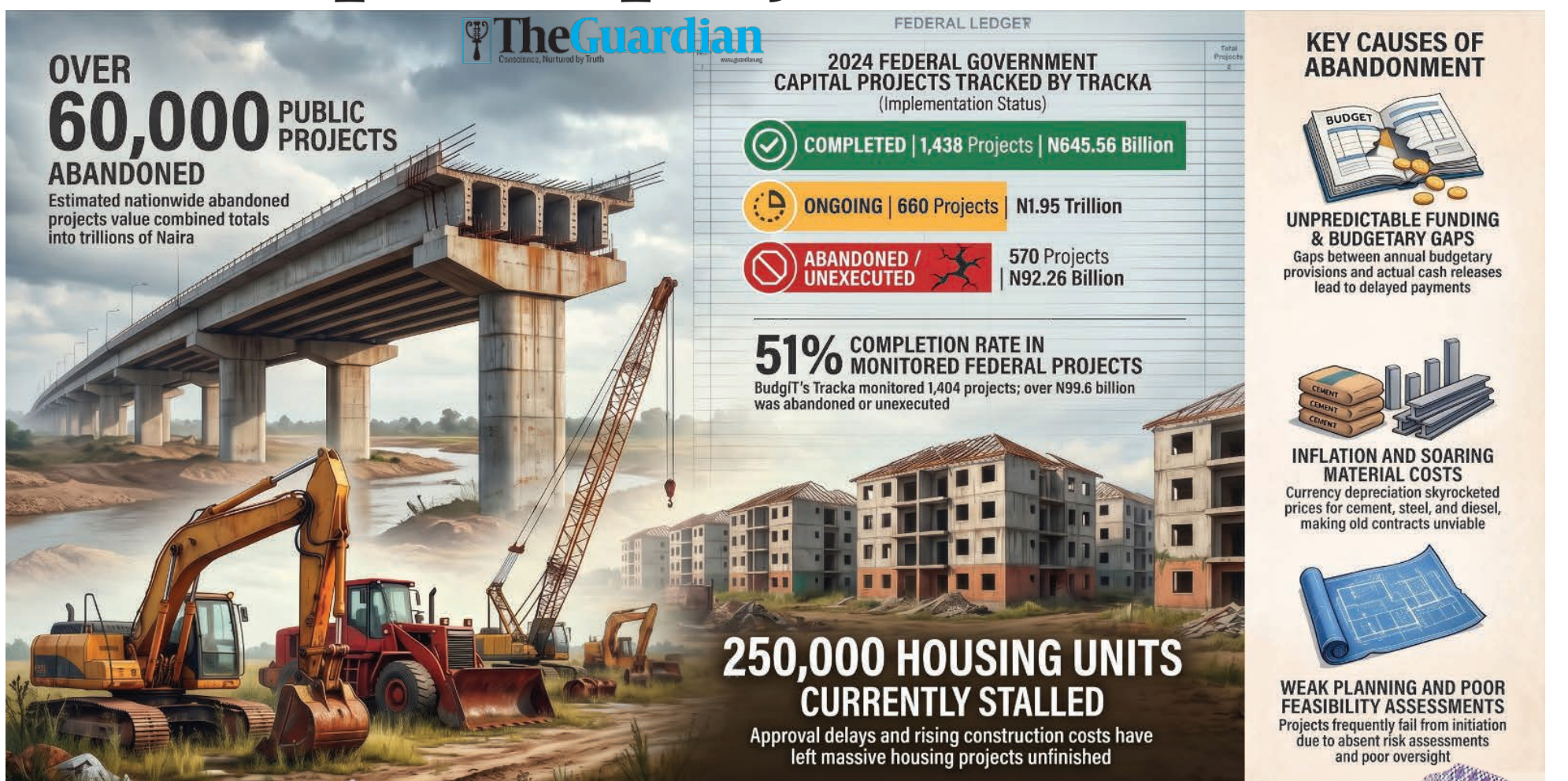
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Construction zone:

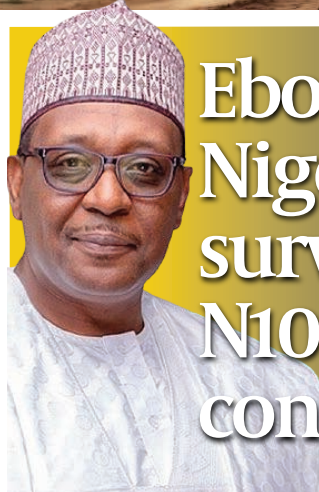
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Weak oversight, fiscal plan leave over 60,000 public projects abandoned



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Reps give MTN, Airtel, Glo, others seven-day ultimatum over poor network

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Panorama

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SPOTLIGHT

Ebola patient is a diplomat, condition deteriorating, says NCDC

From **Nkechi Onyedika-Ugoeze** (Abuja)
THE Nigeria Centre for Disease Control and Prevention (NCDC) yesterday said the Bundibugyo strain of Ebola diagnosed in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) has to do with a diplomat whose condition has deteriorated into "multi-organ failure".

On Tuesday, Health Minister, Muhammad Ali Pate, had announced that a female patient who had travelled from Uganda, tested positive for the virus. But in a statement issued after Pate's comment, Charles Oloro, Director-General of Health Services in the East African country, clarified that the patient is a Nigerian.

Nigeria, Poland explore defence pact in border security, technology

NIGERIA and Poland are exploring stronger defence cooperation, particularly in border security and technology transfer, to enhance military operations and regional security.

The Chief of Defence Staff, Gen. Olufemi Oluyede, and the Polish Ambassador to Nigeria, Michał Cygan, discussed the areas during a meeting at the Defence Headquarters, Abuja. This was contained in a statement by the Director, Defence Information, Maj.-Gen. Samaila Uba, on Wednesday in Abuja.

In his remarks, the Ambassador commended the professionalism, resilience and operational effectiveness of the Armed Forces of Nigeria. Cygan noted that Nigeria's strategic geographical position and sustained security engagements were vital to peace and stability in West Africa and beyond.

He described Nigeria as a crucial stabilising force in the sub-region and identified opportunities for both countries to deepen cooperation and exchange expertise.

... DAY 4561

OUR GIRLS
STILL
MISSING

Tope Templer Olaiya,
News Editor

@TopeTempler



Giving an update on Wednesday, the NCDC said the Bundibugyo strain of Ebola diagnosed in the FCT has to do with a diplomat whose condition has deteriorated. It was first discovered in Uganda in 2007. It spreads via direct contact with infected bodily fluids

or contaminated materials.

Olajumoke Babatunde, NCDC's director of the public health laboratory service, said the Ebola case detected in Nigeria is the Bundibugyo strain, which is behind a major DR Congo outbreak.

The official noted that the pa-

tient's condition has deteriorated into "multi-organ failure". The official did not disclose the nationality of the diplomat.

"We did three levels of tests, but all were molecular. The strain was Bundibugyo," Babatunde said.

'Nigeria loses N1.13tr yearly to foreign cloud dependency'

By **Waliat Musa**

NIGERIA loses about \$850 million, equivalent to N1.13 trillion, annually through its reliance on cloud infrastructure provided by a handful of foreign companies, according to research commissioned by global technology philanthropy, Luminate.

The Chief Executive Officer of Luminate, Melanie Hui, disclosed this on Wednesday in Abuja while delivering the keynote address at the Build 2026 Conference, convened by the Nigeria Artificial Intelli-

gence (AI) Collective.

In her address, titled "Africa in the Global AI Order: Towards Equitable Ownership and Shared Prosperity," Hui said the country's dependence on foreign cloud infrastructure raised questions about digital ownership and the distribution of economic value.

"Nigeria, like countries across the world, relies heavily on cloud infrastructure provided by a handful of foreign companies. The research we commissioned estimates that this dependency costs Nigeria

around \$850 million each year," she said.

Hui stressed that hosting digital infrastructure within a country's borders did not necessarily translate into ownership or control.

Hui identified Nigeria as an example of how African countries can shape the global artificial intelligence (AI) economy, warning against a future in which the continent remains a consumer of technology, a source of raw data and a supplier of low-paid labour.



An overloaded car prepares to join the busy Lagos-Abeokuta Expressway, at Abule-Egba bus-stop as a man looks on yesterday. PHOTO: SUNDAY AKINLOLU

Nigeria's YellowGreens overpower Zambia in T20 W'Cup qualifier

By **Christian Okpara**

NIGERIA'S reputation as an emerging power in African cricket was at the fore yesterday when the senior men's national team, YellowGreens, overpowered Zambia with a nine-wicket victory at the ICC Men's T20 World Cup Africa Sub-Regional Qualifier C in Abuja.

Isaac Danladi contributed an unbeaten 90 and Selim Salau had a career milestone as the YellowGreens continued their

winning start to the sub-regional qualifier C at the NCF Oval 1 in Abuja.

Chasing a target of 143 runs, Nigeria reached 146 for one in 14.5 overs, sealing victory with 31 balls to spare and recording their second consecutive win in the competition.

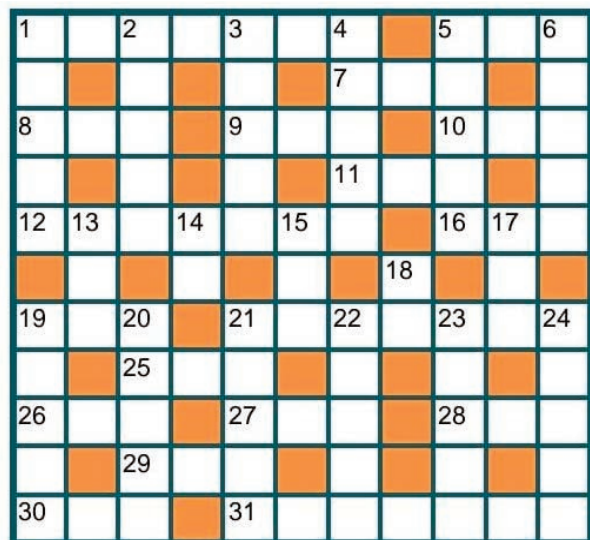
After winning the toss and electing to bat, Zambia posted 142 for nine in their allotted 20 overs.

Ismail Kara top-scored for

Zambia with an impressive 82 off 44 deliveries, including six fours and seven sixes, as he attempted to build a competitive total for his side.

Nigeria's bowlers responded with a disciplined performance. Abdullahi Ismail was the standout, claiming three wickets for just nine runs in his four overs to restrict Zambia's scoring opportunities. The YellowGreens maintained pressure throughout the innings, ensuring the target re-

CROSS WORD PUZZLE



• ACROSS

1. Dam in Sokoto State, (7).
5. Plateau State late Governor, (3).
7. River in southeastern Wales, (3).
8. American Standard Version, abbr.
9. South Asian flat bread, (3).
10. Indicates 'single', (3).
11. Vehicle on rails, (3).
12. Light-colored social insect, (7).
16. Female sheep, (3).
19. Perceive with eyes, (3).
21. Fine Caribbean Island country, (7).
25. Gases forming atmosphere, (3).
26. Angola, abbr., (3).
27. Cause to have problems, (3).
28. National Orientation Agency, abbr.
29. Line of scrimmage, abbr., (3).
30. Town in Osun State, (3).
31. Attract attention of others, (4, 3).

• DOWN

1. Allow as favour, (5).
2. large natural water channel, (5)
3. Senator from Bauchi Central, (5)
4. Unit of weight, (5).
5. Ondo State capital city, (5).
6. vertebrates' waste product, (5)
13. East-northeast, abbr., (3).
14. Mega base, abbr., (2).
15. Drink made by infusion, (3).
17. Workers' Educational Asso., abbr.
18. Hawaiian, abbr., (2).
19. Be frightened, (5).
20. large prey bird, (5).
21. Yellow alloy, (5).
22. Word to attract attention, (5).
23. Sweet yellow tropical fruit, (5)
24. Military sash, (5).

© Olulana Olukayode

Check Back Page for solution to the puzzle

RANDOM FACTS

- The most complicated word in English language is 'run' that holds a record-high 645 different possible meanings, according to Oxford English Dictionary editors.
- Adomania (n): The sense that the future is coming too quickly.
- In darkness, your senses of touch and hearing are heightened. The brain shifts focus to amplify sensory cues, helping you pick up on subtle sounds and textures that would otherwise go unnoticed.

TODAY'S QUOTE



All the world's a stage,
and all the men and
women merely players.
They have their exits
and their entrances,
and one man in his time
plays many parts.

WILLIAMS
SHAKESPEARE

When a country is well
governed, poverty and a
mean condition are things
to be ashamed of. When a
country is ill governed,
riches and honor are things
to be ashamed of.

Real knowledge is to
know the extent of one's
ignorance.

CONFUCIUS

It requires a lot of
energy to hold a grudge.

GREGORY
OKORO-IDOGU



TODAY IN HISTORY

- Stuttering Awareness Day
- 2019 - Ireland

Same-sex marriage was legalised and abortion was decriminalised in Northern Ireland.

- 2018 - Nigeria

Policemen escorted NHIS Executive Secretary, Usman Yusuf, into office. Workers had earlier blocked entrance to the office complex but were unable to resist security operatives who aided Yusuf's entrance.

- 2018 - Cameroon

Paul Biya was re-elected as president of Cameroon for another term of seven years in office. Clement Atangana who declared the results, said Biya won 71.3 per cent of the votes.

- 2017 - Nigeria

A Federal High Court in Abuja ordered that all monies in bank accounts owned by corporate firms, government agencies or individuals that are without Bank Verification Numbers (BVNs) be forfeited to the federal government in 14 days should the account owners fail to state why their monies should not be forfeited.

• The scramble to acquire 9mobile, Nigeria's fourth largest network operator, began as 16 firms submitted expressions of interest (EoIs) to Barclays to bid.

- 2011 - S/Arabia

Saudi Crown Prince Sultan bin Abdul Aziz, heir to the throne, died in the United States. He had been receiving treatment for colon cancer since 2009. The most likely candidate to replace Sultan as King Abdullah's successor is Prince Nayef (78), the powerful interior minister in charge of internal security

- 2011 - Nigeria

Boko Haram insurgents shot dead Zakariyya Isa, a NTA reporter in Maiduguri.

- 2009 - Uruguay

Uruguay's last dictator, Gregorio Alvarez (83), was sentenced to 25 years in prison for 37 homicides during his 1973-1985 military regime, when dissidents disappeared in a region-wide crackdown on leftists called "Operation Condor."

- 2005 - Nigeria

A Boeing 737-200 plane, Belview Airlines Flight 210 crashed after takeoff from Lagos en route to Abuja at Lisa Village, Ogun State, killing all 117 on board.

- 2001 - Nigeria

Between Oct 22 to 24, soldiers killed up to 200 civilians in Zaki Biam, Benue State causing thousands of villagers to flee into the bush. The killings were in revenge for 19 soldiers. Pres. Obasanjo acknowledged ordering the attacks and made a formal apology on Jan 1, 2003.

Ekiti, Anambra, Benue, two others pass State Police Bill

From **Ayodele Afolabi, Ado Ekiti**
At the last count, 13 states have already passed the State Police Bill, which is awaiting assent by 24 Houses of Assembly.

The Ekiti State House of Assembly has passed the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999 (Sixth Alteration) Bill, 2026, seeking to provide for the establishment of State Police in Nigeria.

The bill scaled second and third readings during plenary in Ado Ekiti, with all 21 members present supporting its passage, signalling the Assembly's endorsement of the proposed constitutional framework for decentralised policing.

Following the passage, the Speaker, Adeoye Aribasoye, directed the Clerk of the House to transmit the document to the National Assembly, alongside the observations made by the state legislature.

He described the proposed establishment of State Police as a matter that had remained at the forefront of national discourse for more than two decades, noting that the Ekiti Assembly had a historic opportunity to make its position known on the issue.

Also, the Benue State House of Assembly passed a similar bill seeking to amend the Nigerian Constitution to allow the establishment of state police, adding its voice to ongoing efforts

to decentralise policing and address the country's security challenges.

The bill was approved during Tuesday's plenary presided over by the Speaker, Alfred Emberga, following deliberations led by the House Majority Leader, Peter Ipusu.

Ipusu urged lawmakers to expedite consideration of the proposed amendment, arguing that state police would strengthen intelligence gathering at the grassroots, improve responses to security emergencies and enhance law enforcement.

He maintained that decentralised policing could help tackle security threats, including rural banditry, farmer-

herder conflicts and urban crime, while creating employment opportunities and promoting accountability.

The Imo State House of Assembly yesterday approved a proposed alteration to the 1999 Constitution to provide for the establishment of state police services and related matters. The resolution followed a motion moved by the Majority Leader, Kanayo Onyemaechi, representing Owerri West, during plenary.

Moving the motion, Onyemaechi said the National Assembly had transmitted the bill to the state legislature for consideration and approval, in line with constitutional provisions.

He said the House would be discharging its statutory responsibility by considering the proposed amendment and taking a position on it, stressing that insecurity remained a major concern requiring urgent attention.

The majority leader urged his colleagues to approve the constitutional alteration, arguing that the establishment of state police services would help address security challenges across the country.

Following its brother, the Anambra State House of Assembly has passed a resolution to pave the way for the establishment of state police.

The bill passed through the first, second and third readings during plenary in Awka, marking a step towards establishing a constitutional framework for decentralised policing in the country.

The executive bill, which originated from the Presidency, seeks to provide a legal basis for

states to establish their own police services, subject to constitutional provisions and an Act of the National Assembly prescribing minimum national policing standards.

Under the proposed framework, the Nigeria Police Force would remain the default policing institution in a state until a state police service is lawfully established and certified operational.

The bill also retains the Federal Government's policing responsibilities across the 36 states and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Abuja, while providing safeguards for civilian oversight, human rights protection, national policing standards, independent police service commissions, inter-governmental cooperation, criminal information systems and firearms control.

At the plenary, presided over by the Speaker, Dr Somtochukwu Udezue, the lawmakers adopted the bill through a voice vote.

Senate summons NMDPRA, NNPC officials over discrepancies in fuel import records

No plan to tax petrol, Oyedele clarifies amid controversy

From **John Akubo, Abuja**

THE Senate has rejected conflicting records of Premium Motor Spirit (PMS) imports presented by the Nigerian Midstream and Downstream Petroleum Regulatory Authority (NMDPRA) and the Nigerian National Petroleum Company Limited (NNPCL).

It maintained that the huge discrepancies raise serious questions about the integrity of the figures.

Meanwhile, the Minister of Finance and Coordinating Minister of the Economy, Taiwo Oyedele, has clarified that the Federal Government has no plan to introduce petrol tax next year amid the high cost of living faced by Nigerians.

The Senate Committee on Public Accounts had on Tuesday resolved to summon the heads of NMDPRA, NNPC Ltd and Nigeria Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (NEITI) to explain the differences and reconcile the records.

The lawmakers said the investigation could expose suspected irregularities in the reporting of petrol imports into the country.

The discrepancies emerged when NMDPRA officials appeared before the committee to respond to queries raised in NEITI's Oil and Gas Industry Audit Report from 2021 to 2023.

NMDPRA chief executive, Rabiu Umar, was represented at the session by a deputy director, Uzoamaka Ugwu-Ojobe.

Defending the authority's figures, Ugwu-Ojobe insisted that its records were credible, despite the significant differences with those submitted by NNPC.



President of the Republic of Sierra Leone, Dr Julius Maada Bio (left) and former President of Nigeria, Dr Goodluck Jonathan during the latter's visit to Sierra Leone.

Atiku, Obi, others close to consensus candidacy, says G100

From **Adamu Abuh, Abuja**

OPPOSITION leaders associated with the African Democratic Congress (ADC), Nigeria Democratic Congress (NDC), Peoples Redemption Party (PRP), Social Democratic Party (SDP) and other political platforms have made significant progress towards producing a consensus presidential candidate to challenge President Bola Tinubu of the All Progressives Congress (APC) in the 2027 general election, the G100 Coalition has said.

Adding a fillip to the arrangement, the presidential candidate of the Young Progressives Party (YPP), Peter Agada, said he is waiting for a call from NDC's Peter Obi and ADC's Atiku Abubakar, stressing his willingness to work with either or both opposition figures, provided they align with his plans for Nigeria.

The coalition, yesterday in Abuja, expressed optimism as it inaugurated the legal and media committees to provide a framework for negotiations among the parties and their leading presidential hopefuls, including Atiku, Obi, PRP's Don-

YPP's Agada waits in the wings as coalition inaugurates c'tees to advance negotiations

ald Duke and SDP's Adewale Adebayo.

Chairman of the G100 Coalition, Prof. Sadiq Gombé, who chaired the session, claimed that discussions involving party leaders and presidential candidates had advanced, expressing confidence that outstanding issues could be resolved before the presidential election billed for January 16, 2027.

"Our ambition is to present a candidate that can defeat APC and form the next government, and we're making very good progress," he said.

The meeting was attended by chairmen and representatives of the ADC, NDC, PRP, SDP, Allied Peoples Movement (APM) and Peoples Democratic Party (PDP). Gombé said the inauguration of the committees marked a deliberate move to translate the coalition's political intentions into a structured process capable of sustaining negotiations and addressing potential obstacles to an agreement.

"Today, we take a deliberate step from intention to structure. The

work of this coalition will be judged not only by the strength of our convictions, but by the discipline, precision and unity with which we carry it out," he said.

The legal committee, comprising national legal advisers of participating parties and other senior legal representatives, as agreed, is expected to examine the legal and constitutional implications of the proposed alliance.

Its responsibilities include reviewing outstanding legal challenges confronting the parties, examining the actions of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) in relation to relevant Supreme Court judgments, and advising the coalition on lawful options available to it.

The committee will also review working-group documents and negotiated agreements, identify potential legal risks, recommend safeguards and establish dispute-resolution mechanisms before any coalition agreement is adopted.

Dangote to expand fuel supply in Africa with Kenya pipeline deal

By **Waliat Musa**

PRESIDENT/Chief Executive of Dangote Industries Limited, Aliko Dangote, has disclosed plans to expand the group's petroleum distribution network across Africa, following the acquisition of a 25 per cent stake in Kenya's petroleum products pipeline network, as he called on African governments to protect domestic industries against unfair foreign competition.

Dangote said the group was pursuing investments in pipelines, storage facilities and supply corridors across East, Central and Southern Africa to address petroleum supply constraints and improve the movement of refined products between markets.

Speaking during a conversation with *Financial Times* journalist David Pilling, the industrialist disclosed that the group was developing a distribution corridor linking Djibouti to Addis Ababa in Ethiopia, while projects in Cameroon and Namibia were also at various stages of development.

He said the group's invest-

ment in Kenya's pipeline network was part of a broader plan to establish an integrated petroleum distribution system across the continent. "We are very aggressive with that," Dangote said in response to a question about the group's plans to develop depots, pipelines and other petroleum distribution infrastructure.

"Just let me tell you, yesterday, with the support from the President of Kenya, we bought 25 per cent of the pipeline network for the distribution of petroleum products," he said.

Dangote identified Namibia as a strategic location for supplying refined petroleum products from the Dangote Petroleum Refinery in Lagos to markets in Southern Africa, including Botswana and South Africa.

"From our refinery to Namibia is just about four days of steaming," he said, outlining plans for a distribution corridor through Zimbabwe and Zambia, with strategically located storage and transportation facilities intended to serve several countries.

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News Analysis

Can Mbah's smart initiative sustain confidence in public schools?

With a massive recruitment of over 2,200 teachers for the smart, green school initiative, Enugu State appears set for a major educational leap. The move is hurting private school owners as teachers and pupils are leaving in droves, but the major concern is the sustainability of the 'smart' attractions, LAWRENCE NJOKU reports.

THE notice board of one of the private schools on the New Layout axis of Enugu State recently displayed the list of vacant positions at the facility. The school's management made the post.

Among the positions to be filled were English Language teachers, as well as those of Mathematics, Integrated Science, Civic Education, Igbo Language and others.

The notice had asked interested applicants to "appear in person" with their application letters.

At another private secondary school along Agbani Road, seven teachers, including those in the junior secondary, failed to return to work after resumption of the ongoing academic session. It was later gathered that they were among the teachers recently recruited into Enugu State Government's Smart Green Schools.

At one of the faith-based secondary schools in the Achara Layout area of the state, Mrs Catherine Ugwu had shown up to inform the management that her children would no longer continue at the school. Mrs Ugwu's twins were admitted into Junior Secondary 1 of the school last year.

She confided to *The Guardian* that the departure of some teachers, which had become a topic of discussion on the Parents-Teachers platform, was responsible for her action, adding that the school had found it difficult to secure suitable replacements at the time of resumption.

Mrs Mercy Ozor, a teacher in a private primary school in Trans-Ekulu, Enugu, alluded to the development when she told *The Guardian*: "Four of our teachers did not return this session. I heard they got employment with the government. We have managed to recruit two teachers. But I can tell you that you cannot compare them with the ones that have left."

"For the other two vacancies, we have been shuffling ourselves and classes while hoping to get capable hands that could take them. This is only the first term, and some students who were given admission did not show up. Some showed up within the first week and left on learning about the shortage of teaching staff."

Many private primary and secondary schools in Enugu are currently battling shortage of teaching staff since the resumption of 2026/2027 academic exercise. The development may not be unconnected with the commencement of activities in some of the 260 smart green schools being constructed by the state government.

The government kick-started some of the completed smart school initiative in September 2026 with the recruitment of 2,299 teachers, who were posted to various schools after their induction. These teachers, described as the first batch of the teaching staff expected to be employed for the schools, were part of those involved in the computer-based tests written in 2024.

During the assessment tests for the candidates that applied for the teaching vacancies in 2024, the Commissioner for Education, Prof. Ndubueze Mbah, disclosed that the state would employ about 6,580 teachers in the smart schools. He added that no fewer than 26,000 candidates had applied for the smart school jobs.

Explaining that his ministry decided to come up with "a bias-free process of evaluating their subject area competency and basic digital literacy proficiency," added that two centres were designated for the assessment with a minimum of 6,000 candidates per day.

"It is very important for us to make sure that the teachers who shall be teaching our children



have basic numeric and literacy proficiency; that is why we are having general examinations in Mathematics and English Language.

"They are also being tested on basic digital literacy; if you are a teacher who is going to teach in the smart school, you are going to be using a computer, smart board, and a digital hybrid library. It is a high-tech environment. We want to make sure that our teachers have at least basic knowledge of computer," he stated.

The new smart green schools operate the lower and upper basic classes - from the nursery - primary to the junior secondary levels. Those recruited are not just qualified teachers but are also at their best in their core subject areas.

It was gathered that the new system being run in the school approved teachers for core subjects from primary four, unlike the conventional primary school system where a single teacher handles all the subjects from primary one to primary six.

The Guardian gathered that the plan to unveil the smart schools as a means of improving education and restoring confidence in public schools was initiated when Governor Peter Mbah assumed office in May, 2023.

He had promised to establish the school in each of Enugu's 260 electoral wards, adding that the schools are to be designed around digital learning, science laboratories, modern classrooms, solar power, technology and experiential learning rather than the old modern of memorisation and inadequate infrastructure.

The governor argued then that "If Enugu wants to become a \$30 billion economy, it cannot educate its children for an economy that no longer exists. It must prepare them for technology, science, entrepreneurship, manufacturing, agriculture, creative industries and a globally competitive labour market," he said.

To actualise this, Mbah deliberately set out more than 33 per cent of the state's budget in both 2024 and 2025, while the 2026 budget allocation was about 32.27 per cent to the education sector. Each of the schools was estimated to cost about N1.2 billion.

So far, some of the schools are now up and running. The state government has not only

upgraded and trained the teachers to comply with the modern technological trends in education; it is also monitoring them to ensure that they delivered accordingly. This development is unsettling some private schools that are being challenged by lack of adequate teaching staff, and rising number of students' withdrawals.

The Enugu public school system has for sometimes now been crumbling over alleged government neglect following the inability of previous administrations to effectively fund and provide for the needs of the sector.

With a high number of school environments becoming unkempt and littered with dilapidated structures, several schools even had pupils learning in found spaces without adequate desks and basic teaching aids. In some communities, learning was conducted under trees as a result of inadequate or dilapidated classrooms.

The development paved the way for migration of educators to private schools. Pupils followed suite.

Before long, private primary and secondary schools became a hallmark of the state as parents encouraged them.

The state government also did not help matters as it issued licenses to anyone willing to operate such schools no matter the location. This led to the uncontrolled springing up of unapproved, low-cost private schools with many (even till now) operating under uncompleted buildings or residential buildings all in the name of serving as alternatives to failing public schools.

All these appear to be changing as the Mbah-led administration moves to restore confidence in public schools by modernising many schools and closing some privately-owned substandard or unregistered schools.

Also recently, private school operators raised an alarm over alleged heavy, multiple taxations, including business and environmental charges being placed on them.

They are now also made to undergo yearly license renewal while the ministry's compliance arm has been activated to ensure regular monitoring of the schools to ensure that they possess adequate learning materials.

To further actualise his plan, the Mbah-led government also closed some public schools that



Mbah

are located close to the smart schools and sent affected learners to the smart schools.

Parents, who have realised the scale of infrastructure in the schools, are massively withdrawing their children from private schools and enrolling them back into the public system.

Some of them insist that the schools are cheaper and provide better opportunities for learning than private schools with higher school fees and without enough room for effective education.

Mrs Chinenye Igwebuike, who was among the first batch of teachers recruited into the smart schools, told *The Guardian* that she decided to quit a private secondary school where she taught English Language, Literature and Government for five years, because, "I needed a pensionable job."

She added that there are better opportunities for growth and development for any teacher in the smart schools at the moment because of the facilities in them.

"I competed with several other qualified teachers and was picked after a computer-based interview. We went for induction and several other sessions where we were exposed to modern technological facilities that now define education in the state. These would not have been possible if I were still in a private school," she said.

Also, the state chairman of the National Association of Proprietors of Private Schools, Nelson Agu, who acknowledged that the introduction of the smart schools had challenged private schools, said they had upgraded their "schools to meet the required standards"

Many are questioning how far that these measures being undertaken by the Mbah administration could fully restore the lost confidence in public schools operated by the government and in the long run discourage the rise of private schools in Enugu.

The question has become necessary following concerns being raised over the location of some of these schools and their proximity to those they are meant to serve. Many residents still don't believe that Mbah's formula is feasible and would rather stick with private schools.

It was observed that because of the location of political wards in some communities, those living in peripheral villages within the ward trek several kilometers to their school. This was not the case before now.

There are also concerns about the completion time and equipment availability in some of these schools in several communities with the increasing responsibilities that the state government has undertaken of late, especially the over 800 additional political appointments, a development that has increased its monthly wage bill.

In the penultimate week, the Parents-Teachers Association of the Government Technical College, Enugu, had raised some worries over alleged poor teaching and lack of practical training in some departments in the school, including the inability of students to use computer sets despite their availability and well trained and qualified teachers.

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

Shettima tasks states to own power markets, end dependence on FG

From **Terhamba Daka** (Abuja) and **Waliat Musa** (Lagos)

VICE President Kashim Shettima has challenged state governments to end their reliance on the Federal Government for electricity solutions, urging them to establish functional power markets, attract private investment and harness

NELFUND warns varsities, others against compulsory student loans

From **Owede Agbajileke**, Abuja

NIGERIAN Education Loan Fund (NELFUND) has declared that accessing its student loan scheme is voluntary, warning tertiary institutions against making it compulsory for students.

This followed the controversy surrounding the directive by the Enugu State College of Education (Technical), Enugu, mandating all students to apply for the facility.

The Fund, in a statement issued yesterday in Abuja, said the scheme was designed to support students who genuinely needed financial assistance to pursue their education, stressing that students who could afford their educational expenses were under no obligation to borrow.

The clarification comes amid outrage over an internal memorandum by the Enugu State College of Education (Technical).

Nigeria pushes digital future as NITDA rallies MDAs for IPv6 migration

By **Adeyemi Adepetun**

NIGERIA is taking bold steps toward a digitally empowered future as the National Information Technology Development Agency (NITDA) spearheads the migration of government institutions to Internet Protocol version 6 (IPv6). This initiative signals the country's commitment to modernising its digital infrastructure, ensuring that Ministries, Departments, and Agencies (MDAs) are equipped to deliver secure, efficient, and future-ready public services.

The IPv6 migration training, now underway across MDAs, marked a critical milestone in Nigeria's digital transformation agenda. By preparing government agencies to adopt the next-generation Internet protocol, NITDA said it was not only addressing the limitations of IPv4 but also positioning Nigeria to harness emerging technologies, strengthen cybersecurity, and expand access to inclusive digital services for citizens nationwide.

FG says investment, not gas reserves, will unlock Nigeria's industrial growth

their local energy resources to drive economic growth.

Shettima said Nigeria's ambition to build a competitive industrial economy would remain unrealised unless the ongoing electricity reforms translated into reliable and affordable power for businesses, households and public institutions.

He spoke yesterday while declaring open the National Stakeholders' Workshop on the Electricity Act 2023 at the State House Banquet Hall, Presidential Villa, Abuja.

The workshop, themed "Unlocking the Opportunities of the Electricity Act 2023 for Sustainable Energy Development and Economic Growth in Nigeria," brought together federal and state institutions, regulators, and other stakeholders to examine the legislation's implementation.

Represented by the Deputy Chief of Staff to the President, Senator Ibrahim Hassan Hadejia, the Vice President said the Act had opened up opportunities for states to take greater respon-

sibility for electricity governance and develop markets tailored to their economic needs and available energy resources.

Shettima identified Nigeria's diverse energy resources as a major opportunity for states to expand electricity access, citing solar power potential in Sokoto, Borno and Katsina; natural gas resources in Delta, Rivers and Bayelsa; and hydroelectric opportunities in Niger and Kebbi states.

He urged state governments to translate these natural

advantages into viable investments capable of powering agriculture, manufacturing, healthcare and education.

The Vice President, however, warned that the passage of legislation alone would not guarantee improved electricity supply, stressing the need for states yet to establish regulatory institutions to commence the process without delay.

MEANWHILE, the Federal Government has identified sustained investment as critical to converting Nigeria's more than 200 trillion cubic feet (Tcf) of

proven gas reserves into industrial growth, electricity generation and job creation, as it disclosed that over N100 billion in long-standing gas debts had been settled since January 2026.

The Special Adviser to the President on Energy (Oil and Gas), Mrs Olu Arowolo Verheijen, disclosed yesterday at the Africa Interviews Sustainability Forum 2026 in Lagos, stressing that natural resource abundance alone could not guarantee economic prosperity without consistent investment and a stable business environment.

Don seeks overhaul of varsities curriculum to produce job creators

From **Ayodele Afolabi**

UNIVERSITY Professor and Chairman of United Nigeria Airlines, Prof. Obiora Okonkwo, has called on the Nigerian universities to overhaul the education systems to produce job creators, innovators and problem-solvers rather than job seekers.

Okonkwo said that Nigeria's quest for sustainable economic growth would remain elusive unless the universities and other institutions equipped students with practical skills, technical competence and entrepreneurial abilities required to address the country's developmental challenges.

He made the call while delivering the 14th convocation lecture of Afe Babalola University, Ado-Ekiti, Ekiti State titled: "Functional Education and the Nigerian Project: Strategic Human Capital Development for National Renewal."

ECOWAS seeks EU expertise to strengthen W'Africa's disaster response

By **Oludare Richards**

ECONOMIC Community of West African States (ECOWAS) is exploring European disaster management practices to strengthen West Africa's capacity to detect emerging threats, coordinate emergency responses and mobilise relief resources across the region.

The move followed a five-day study visit to Germany and Belgium, where ECOWAS officials and disaster management experts examined how European institutions coordinate emergency operations, share information and deploy assistance when disasters strike.

The visit, held from October 12 to 16, is expected to inform efforts to strengthen the ECOWAS Emergency Operations Centre (EDOC) and establish a regional cooperation and solidarity mechanism for disaster preparedness and response.



Minister of Aviation and Aerospace Development, Festus Keyamo (left); Ekiti State Governor, Biodun Oyebanji; former President, Nigeria Bar Association (NBA), Wole Olanipekun (SAN); Chairman, CAVISTA Holdings and Honorary degree awardee, John Olajide; Founder, Afe Babalola University, Ado-Ekiti (ABUAD), Aare Afe Babalola (SAN); his wife, Modupe Babalola; and ABUAD's Vice-Chancellor, Prof. Smaranda Olarinde, at the institution's 14th convocation ceremony in Ado-Ekiti, yesterday.

Reps give MTN, Airtel, Glo, others seven-day ultimatum over poor network

From **Joel Oladele**, Abuja

HOUSE Representatives has given MTN Nigeria, Airtel Nigeria, Globacom, Mafab Communications and other telecom operators seven days to explain persistent poor network services across the country.

The ultimatum came yesterday during a public hearing in Abuja, where the lawmakers directed the companies' chief executives to appear before the committee on

October 28, 2026.

The decision followed the adoption of two motions sponsored by Sunday Umeha and Afam Ogene.

The committee expressed displeasure over the failure of some operators, including MTN and Mafab Communications, to honour previous invitations.

The lawmakers directed the Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC) to ensure compliance and ordered the operators to submit relevant

documents before the hearing, scheduled for 2 p.m. at Hearing Room 447 of the New Building of the National Assembly Complex, Abuja.

They warned that any chief executive who failed to appear could face an arrest summons.

Committee Chairman, Olumide Osoba (APC-Ogun), said reliable telecommunications services were essential to Nigeria's economy, supporting businesses,

financial transactions and everyday communication.

He said the House established the ad hoc committee to investigate recurring subscriber complaints and identify the causes of poor service delivery.

Osoba also criticised operators for sending lower-ranking officials or offering excuses instead of allowing their chief executives to answer questions about network performance and operational challenges.

Only 108 of 39,000 underage UTME candidates qualify for admission, says Alausa

From **Owede Agbajileke**, Abuja

ONLY 108 underage candidates out of more than 2.17 million students who sat the 2026 Unified Tertiary Matriculation Examination (UTME) have qualified for possible admission into tertiary institutions after meeting the Federal Government's stringent academic and maturity requirements.

The Minister of Education, Dr Tunji Alausa, disclosed this on Wednesday in Abuja while receiving the two highest-scoring candidates and six best-performing underage candidates in the

2026 UTME, presented by the Registrar of the Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board (JAMB), Prof. Segun Aina.

Alausa said 2,244,149 candidates registered for the 2026 UTME, while 2,174,396 sat the examination. Of these, approximately 39,000 were below the age of 16, the minimum age prescribed by the government for admission into tertiary institutions.

He explained that candidates seeking exemption from the age requirement had to satisfy multiple screening conditions, including scoring at least

320 out of 400 in the UTME, equivalent to 80 per cent.

They were also required to score at least 80 per cent in their post-UTME examinations, attain the prescribed 80 per cent threshold in the assessment of their O-level results and pass a screening exercise designed to establish their psychological, emotional and intellectual readiness for university education.

According to the minister, only 391 candidates from the underage group scored at least 320 in the UTME, while further assessments narrowed the number of

successful candidates to 108.

He described the candidates as exceptionally gifted, saying they represented approximately 0.005 per cent of those who sat the examination.

The minister said the decision to maintain a minimum admission age of 16 was not intended to prevent gifted children from advancing academically but to ensure that those admitted at a younger age possessed the intellectual ability and emotional maturity required for higher education.

Weak oversight, fiscal plan leave over 60,000 public projects abandoned

By Victor Gbonegun and Tunde Akinola

NIGERIA'S abandoned public projects crisis has assumed alarming proportions, with billions of naira committed to infrastructure that remains incomplete, unexecuted or left to deteriorate.

Although the country has no comprehensive, continuously updated national database of abandoned projects, available evidence from government agencies and independent monitors points to the scale of the problem.

The National Assembly recently cited figures indicating that more than 60,000 projects have been abandoned across the country, with their combined value running into trillions of naira. The House of Representatives subsequently called for a comprehensive review of abandoned Federal Government projects, including their contract values, amounts spent and stages of completion.

Field monitoring by Budget's Tracka provides further evidence. Between September 2023 and September 2024, Tracka monitored 1,404 government projects worth N282.5 billion across 25 states. Of these, 720, representing 51 per cent, were completed, while 332 were ongoing. Another 129 projects were abandoned or fraudulently executed, while 223 projects valued at N79.81 billion were not executed.

Tracka estimated the value of the abandoned projects at about N19.81 billion, while

- Govt inherited ongoing projects valued at N14.42 trillion
- Finance ministry plans payment for 1,240 local contractors
- Budget knocks BPP over oversight failures in public project execution
- Experts blame delayed payments, incomplete budget implementation
- 'Prolonged abandonment will reduce surrounding property values'

abandoned and unexecuted projects together represented more than N99.6 billion in public funds.

Its subsequent assessment of 2,760 Federal Government capital projects under the 2024 budget, valued at more than N1.9 trillion, also showed significant implementation gaps. Only 1,438 projects, valued at N645.56 billion, were completed, while 660 worth N1.95 trillion were ongoing. Another 471 projects, valued at

N62.29 billion, had not been executed, while 99 projects worth N29.97 billion were abandoned.

Tracka also found that five states: Taraba, Abia, Nasarawa, Adamawa and Ogun accounted for 97.5 per cent of abandoned Federal Government projects in its monitoring, despite full disbursement of funds. The projects in the five states were valued at N7.8 billion out of N8 billion linked to projects for which funds

had been released. Taraba accounted for the largest share, while 17 states recorded no abandoned projects during the tracking period.

The findings have raised questions about accountability and oversight in public project execution, including the effectiveness of the Bureau of Public Procurement (BPP). There has been no record of a domestic firm being blacklisted under the newly implemented debarment

framework.

The scale of the problem is particularly striking in the road sector. In November 2025, the Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC), working with the Federal Ministry of Works, commenced a nationwide physical verification and performance audit of 760 federal road projects valued at more than N36 trillion across the 36 states and the Federal Capital Territory. The exercise is expected to identify abandoned projects and strengthen contractor accountability.

In the housing sector, 250,000 housing units have reportedly been identified as

abandoned projects for assessment. Officials attributed the stalled projects to factors including approval delays, changes in contractors and rising construction costs.

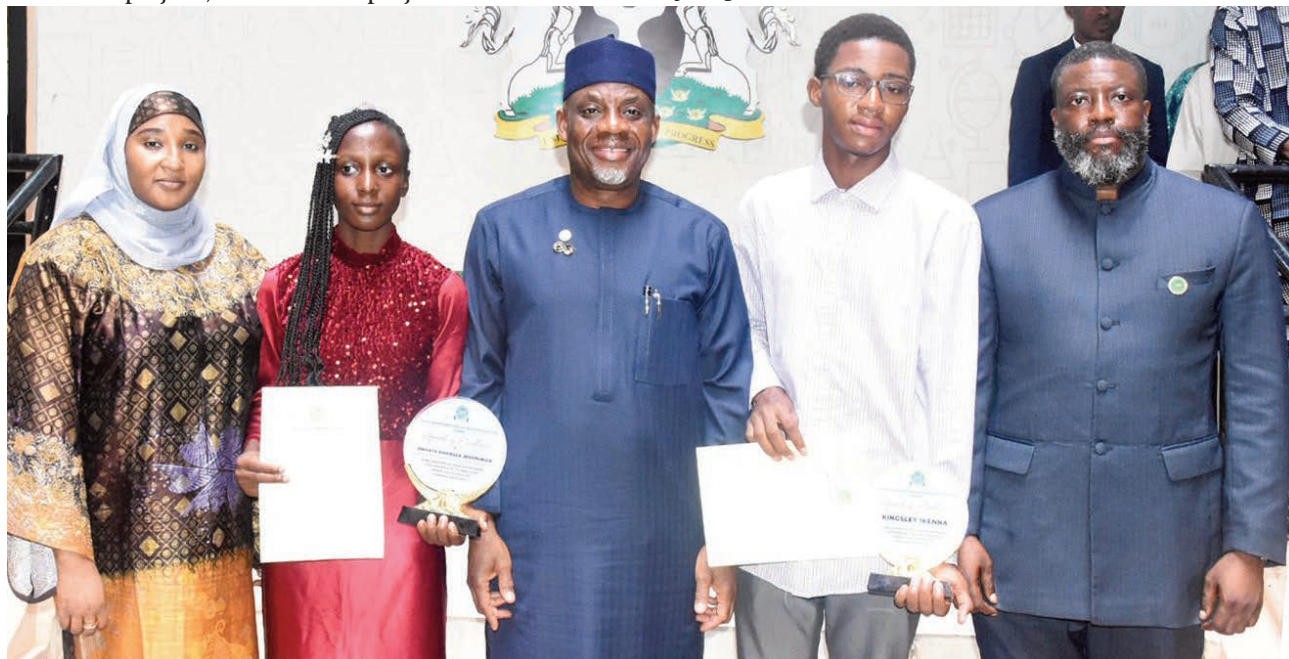
The Minister of Housing and Urban Development, Muttagha Darma, said the ministry was reviewing abandoned projects nationwide to determine their status, level of completion and the interventions required to restore them for public use.

Darma said that completing the projects would prevent the waste of resources already committed and increase the number of housing units available to Nigerians. Data from agencies under the ministry also identified 46 major abandoned housing projects across the 36 states through the Federal Mortgage Bank of Nigeria (FMBN).

According to the Open Treasury Portal, the Federal Government released approximately N2.68 trillion for the construction, rehabilitation and maintenance of federal roads and bridges. The initial cost of inherited ongoing projects was put at N14.42 trillion, while N3.12 trillion had been certified as paid at the time.

The funding challenge comes amid rising public debt. The Debt Management Office (DMO) reported that Nigeria's public debt stock stood at N166.79 trillion as of June 30, 2026, an increase of N7.44 trillion from N159.35 trillion at the end of the first quarter.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 10



Minister of State for Education, Prof. Suwaiba Ahmad (left); the overall best candidate for 2026 JAMB, Owuoye Daniella; Minister of Education, Dr Tunji Alausa; another overall best candidate for 2026 JAMB, Kingsley Ikenna, and Registrar of Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board (JAMB), Prof. Segun Aina, during the award of recognition by the Minister of Education to celebrate JAMB 2026 Customer Week in Abuja, yesterday. PHOTO: NAN

Ebola: FG assures Nigerians amid surveillance, NIOb fund concerns

From Terhembba Daka, Sodiq Omolaoye, Nkechi Onyedika-Ugoeze, John Akubo, Joel Oladele, Tina Abeku (Abuja), Olusegun Koi-ki, Ijeoma Nwanosike and Opeyemi Babalola (Lagos)

THE Federal Government has moved to allay fears over Nigeria's latest Ebola case, assuring citizens of effective containment measures, but questions over airport surveillance, possible gaps in contact tracing and the whereabouts of the N10 billion reportedly earmarked for preparedness have raised concerns about the country's response.

It followed the confirmation of the infection in a woman who travelled to Abuja through Addis Ababa on October 5, 2026.

The woman reportedly de-

- Experts question preparedness, contact tracing gaps
- FAAN steps up airport vigilance as health authorities track 44 contacts
- Gbajabiamila: Patient responding well to treatment
- Atiku demands audit of alleged NIOb preparedness fund
- Senate, Reps demand emergency funds, tighter screening
- NSCIA urges suspected cases to avoid congregational prayers
- Ghana steps up Ebola surveillance after cases in Nigeria, Kenya

veloped symptoms two days after arriving in Nigeria and sought treatment at a private hospital in Abuja on October 11, presenting with malaria-like symptoms. Her condition reportedly failed to improve.

Health officials subsequently established that she had recently travelled to Uganda, which is affected by the current outbreak. She was tested for Ebola on October 19, with the positive result confirmed on Tuesday.

Nigerian health authorities have since identified 44 contacts linked to the case, most of them healthcare workers. The contacts also include the patient's husband, a Swiss national residing with her in Abuja.

The government said it had intensified contact tracing and containment measures, ruling out an immediate blanket quarantine of Nigerians. Minister of Health and Social Welfare, Prof Muhammad Ali Pate, said the government was working closely with Uganda and other relevant health authorities to prevent further transmission, expressing confidence in Nigeria's public health infrastructure and expertise.

Pate spoke yesterday night after a closed-door meeting with the Chief of Staff to the President, Femi Gbajabiamila, at the Presidential Villa, Abuja. He disclosed that the Nigeria

Centre for Disease Control and Prevention (NCDC) had activated its incident management system, with health officials working round the clock to trace contacts, monitor potential exposure and implement containment measures.

The Chief of Staff to the President has confirmed that the woman is currently responding well to treatment.

The minister urged Nigerians to remain vigilant, observe public health precautions and rely on verified information from official sources rather than spreading rumours or unconfirmed reports.

"We are collaborating with our sister African nation of Uganda. What is important is that we have found this one case. We are doing contact tracing, and we are putting containment measures in place to ensure that it does not spread into our population,"

he said.

Pate recalled Nigeria's successful response to the 2014 Ebola outbreak, expressing confidence that the country's public health institutions could effectively manage the current situation.

"Nigerians should be reassured. We must be vigilant, but not panic," he said.

He added that the government would continue to provide regular updates as more information became available, warning against what he described as unnecessary hysteria over the confirmed case.

"We have things in place that give us confidence that Nigeria can weather this public health crisis. Let us not fall into a trap of hysteria or panic. It is one case; it is an imported case, and we are containing it."

"We will continue to take measures. If the situation changes, we will come out and inform Nigerians," the minister said.

Experts question Nigeria's preparedness, contact tracing gaps

NIGERIA'S confirmation of the Bundibugyo strain of Ebola virus disease has raised concerns about the country's preparedness to prevent further transmission, with ex-

perts questioning the scope of contact tracing, airport surveillance and how the infected patient escaped earlier detection.

The Nigeria Centre for Disease Control and Prevention confirmed the strain yesterday during an emergency incident management meeting in Abuja, disclosing that the patient, identified as a diplomat, had deteriorated into multi-organ failure. However, authorities did not disclose the patient's nationality.

The immediate past chairman of the Nigerian Medical Association (NMA), Dr Babajide Saheed, questioned whether the country had maintained the preparedness systems needed to respond effectively to an outbreak.

In an interview with *The Guardian*, Saheed said the Federal Government, state governments and local governments were not adequately prepared. He pointed to unanswered questions about how the patient entered the country, the circumstances surrounding her initial treatment and the extent of possible exposure.

He questioned how a traveller arriving from an area affected by Ebola, reportedly with symptoms, could pass

CONTINUED ON PAGE 25

TRUEFACT: GOOD LEADERSHIP QUALITY:

PROTECT AND NOT SELF-SEEKING

Moses protected his people even from God's destruction. "Now leave me alone and my anger shall blaze out against them and destroy them all; and I will make you, Moses, into a great nation instead of them." But Moses begged God not to do it. "Lord," he pleaded, "why is your anger so hot against your own people whom you brought from the land of Egypt with such great power and mighty miracles? So the Lord changed his mind and spared them. (Exodus 32: 10, 11 & 14 TLB)

Prayer: Lord give me a heart of genuine love towards others

Email Address: g.truefact@gmail.com

Oyo Assembly approves N100b for infrastructure

- [Alli campaign organisation alleges Makinde bent on bankrupting Oyo to fund elections](#)
- [You'll refund every kobo after office, Oyo APC tells governor](#)

From **Rotimi Agboluaje**, Ibadan

OYO State House of Assembly has approved a N100 billion loan facility from United Bank for Africa (UBA) Plc to accelerate the completion of ongoing infrastructure projects and to fund other critical developmental initiatives across the state.

The approval followed a request by Governor Seyi Makinde in a letter addressed to the Speaker of the House, Adebayo Ogundoyin.

The Assembly said that the loan was intended to provide additional funding for critical infrastructure development and facilitate the timely completion of ongoing projects in the state, while the accompanying N300 billion facility will be used to refinance an existing contractors' finance facility obtained from Access Bank.

MEANWHILE, the Senator **MSharafadeen Alli** Campaign Organisation (SSACO) has condemned Makinde's decision to proceed with securing a fresh N100 billion loan, despite earlier warnings against reckless borrowing in the twilight of his administration.

ALSO, the All Progressives Congress (APC) in Oyo State has berated Makinde over the fresh N100 billion loan.

Renowned architect, Ajadi, seeks end to foreign design templates for African cities

[Mimiko, Ogunsola, others honour Mabogunje at public lecture](#)

By **Adelowo Adebumiti**

ARENOWED architect and urban theorist, Dr Stephen Ajadi, has said that African cities are entering a critical 25-year window that will define their spatial, economic and cultural identity for the next centuries.

Ajadi made the declaration at the third Palm Foundation Public Lecture in honour of the late Prof. Akinlawon Ladipo Mabogunje, the father of African geography.

The event united academic leaders, statesmen and policy-makers around a shared mission that is ending the reliance on imported urban templates and taking ownership of Africa's urban future.

In his keynote address, titled "Palimpsest and Provenance: The Identity and Trajectory of the African City," Ajadi presented staggering projections, revealing that 40 per cent of global buildings and 75 per cent of infrastructure expected by 2050 are yet to be built, with Africa's urban land expanding by 590 per cent.

The Founding Partner, Ruban Architecture Office, cautioned against speculative, imported designs, such as pop-culture-inspired "Wakandan urbanism," which erase informal markets and community structures.

NAF Crash: Navy reaffirms commitment to Ondo recovery operation, seeks sustained cooperation

From **Adewale Momoh**, Akure

THE Nigerian Navy has reaffirmed its commitment to the ongoing search and recovery operation at the site of the Nigerian Air Force ATR-42 aircraft crash in Igbokoda, Ondo State.

The Flag Officer Commanding (FOC), Western Naval Command, Rear Admiral Abdullahi Abubakar Mustapha, reiterated this while conducting an on-the-spot assessment of the exercise to evaluate progress and identify operational hurdles.

Mustapha, while speaking at the Forward Operating Base

(FOB), Igbokoda in Ilaje Local Council of Ondo State, said that the military's coordinated approach to the recovery mission had drawn participation from multiple agencies and private sector partners.

The Naval Chief, who was received at the Base by the Commanding Officer, alongside the Commander of 107 Air Maritime Group and the Commandant of the Nigerian Air Force Institute of Safety, interacted with personnel and stakeholders directly involved in the search and recovery efforts.

He subsequently convened a

meeting with representatives of Hi-Tech Construction Company, the Ondo State Emergency Management Agency (ODSEMA), the National Emergency Management Agency, and other stakeholders.

The meeting was said to have provided a platform for participants to review the progress of the operation and deliberate on the challenges encountered since the exercise began.

The FOC commended the Ondo State Government and Managing Director of Hi-Tech Construction Company,

Danny Aboud, for their commitment to the operation, particularly the deployment of mechanised equipment to the difficult terrain of the crash site.

He emphasised that the continued cooperation and commitment of all stakeholders remained crucial to the successful completion of the recovery operation.

Mustapha and the stakeholders proceeded by boat to the crash site for a first-hand assessment of the operation, where he received updates from personnel directly involved in the operation.



Secretary to Ondo State Government (SSG), Dr Taiwo Fasoranti (left); Deputy Governor, Dr Olayide Adelami; Governor Lucky Aiyedatiwa, Olu of Ilu Abo, Olu Falae, and his wife, Rachael, during a condolence visit to the family of the late Afenifere leader, Reuben Fasoranti, in Akure.

Afenifere, Hamzat, Fayemi, YCE, Tunji-Ojo, others mourn Fasoranti

From **Seye Olumide** (Lagos), **Rotimi Agboluaje** (Ibadan) and **Adewale Momoh** (Akure)

[Say his life was dedicated to justice, fairness, preservation of Yoruba values, others](#)

THE leadership of Afenifere, the pan-Yoruba socio-cultural organisation, and Lagos State Deputy Governor and All Progressives Congress (APC) governorship candidate, Dr Kadri Obafemi Hamzat, have expressed grief over the death of Reuben Famuyide Fasoranti, the revered Afenifere Leader Emeritus, who died at the age of 100.

In separate condolence messages, both described the late elder statesman as a principled leader whose life was devoted to justice, fairness, democracy and the preservation of Yoruba values.

In a message signed by Afenifere's leader, Oba

Oladiipo Olaitan, and Secretary-General, Alade Rotimi-John, the organisation said Fasoranti would be remembered for his unwavering commitment to its founding ideals, including equity, equality, democratic governance and a life of abundance for all.

Hamzat, on behalf of his family, commiserated with the Fasoranti family, the government and people of Ondo State and the entire Yoruba nation over the loss.

He described Fasoranti as a distinguished educator, principled leader and respected voice in Nigeria's socio-political landscape, whose life was dedicated to justice, fairness and the preservation of

Yoruba values within a united Nigeria.

Similarly, former Governor of Ekiti State and past Chairman of the Nigeria Governors' Forum (NGF), Dr Kayode Fayemi, in a condolence statement he personally signed, said the passing of Fasoranti represented a significant loss to the Yoruba people, the progressive political tradition and the wider Nigerian community, noting that the late Afenifere leader distinguished himself through his integrity, fairness and commitment to the welfare of his people.

However, the Yoruba Council of Elders (YCE) has described Fasoranti's life of service, wisdom and exemplary leader-

ship as an enduring source of inspiration to the Yoruba race and Nigeria.

In a condolence message issued on behalf of the Council's President, Jibade Oyekan, and its members, the Secretary-General of the YCE, Oladiipo Oyewole, said the late elder statesman would be remembered for his humane nature, amiable disposition and unwavering commitment to the Yoruba cause.

ALSO, Minister of Interior, **A**Olubunmi Tunji-Ojo; his Youth Development counterpart, Ayodele Olawande; former Ondo State Governor, Dr Olusegun Mimiko, and All Progressives Congress leaders have mourned Fasoranti

AAC asks Tinubu to host Sowore's campaign inauguration at Aso Rock

- [Okurounmu, Yoruba Ronu question 2027 polls' credibility](#)
- [Federal parastatals' CEOs rally support for President](#)

By **Seye Olumide**

THE African Action Congress (AAC) has asked President Bola Tinubu to permit it to inaugurate the Presidential Campaign Council of its candidate, Omoyele Sowore, at the Presidential Villa, Abuja, on November 11, 2026, as political activities gather momentum ahead of the 2027 general elections.

In a letter dated October 21 and signed by its National Secretary, Oshiokhue Philip Ikpeminoghena, the party also requested food, drinks and logistical support for 5,000 participants expected at the event.

The AAC said its request was based on multiparty democracy, political inclusiveness and equal treatment of parties, saying that public institutions should not be reserved for the ruling All Progressives Congress (APC).

The request comes amid growing political mobilisation for the election, even as concerns mount over the credibility of the polls and the administration's handling of economic hardship.

However, former senator representing Ogun Central, Femi Okurounmu, has expressed doubts about Nigeria's democratic system, saying opposition parties have failed to convince Nigerians that they can offer a credible alternative to the APC.

Okurounmu said that the country's challenges went beyond the performance of Tinubu's administration, questioning whether the existing political structure could adequately address its fundamental problems.

Ehimuan, Musawa, Austen-Peters, others to speak at DICE 5.0

By **Opeyemi Babalola**

A PAN-AFRICAN organisation that focuses on digital transformation, leadership development and innovation, Digital Innovation and Creative Excellence (DICE), has announced the fifth edition of its ecosystem mixer, a gathering to bring together leaders across Africa's creative, technology and business ecosystems.

The event, DICE 5.0, scheduled to take place on Thursday, November 5, 2026, at the Wole Soyinka Centre for Culture and Creative Arts (National Theatre), Lagos, themed "Igniting African Creativity through Infrastructure & Strategic Capital," hosted as part of CANEX WKND 2026, will bring together creatives, investors, business leaders, technology innovators and policymakers to explore how enabling infrastructure and strategic investment could unlock new opportunities for Africa's creative economy.

Trust, not promises, is lifeline of democracy, says Daniel

By **Iyabo Lawal**

FORMER Governor of Ogun State, Gbenga Daniel, has said that trust, and not promises, is the lifeline of democracy, saying that Nigeria's democratic legitimacy is being eroded at the grassroots where government is most absent.

He spoke yesterday in Lagos at the 2026 Nigeria Grassroots Governance Summit and Awards (NIG-GSA), where insecurity, financial autonomy and the collapse of local governance took centre stage.

Daniel, who is currently representing Ogun East Senatorial District at the National Assembly, in his keynote address at the event, titled "Building trust between government and the people," held at the Marriott Hotel, Ikeja, said elections only confer legitimacy, while performance sustains it.

"When citizens elect leaders, they are entrusting them with their hopes and collective future. When promises are repeatedly made and abandoned, public trust diminishes," he said, noting that dis-

trust undermines tax compliance, discourages investment and widens the gap between institutions and the people.

He called for local councils to be professionally managed and genuinely empowered, with citizens' engagement moving beyond ceremonial consultations to real participation in identifying needs and tracking projects.

The message was reinforced by Deputy Inspector-General of Police (DIG) Adeleye Olusola Oyebade (rtd), who said the country's reliance on

top-down reactive policing has failed.

He said that community policing is not about vigilante groups but about partnership, where traditional rulers provide intelligence, local councils coordinate prevention, women and youths supply early warning information, and the police respond lawfully and accountably.

Oyebade said for years, Nigeria's security response has been to deploy personnel after lives had been lost and property destroyed.

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Panic as gaseous odour hits Ogun communities again

From Segun Ayinde, Abeokuta

Hundreds of students hospitalised, govt blames underground gas emissions

PANIC gripped parts of Ogun State yesterday after an unusual gaseous odour spread across Ijebu-Ode, Ago-Iwoye and Ijebu-Igbo, leaving hundreds of secondary school students requiring medical attention.

In Ijebu-Ode, the recurring incident affected students of Anglican Girls Grammar School, including those in its public and private sections, in the Obalende area. Dozens of students reportedly inhaled the odour and were taken to the General Hospital for treatment.

A similar situation was reported in Ijebu-Igbo, where several students of Ijebu-Igbo Girls Grammar School were also affected and rushed to the General Hospital.

In Ago-Iwoye, the offensive odour forced some schools to abruptly suspend academic activities and send students home as concerns grew over the possible health implications.

The incidents triggered anxiety at the General Hospitals in Ijebu-Ode and Ijebu-Igbo, as parents, teachers and guardians

hurriedly brought affected students to the facilities for medical attention.

As of press time, doctors and nurses were attending to the students, although the number of those hospitalised and the severity of their conditions had yet to be officially confirmed.

Reacting to the development, the Ogun State Commissioner for Environment, Ola Oresanya, attributed the incident to previous underground gas emissions that have intermittently affected Ijebu-Ode since April 2026.

Oresanya said investigations by the state government had established that the occurrences were neither acts of sabotage nor the result of gas pipeline leaks, but natural phenomena associated with geological and tectonic fault lines.

He urged residents to remain calm, assuring parents and guardians that the incident was not fatal and that the affected students were expected to recover shortly after receiving medical attention.



The hospital scene

Kidnappers kill seven-year-old boy after demanding N2.5m ransom

From Isa Abdulsalami Ahovi, Jos

A seven-year-old boy, Abdullahi Rabi'u, has been found dead hours after suspected kidnappers abducted him in the Majema area, along Ring Road in Jos North Local Council of Plateau State and demanded a N2.5million ransom.

The boy was reportedly abducted on Monday evening after being sent on an errand to a neighbour's house.

Narrating the incident, his uncle, Sukairaj Danladi Me Gado, said Abdullahi delivered the message but failed to return home, prompting the family to search for him.

He said their efforts to locate the boy proved unsuccessful until Tuesday morning, when the family received a call from an unidentified number.

According to him, the caller



Rabi'u

demanded N2.5million as ransom and informed the family that the boy had been kidnapped.

Me Gado said the family had agreed to pay the ransom in the hope of securing the child's release.

However, their hopes were shattered later on Tuesday when they learnt that his body had been found in a narrow passage near their residence.

The discovery plunged the family and residents of the neighbourhood into mourning.

The grieving uncle expressed sorrow over the killing and alleged that the perpetrators might be familiar with the neighbourhood.

Police step up digital intelligence, accountability, crime-fighting in three states

From Eniola Daniel (Lagos) and Tina Agosi Todo (Calabar)

THE police in Lagos, Ogun and Cross River states have stepped up efforts to combat crime through digital intelligence gathering, stronger collaboration with justice-sector stakeholders and enforcement against suspected violent offenders.

While the Lagos State Police Command has urged transport operators and hoteliers to adopt a digital passenger and guest registration system, the Ogun Command has reaffirmed its zero tolerance for extortion and misconduct, as the Cross River Command arrested a man over alleged assault and

threats to life and recovered a locally made pistol and ammunition.

At a stakeholders' engagement on the National Transit E-Manifest (NTEM) at the Police Officers' Mess, GRA, Ikeja, Lagos, the Lagos State Commissioner of Police, Tijani Fatai, urged hotel operators and members of the National Union of Road Transport Workers (NURTW) to enrol in the platform to strengthen crime prevention.

NTEM is designed to improve the collection, verification and retrieval of passenger and hotel guest records, enabling authorised security agencies to identify suspects, gather intelligence and investigate

security incidents more efficiently.

Fatai said criminals involved in kidnapping, armed robbery, human trafficking and highway attacks often exploit inadequate passenger manifests and poorly maintained hotel registers to conceal their identities and movements.

He noted that handwritten records used by some transport operators and the limited digital capacity of certain hotels could delay investigations and hinder security responses.

The commissioner, however, stressed that the system must operate within the law.

Man arrested over murder of eight-month-pregnant girlfriend

From Joseph Kanjo, Benin

THE Edo State Police Command has arrested a 40-year-old man, Samson Ekata, over the alleged murder of his eight-month-pregnant girlfriend in Uromi, Esan North-East Local Council of the state.

Ekata, who was paraded alongside other suspects by the police, allegedly killed the woman, who had reportedly lived with him for about a year, mutilated her body and attempted to remove her unborn baby.

Speaking during the parade, the Commissioner of Police, Patrick Daaor, described the incident as horrific and expressed sadness over the killing. He commended members of the community for providing information that helped the police arrest the suspect, adding that Ekata, who remained in custody, would face the full weight of the law.

Daaor urged residents to continue providing useful information to security agencies to help combat crime. He also advised parents to pay closer attention to their children's safety, particularly that of girls, while urging young women to exercise caution in their relationships.

Fielding questions from journalists, Ekata claimed that he had never killed anyone before the incident and confirmed that the deceased was his girlfriend and had been living with him.

One dies, three injured as truck suffers brake failure in Ogun

From Segun Ayinde, Abeokuta

ONE person has died while three others sustained varying degrees of injuries after a cement-laden truck suffered brake failure and crashed into a ditch along Ajebo Road in Ogun State.

The accident occurred yesterday, at Agbedejobi Village, around Mile 6, Ajebo Road, in Obafemi-Owode Local Government Area of the state.

The spokesperson for the Traffic Compliance and Enforcement Agency (TRACE),



Incident scene

Babatunde Akinbiyi, confirmed the incident in a statement

issued in Abeokuta yesterday.

According to Akinbiyi, the unregistered truck veered off the road while the driver attempted to avoid a vehicle ahead, eventually landing in a ditch and ending up on a railway track.

The impact caused the truck to spill its entire load of cement into a nearby bush.

Akinbiyi said the deceased's remains had been deposited at the morgue of the General Hospital, Ijaye, Abeokuta, while the three injured victims were receiving treatment at the same facility.

Murder suspect recounts Instagram chats that sparked clash with girlfriend

By Ngozi Egenuka

BENJAMIN Nnayerugo, popularly known as Killaboi, yesterday told a Lagos State High Court sitting at the Igbosere division that alleged Instagram messages suggesting his late girlfriend, Augusta Onuwaghagbe, was arranging a sexual encounter for money left him emotionally distressed and prompted a confrontation between them.

Nnayerugo, who is standing

trial before Justice Ibironke Harrison over the alleged murder of Augusta, gave the account while testifying in his defence. He described how he monitored her Instagram account, allegedly uncovered conversations about a proposed meeting for payment, and eventually confronted her during a video call.

He told the court that the incident began in late June 2023 after he lost money on a sports bet and became upset.

According to him, Augusta tried to console him, reminding him that he had previously won larger amounts and encouraging him not to feel discouraged. However, he said her efforts did not improve his mood.

He said Augusta was scheduled to return to school and left the following day. Because he had access to her Instagram account, he continued monitoring her conversations after she returned to school.

The defendant said he noticed that she exchanged messages with accounts belonging to people who were not her friends on the platform and later deleted the conversations.

He described the messages he initially saw as invitations to clubs and enquiries about her well-being, adding that he monitored the account for about a week without noticing anything he considered suspicious.



Killaboi

Hot Lines: 08034990344 and 08160223638

LASEMA averts train collision at Ilupeju, rescues 10 persons in Lagos auto crash

Warns residents against uncovered wells amid Abule-Egba tragedy

By Bertram Nwannekanma

THE Lagos State Emergency Management Agency (LASEMA) has averted a potential train collision at Ilupeju Bypass and rescued 10 injured passengers following a chain collision involving two commercial buses and a trailer on the Third Mainland Bridge, reinforcing its commitment to swift emergency response and public safety across Lagos State.

The two incidents occurred yesterday and were handled by LASEMA's response teams in collaboration with the Lagos State Traffic Management Authority (LASTMA), the Lagos State Ambulance Service and

the Nigeria Police Force (NPF). In the first incident, LASEMA received a distress call at about 9:30 a.m. of a multiple-vehicle crash on the Third Mainland Bridge inward Adekunle.

The agency's Tiger Response Team, deployed from its Command and Control Centre, arrived at the scene at 10:05 a.m.

According to the agency, a commercial bus with registration number GGE 76 XW had stopped by the roadside to repair a faulty tyre when another bus, with registration number JJJ 599 YG, rammed into it from behind. A trailer subsequently struck the second bus before fleeing the scene, trig-

gering a chain collision. No fewer than 10 passengers sustained injuries of varying degrees. LASEMA paramedics, working with the Lagos State Ambulance Service, administered pre-hospital care before evacuating the injured persons to hospital for further treatment.

The two buses were subsequently towed to a police station with the assistance of a private towing vehicle, while emergency responders managed traffic and secured the scene.

The affected section of the bridge was later cleared and reopened to motorists.

In a separate operation, LASE-



Rescuers at the scene.

MA's Cobra Squad, while on routine patrol, discovered a branded commercial bus immobilised by a mechanical fault on the railway track at Ilupeju Bypass.

Recognising the imminent

risk of a train colliding with the stranded vehicle, the team swiftly deployed the agency's light tow truck to remove the bus from the tracks and move it to a nearby lay-by. The timely intervention averted a poten-

tially serious rail accident. Personnel from LASEMA, LASTMA and the NPF participated in the operation, demonstrating the importance of effective co-ordination among emergency and traffic management agencies.

Permanent Secretary of LASEMA, Dr Olufemi Damilola Oke-Osanyintolu, commended the agency's responders and partner organisations for their swift and coordinated actions.

He urged motorists to avoid carrying out vehicle repairs on highways and bridges, stressing the importance of regular vehicle maintenance to prevent mechanical breakdowns and reduce the risk of road accidents.

Hospital suspends nursing school activities amid student's death in Ogun

From Segun Ayinde, Abeokuta

THE management of the Neuro-psychiatric Hospital, Aro, Abeokuta, Ogun State, has indefinitely suspended academic activities at its School of Post-Basic Psychiatric Nursing following the death of a student, Ayodeji Taiwo, amid allegations of negligence and protests by fellow students.

Taiwo, who was reportedly asthmatic, died at the institution under circumstances that have sparked controversy, with students alleging that negligence in responding to his medical emergency contributed to his death.

The suspension was announced in a notice dated October 20, 2026, and signed by the Coordinator of the Programme and Head of School, Dr Taiwo Omirin, on behalf of the Acting Provost and Medical Director.

According to the notice, the suspension affects students in the 2025/2026 and 2026/2027 academic sessions, including master's student nurses and those undergoing orientation.

Resident students were also directed to vacate their hostels with immediate effect.

Omirin said the decision followed the death of Student Nurse Ayodeji Taiwo and the unrest it reportedly triggered within the hospital community.

Police arrest suspected cultist, four robbery suspects, recover firearms in Ogun, Rivers

From Segun Ayinde (Abeokuta) and Godfrey Gabriel (Port Harcourt)

Police arrest suspected cultist, four robbery suspects, recover firearms in Ogun, Rivers

POLICE commands in Ogun and Rivers states have arrested five suspected criminals in separate operations involving alleged cultism, armed robbery and kidnapping, recovering firearms and ammunition, while rescuing 11 Ghanaian nationals allegedly held hostage after being lured to Nigeria with promises of Canadian and Spanish visas.

In Ogun State, operatives arrested a suspected cultist and armed robber, Idris Obarayi, 30, and recovered a locally made pistol and a live cartridge.

Rescue 11 Ghanaians allegedly held hostage over promised overseas visas in Ogun

In Rivers, four suspected members of an armed robbery and kidnapping syndicate were arrested, with six firearms and 58 rounds of ammunition recovered.

The Ogun State Police Command also rescued seven men and four women from an alleged hostage-taking operation in Sagamu, where they were reportedly held against their will after paying a fellow Ghanaian national to facilitate their travel abroad.

The Spokesperson for the Ogun Command, Oluseyi Babaseyi, confirmed the developments in separate state-

ments in Abeokuta yesterday. Babaseyi said the arrest of Obarayi followed a distress report about suspected gunfire and screams in the Oke Ago-Owu area of Abeokuta North

Local Council at about 2:30 a.m. on October 20, 2026. He said operatives of the Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) Unit mobilised to the area but the suspect fled on



Rescued victims

sighting the police, abandoning the firearm and ammunition during the pursuit.

According to him, sustained tracking and investigative efforts led to Obarayi's arrest at about 5:45 p.m. the same day at his hideout in Ita Ogboni, Igbore, Abeokuta.

"Preliminary investigations indicate that the suspect allegedly admitted to membership of the Aiye confraternity and claimed ownership of the recovered items," Babaseyi said.

He added that investigations were ongoing to apprehend other suspects and establish the full circumstances surrounding the incident.

Lagos agency urges teens to speak up against sexual abuse

By Bertram Nwannekanma

FOR many teenagers, recognising abuse, setting personal boundaries and finding the courage to report inappropriate behaviour can be difficult, particularly when the perpetrators are people they know or trust.

To help young people navigate these challenges, the Lagos State Domestic and Sexual Violence Agency (DSVA) has launched the Smart Teens Advocacy Initiative (STAI), equipping adolescents with the knowledge and confidence to recognise, prevent and report sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV).

The initiative, themed: "Stay Safe, Speak Up," was launched on Tuesday at Girls Senior High School, Agege, with 320 students from schools across Education District I participating.

It seeks to promote personal safety, healthy boundaries and peer advocacy while encouraging teenagers to speak out against abuse without fear of blame or intimidation.

Executive Secretary of DSVA, Mrs Titilola Vivour-Adeniyi, while speaking at the launch, said empowering young people to protect themselves and support others was crucial to pre-

venting sexual and GBV. She urged students to challenge harmful attitudes, promote respect and report abuse, stressing that children should be able to seek help without being blamed for what happened to them.

Vivour-Adeniyi also called on parents, teachers, caregivers and relevant institutions to create environments where children could speak freely, have their concerns taken seriously and receive the protection they needed.

Head of the Counselling Unit, Education District I, Dr Olubukola Rosanwo, commend-

ed the initiative and encouraged the students to participate actively and apply the lessons to their daily lives.

She stressed the need for safe school environments where students could confidently approach counsellors, teachers and other trusted adults whenever they encountered abuse or situations that made them uncomfortable.

In her keynote address, titled "Stay Safe and Speak Up," the State Coordinator of the Child Protection Network, Mrs Aderonke Oyelakin, urged the teenagers to learn how to identify unsafe situations, establish

personal boundaries and make informed decisions.

She also drew attention to online safety, advising students to exercise caution in their digital interactions and report abusive behaviour to trusted adults and appropriate authorities.

A session on "Breaking the Silence in Our Schools: Preventing Sexual and Gender-Based Violence Through Teen Advocacy," facilitated by Bunmi Amosu examined different forms of abuse, including physical, sexual and emotional abuse, as well as technology-facilitated violence.

Lagos commuters pay more to escape long bus queues, delays

By Glory Sunday

FOR many Lagos commuters, avoiding delays means spending more on transport. When buses take too long to fill up, passengers must choose between waiting and risking late arrival or paying extra for tricycles and connecting buses.

The longer they wait, the more likely they are to abandon cheaper options for faster alternatives, turning daily journeys into a costly trade-off between time and money.

For Anu Olamide, a Magodo resident who works on Lagos Island, the morning commute is usually manageable. Returning home in the evening, however, is a different experience. Olamide said she crosses the

bridge near the Secretariat behind Magodo Phase Two to access public transport towards the Ajah and Victoria Island axis.

Although she sometimes waits about 15 minutes for a vehicle in the morning, she said the journey was generally faster than her evening movement when traffic congestion and higher transport fares made getting home more difficult.

Her experience reflects the challenges commuters face when traffic congestion, long waiting times and rising transport costs combine to make everyday journeys more expensive.

For Felix Adeniji, who travels between Magodo and Ketu, the delay often begins with waiting

for enough passengers to board a tricycle, popularly known as keke.

Adeniji said he typically waits about 10 minutes, although the period could stretch to 30 minutes, depending on passengers' availability.

Vehicles, he noted, tend to fill up faster during the morning and evening rush hours when more people are travelling.

For commuters travelling from Ojota, however, the wait can be considerably longer, with some spending more than

an hour at the motor park before their journey begins.

Favour Okon said repeated delays at the Ojota motor park had forced her to reconsider how she travelled to Ogba and Agege.

She recalled spending more

than an hour waiting for a bus to fill up, despite needing to reach her destination on time.

On another occasion, the bus barely left the park before stopping around Oregun, Ikeja, because of a mechanical problem.



Ojota Bus park.

PHOTO: GLORY SUNDAY

PUBLIC NOTICE
LOSS OF LAND RECEIPT
I, **MRS RACHAEL ADEPEJU JOLAYEMI**, hereby announce that I have lost my original land purchase receipt /deed of assignment in respect of a parcel of land measuring 2,256.360 square metres, situated at Kazeem Salami Close, off Kazeem Salami Street, Ijanikin Town, Ojo Local Government Area, Lagos State.
All efforts to recover the receipt have proved unsuccessful. The general public is hereby notified of this loss.

Government inherited ongoing projects valued at N14.42 trillion

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

Funding pressures remain a major challenge to project ex-

ecution, with industry stakeholders attributing a signifi-

cant proportion of delayed and abandoned projects to in-

adequate or delayed payments. The Federal Ministry of

Works reported that the Federal Government inherited 2,064 road contracts when it assumed office in May 2023. Members of the Federation of Construction Industry (FOCI) said that the Nigerian construction industry is facing a crisis arising from inadequate and unpredictable funding, delayed payments and rising operating costs.

FOCI President, Vincent Barrah, blamed the situation largely on the gap between annual budgetary provisions and actual cash releases for infrastructure projects.

According to him, many projects are awarded without adequate multi-year funding, leading to delayed payments, accumulation of certified debts, reduced construction activities and, in some cases, suspension or abandonment of projects. The funding crisis was taking a toll on employment, as about 1,000 senior staff and 40,000 junior workers lost their jobs.

The federation called for a more responsive approach to price adjustments and variations, adding that existing mechanisms often fail to adequately reflect significant changes in inflation, foreign exchange rates and construction input costs.

It noted that the prices of cement, steel, bitumen, diesel, equipment, spare parts and other inputs had risen significantly following the depreci-

ation of the naira, making some contracts awarded several years ago commercially difficult to execute at their original rates.

Barrah said lengthy administrative processes for measurement, certification, approval and payment often force contractors to finance substantial portions of projects while waiting for government payments, increasing financing costs and placing additional pressure on working capital.

He, however, said translating increased capital budgets into completed infrastructure required improvements in project prioritisation, funding, payment discipline, contract administration and implementation policies.

The Guardian learnt that some projects have attracted variations because of sharp increases in the prices of construction materials, including cement and iron rods.

However, the Federal Ministry of Finance said it had approved payments to more than 1,240 local contractors, prioritising businesses with verified claims of N100 million or less. The ministry said the strategy was designed to spread the economic impact of the payments rather than concentrate disbursements among a few large firms.

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



RC No. 390837
CLEAN NIGERIA ASSOCIATES
(COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE)

18 Ken Saro-Wiwa Road (Stadium Road)
Port-Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria
www.cleannigeria.org
+234(0) 814 302 8445
enquiry@cleannigeria.org

WRITTEN RESOLUTION OF THE MEMBERS OF CLEAN NIGERIA ASSOCIATES LIMITED BY GUARANTEE PURSUANT TO SECTIONS 620 - 623, 626 - 627 AND 259 OF THE COMPANIES AND ALLIED MATTERS ACT, 2020

Pursuant to Sections 620 - 623, 626 - 627 and 259 of the Companies and Allied Matters Act 2020, we the members of Clean Nigeria Associates Ltd/Gte hereby unanimously adopt the following as resolutions of the Company:

1. A Special Resolution to the effect that:

The affairs of Clean Nigeria Associates Ltd/Gte be voluntarily wound up, pursuant to the above provisions of the Companies and Allied Matters Act 2020, effective 30 September 2026.

2. A Special Resolution to the effect that:

The books of account of Clean Nigeria Associates Ltd/Gte shall not be audited and an Auditor's report shall not be required for liquidating the Company pursuant to Section 633(6)(ii) of the Companies and Allied Matters Act, Laws of the Federation of Nigeria 2020.

3. An Ordinary Resolution to the effect that:

Ajibola Olomola of KPMG Advisory Services, KPMG Tower, Bishop Aboyade Cole Street, Victoria Island, Lagos be and is hereby appointed Liquidator to wind up the affairs of the Company.

Dated this 19th day of October 2026

Usman Anibasa
For: Renaissance Africa Energy

Tonye Alagba
For: Nigerian National Petroleum Company Limited

Dr. Adeshina Sadiq
For: Soplat Energy Plc

Fred Omayuku
For: Chevron Nigeria Limited

Dr. John Bwala
For: Antan Producing Limited

Mike Iwegbu
For: TotalEnergies EP Nigeria, Limited

Olatide Farinre
For: AMN Development Company Limited

Tokunbo Ogunyemi
For: Pan Ocean Oil Corporation, Nigeria Limited

Olatunbosun Oni
For: FIRST E&P Development Company Limited

Olatide Jegede
For: Oando Energy Resources Nigeria Limited

Chukwuka Njoku
For: Helix Energies Limited

Carlton Ohiomoba
For: ESSO Exploration and Production Limited

David Aghaiye
For: Shell Nigeria Exploration

Daens Inangli
For: Moni Pulo Limited Production Company

Umarh More
For: Beloms Oil Producing Limited

Anthony Okoye
For: Midwestern Oil and Gas Company Limited

Benjamin Asokhia
For: Yinka Falewiyi Petroleum Company Limited

Callistus Ekwahide
For: Waltersmith Petroleum Oil Limited

Directors: U. Anibasa (Chairman), A. Sadiq, O. Farinre, O. Jegede, J. Bwala, T. Ogunyemi, M. Iwegbu, F. Omayuku, O. Oni, D. Aghaiye, C. Ohiomoba Chief Executive Officer: C. Ezeaku

AJIBOLA OLOMOLA

KPMG Tower, Bishop Aboyade Cole Street,
Victoria Island, Lagos

COMPANIES AND ALLIED MATTERS ACT, 2020 MEMBERS' VOLUNTARY WINDING-UP NOTICE OF APPOINTMENT OF LIQUIDATOR OF CLEAN NIGERIA ASSOCIATE LIMITED BY GUARANTEE (RC: 309837) [Pursuant to section 654(1) of the Companies and Allied Matters Act, 2020]

The Registrar-General
Corporate Affairs Commission
Plot 420, Tigris Crescent
Off Aguiyi Ironsi Street
Maitama
Abuja

I, **Ajibola Olomola** of KPMG Advisory Services, KPMG Tower, Bishop Aboyade Cole Street, Victoria Island, Lagos hereby give notice that I have been appointed Liquidator of Clean Nigeria Associates Limited by Guarantee by virtue of an Ordinary Resolution of the Company passed on the 19th day of October 2026.

Dated this 20th day of October 2026

A. O. Olomola
Ajibola Olomola
Liquidator



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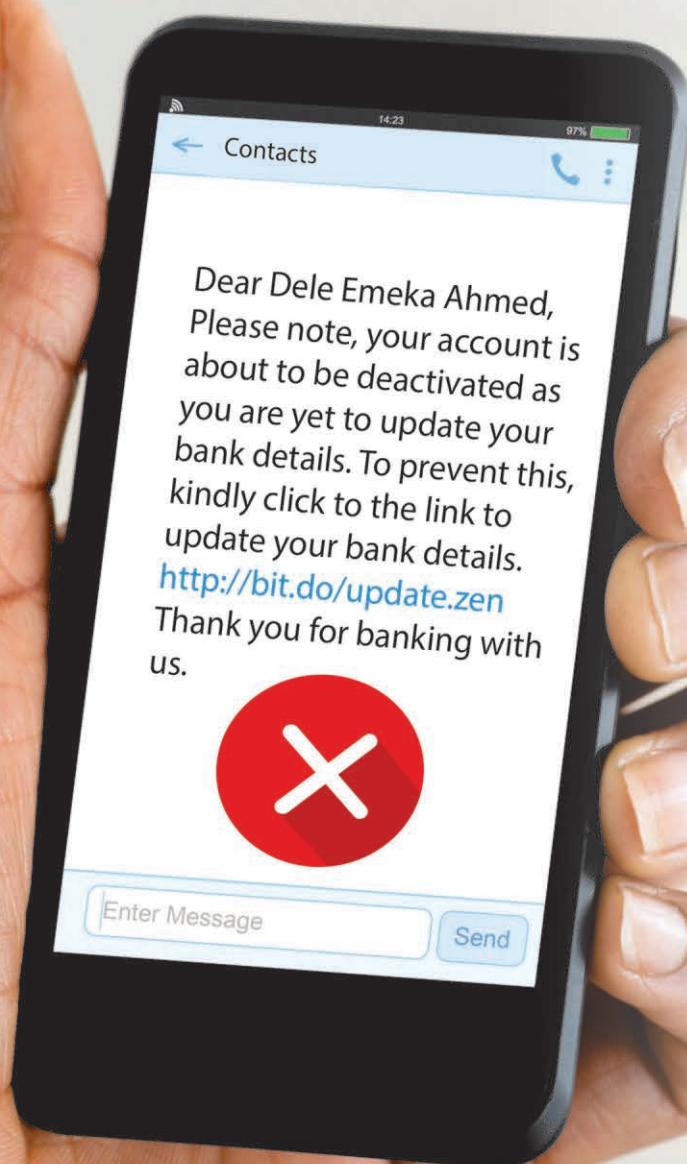
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Conscience is an open wound; only truth can heal it. Uthman dan Fodio 1754-1816

Editorial

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Let military pensioners get what is due to them

IN countries where matters are handled properly and consistently in line with the guiding rules, the recent protest by military retirees over alleged non-payment of salary arrears and exclusion from the latest pay rise for personnel of the Nigerian Armed Forces would not have occurred. Must people troop to the streets in protest before they can get what is legally due to them? If a protest is staged to demand something not already in place, any delay in obtaining it can be understood in the context of the relevant authorities' need to consider and reconsider whether to grant such a request.

But how do we explain a situation where the government has approved a pay rise for the military, yet only some of the intended beneficiaries are captured in the implementation and the others are left out? The implication is that those left out are not entitled to the pay rise. But that cannot be established as the case in this matter. This attitude to the implementation of government decisions and policies will always be a recipe for crisis. It is unacceptable and should not be allowed in our governance culture.

Military retirees in the country recently staged a protest at the Ministry of Defence in Abuja over the alleged failure by the authorities to implement the consequential adjustment to their pensions following the salary increase approved for serving military personnel. One of the leaders of the protesters, Lt. Col. Innocent Azubike (rtd), said they embarked on the action to demand their constitutional pension right.

Azubike explained that in November 2025, President Bola Tinubu approved a salary increase for serving military personnel, which normally should result in a consequential upward adjustment

of pension paid to retired military personnel, but the adjustment was yet to be implemented by the military authorities. He also cited the alleged exclusion of the retirees from another salary increase of between 30 per cent and 80 per cent in August 2026 for active military personnel as one of the reasons for their protest. According to him, the military had computed the fund requirement for the second salary increase, which was to begin in September, again, excluding the retirees by not effecting the consequential adjustment of the pension paid to them. He claimed that the demonstration was to demand their constitutional pension right. Were the protesters wrong?

Though neither the Armed Forces Act nor the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria explicitly states the exact salary figures or automatic percentage increases, in principle, they support the claim by the protesters that their pension should be reviewed as a consequence of the Federal Government's approval of a pay rise for their serving colleagues.

Veteran leaders and legal arguments have asserted that pensions must undergo consequential adjustments whenever serving personnel receive pay raises. Their argument has roots in section 173 (3) of the 1999 Constitution (as amended), which mandates that pensions be reviewed every five years or concurrently with any upward revision of federal civil or public service salaries. Among the consequences of any failure to do so is that disparities will be created between military personnel of the same rank and number of service years but who retired at different times. A sergeant who retired recently under the new salary regime could be earning a pension that is far higher than that of a Lieutenant Colonel who retired about 10 years ago. This will be an unfair situation that

should not be allowed, and that is part of the reason for the consequential adjustment.

The validity of the claim by the protesting retirees was also established when, amid the crisis, their representatives paid a courtesy visit to the Defence Minister, Gen. Christopher Musa (rtd), at the Ministry of Defence in Abuja, where Musa, who was represented by the Permanent Secretary, Richard Pheelangwah, assured them that the concerns over their wage and pension adjustment were receiving urgent attention. In a statement issued on the visit by the Director of Information and Public Relations, Henshaw Ogubike, he reported the minister as saying that relevant military, pension and financial authorities were being engaged to achieve a fair, sustainable and implementable resolution of the matter.

By the comments of Gen. Musa, the story is not that the protesters were not entitled to their demand. Why then were they excluded initially? What is the assurance that if they had kept quiet, they would have been considered for pension review? The November 2025 and August 2026 pay raises could not have been the only ones the military has enjoyed in the history of the institution. How have others been handled in the past in relation to the pensions of retired colleagues? Those who did the computation of the fund required to implement the pay rise should be people with institutional memory of all that should be given consideration in the pay rise, and quickly draw attention to anything crucial that is missing.

It is distressing to see pensioners suffer at the hands of their employers in the country. In many states across the nation, their entitlements are delayed

and their arrears are not paid for up to 36 months, while the governors are recruiting and paying hundreds of political aides just as they waste money on white elephant projects. One of the disgusting things the state does is also to delay the entitlements of workers who died in active service. Many children of such deceased civil or public servants are among the millions of out-of-school children roaming the streets and constituting a serious threat to national peace in future because the government failed to pay the entitlements of their late parents, which they need to continue their education or engage in other endeavours that should make them responsible citizens.

In sane societies, the government considers the disruption that the death of a worker in active service would cause to the education, feeding and health-care of the family and makes it a policy to pay the family within three months after necessary processing is completed. Where is our love for these fellow citizens who suffered this unfortunate fate? The focus is on how to steal public funds and fraudulently become a billionaire. Integrity has no place in governance. Very sad!

There is hardly any evidence that the constitutional directive that pensions be reviewed every five years is being carried out in a country where a high rate of inflation is constantly making a mess of the value of what is paid to pensioners and the high cost of living is choking many people to death.

Whatever the protesting military pensioners are entitled to should be paid to them as promised by the defence minister and they should not be made to die in the sun protesting before they can get what is due to them at any time.

LETTER

Beautiful quotes of a lifetime

The evil machinations in mankind

SIR: This very topic is of great interest to me because of the unrepentant nature of human beings regarding the perpetration of evil and its twin brothers.

Historically, we have read in spiritual literatures of how sin and evil came to being during the time of Adam and Eve.

Milton, one of the classical writers in the days of yore even wrote, "Paradise Lost" to further educate us on this very important topic. Human beings will never learn.

The endemic evil, deeply entrenched in a man's heart was also highlighted in one of the classic works of the legendary Williams Shakespeare when Brutus betrayed Julius Caesar, Emperor of the Roman empire then.

"Et tu Brut," was all Julius Caesar could say when Brutus stabbed him in the stomach and he fell down. Meaning, "And you too Brutus...?!!!" The stab in the heart by a close friend like Brutus was the most devastating and painful act to the great Julius Caesar, because of the glaring betrayal of trust.

The whole gamut of world's literature is filled with millions of works telling and warning us of the consequences and terrible repercussions of doing evil in all ramifications.

Efusetan Aniwura's life, in Yoruba history was also a typical example of a very wicked tyrant and powerful leader who sowed evil and paid dearly for her wicked ways. Aniwura was the Iyalode Ilu Ibadan, a tyrannical and heartless leader.

"Esan kii gbe!" meaning, "You

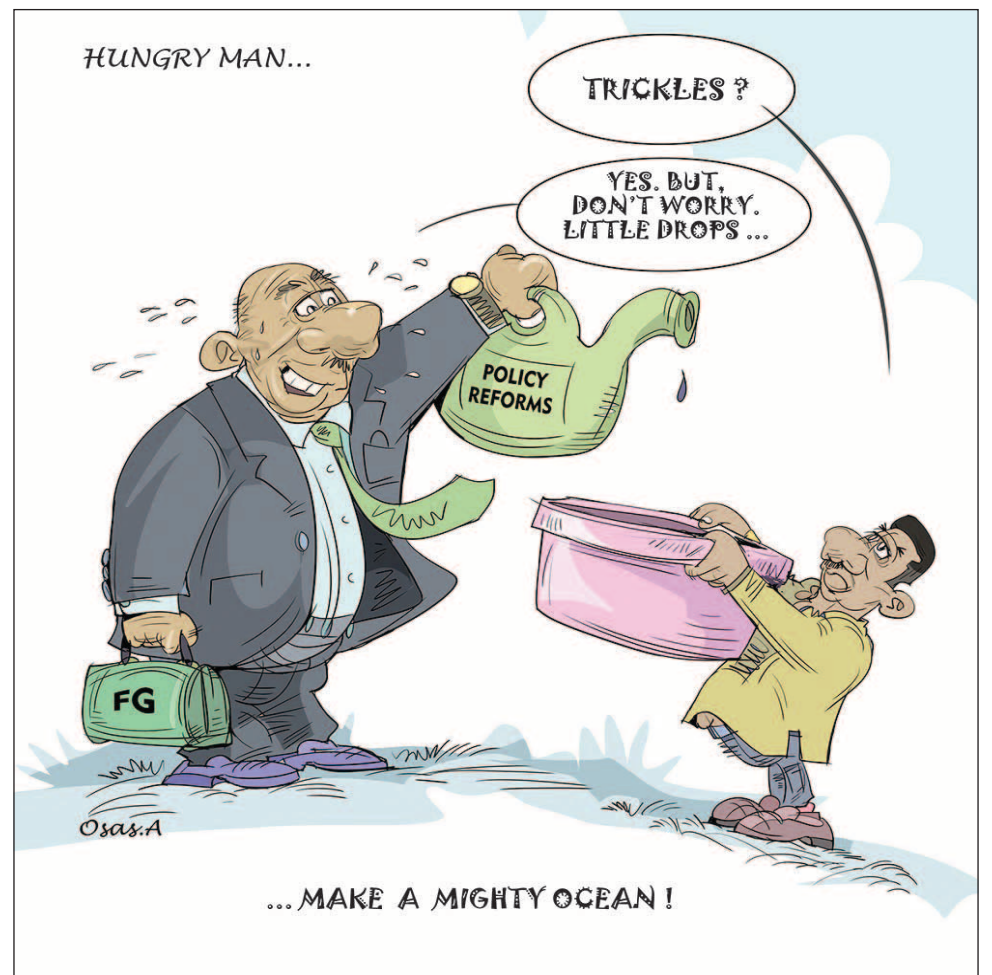
can never escape from Karma and retributive justice." It is also written in the Holy Scripture that, "The heart of man is desperately wicked." When you do bad things and relish in atrocious acts, you would not go unpunished and scot-free!

There is a quote again in the Holy Scripture, "Let love be without dissimulation. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good."

"Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good." This literally means, "Sow good seeds always so as to reap good things in return."

Steer clear of betrayal, backstabbing and other wicked acts to hurt fellow human beings, so your mind can be at peace with the Almighty God, and to enjoy His awesome blessings. Think about it.

Segun Durowaiye can be reached via: 08055356855.



Opinion

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Why energy interventions may outlive 2027 elections

By Lekan Olayiwola

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

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

Thirty days, hidden gaps and deferred bills

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

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

to suppliers. Deferred costs remain obligations.

Two clocks: The ballot and the barrel

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

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

Dependency and who pays twice

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

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

as global fuel and food prices fed through.

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

The production subsidy: What the headline leaves out

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

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

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

The minister's warning and the missing savings Oyelede has argued that restoring a conventional

petrol subsidy could push pump prices to N2,000 a litre and the exchange rate to as much as N3,000 to the dollar. These are the minister's projections of a possible chain of consequences, which should be tested against the assumptions behind them. The government's own record argues for transparency. The IMF put full-year savings from ending implicit fuel subsidies, which it dates to October 2024, at about 2 per cent of GDP and urged that they accrue to the budget.

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

Write the exit before announcing the relief

Whichever party forms the next government, a credible intervention needs transparent rules from the outset. Government should publish the cost per litre, identify who bears it and disclose any deferred liabilities. Any cap should have a defined fiscal ceiling, independently audited accounts and a clear rule for what happens when that ceiling is reached. Reviews should respond to measurable conditions, including global prices, exchange-rate movements and the state of public finances rather than relying on a calendar date alone.

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How to make reforms in Nigeria reach the kitchen faster

By Magnus Onyibe

Last week, I argued that the centralisation of policing in 1966 and the introduction of fuel subsidies in 1973 were both temporary measures introduced during Gen. Yakubu Gowon's administration that became permanent because they had no end dates. This week, I promised to address the bigger question readers have been asking: if the macroeconomy is now working, why is the microeconomy still hurting?

The answer lies in what economists call transmission lag. As I explained last week, it takes between 24 and 36 months to build a factory. Readers were also reminded that Aliko Dangote spent seven years building his 650,000-barrels-per-day refinery from start to finish.

Therefore, the \$50 billion in Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs), the \$2.06 billion in Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), and the JP Morgan bond listing, which could bring \$17.5 billion into the Nigerian economy, as I argued in this column last week, are real prospects. But these developments are concentrated at the top, at the macroeconomic level. They will not translate into money in the market woman's purse or food in our families' cooking pots until someone in the middle converts macroeconomic gains into microeconomic opportunities and jobs.

How do we shorten that 36-month transmission lag to 12 months? There are three bridges to cross.

Before delving deeper into how the bridges can link macro to micro I would like us to adopt Gen. Gowon's development template from some 53 years ago, when he intervened as Head of State to protect Nigerians from the kind of oil price shock the world is currently grappling with, arising from the ongoing Iran-U.S.-Israeli war and manifesting as a global energy crisis.

As readers may recall, Gen. Gowon's administration introduced a petrol price subsidy in 1973 to cushion the impact of the oil price shock on Nigerians following the Yom Kippur War between Egypt and Israel.

The difference I identified between Gowon's 1973 policy and the current actions of European leaders seeking to ameliorate the effects of the oil price shock arising from the Iran-Israel-U.S. conflict is that their interventions, through tax relief on oil, have end dates. Gowon's intervention, however, had no specified termination date. This is why the fuel subsidy remained in operation until the incumbent president, Bola Tinubu, announced its removal in his inaugural speech on May 29, 2023, some 50 years later.

Incidentally, the current government intervention, announced last Thursday by the Minister of Finance and Coordinating Minister of the Economy, Taiwo Oyelede, in the form of a 30-day discount on petrol prices, has an end date.

This suggests to me that the government is reading and listening to those of us in the commentariat who are essentially leading from the streets. Hence, it has decided not to repeat the mistake of the Gowon era, when temporary interventions were introduced without time limits, as I pointed out in this column last week.

By offering a 30-day discount on petrol prices, presumably renewable if the prevailing circumstances persist, the government has demonstrated that it has learnt the lesson of ensuring that temporary policies have clearly defined end dates from the outset. This is

necessary to prevent temporary interventions from becoming permanent, as happened with the centralisation of policing in 1966 and petroleum product subsidies in 1973.

For the record, and to emphasise the point, the other open-ended policy that became permanent because it had no time frame was the centralisation of policing in Nigeria in 1966, following the military coup that toppled the First Republic's democratic administration. The Tinubu administration is also in the process of reversing that arrangement through the ongoing decentralisation of policing, which has already undergone crucial legislative procedures.

Gen. Gowon's second approach to alleviating the hardship Nigerians faced under circumstances similar to those prevailing today was the introduction of a salary award known as the Udoji Award, named after the chairman of the commission that recommended the reforms. The aim was to provide relief to long-suffering Nigerian workers.

In fact, the policy worked very well, except that its implementation was cut short following the ouster of Gowon's administration in a military coup d'état in 1975.

Unfortunately, the Tinubu administration has not yet adopted a Udoji-style salary award as a means of reducing the hardship arising from the removal of the petrol subsidy. Instead, a rather nebulous and complex, high-cost-of-living intervention, described through terms such as discount and modulation, among other labels designed to distinguish it from subsidy, has been adopted. The initiative has attracted considerable public backlash and even parody, largely because it is too complicated to understand, while the estimated relief of N66 per litre is too insignificant for the masses to appreciate the intended benefit.

It is encouraging that Gen. Gowon recently visited President Tinubu at the Aso Rock Presidential Villa. I would like to hazard a guess that he may have shared his experience of managing the turbulence associated with oil booms and busts with the President.

In the latter part of this intervention, I will examine this concern more deeply to determine why a salary award, which has not yet been considered, might have been more efficacious than the price discount, modulation and forward sale of crude oil to local refiners currently on offer. These measures have triggered considerable public debate across conventional and social media platforms.

For now, it is appropriate to focus on the three bridges between progress at the macroeconomic and microeconomic levels that I proposed in the opening paragraphs of this intervention.

The First Bridge: The Fiscal Bridge — From the Federation Account Allocation Committee (FAAC) to the Pocket and Cooking Pot In my article last week, I referenced the Udoji Award of 1974 as an example of a policy introduced under Gowon's administration that worked because the money went directly into workers' pockets.

Today, monthly allocations from the Federation Account Allocation Committee (FAAC) to states have increased substantially, reportedly rising from N1.1 trillion to more than N2.2 trillion following the removal of the petrol subsidy. Yet, the ordinary Nigerian in Warri, Kaura Namoda, Ohafia or Igokoda does not feel the impact. The solution, in my view, is to borrow from Gowon's approach but modernise it.

Of the roughly N10 trillion saved from subsidy removal since May 2023, 50 per cent should be ring-fenced, not for palliatives such as

rice distributions that quickly disappear, but for conditional vouchers. These could include vouchers for farm inputs, compressed natural gas (CNG) conversion kits for commercial tricycles, or keke (rather than focusing only on mass-transit buses, cars and other commercial vehicles), as well as school-fee credits paid directly to schools.

That way, the poor could begin to feel the much-vaunted dividends of the bold reforms undertaken by the Tinubu administration within 30 days, rather than having to wait 30 months.

Another unconventional but potentially impactful measure would be to publish FAAC spending on a local government area-by-local government area basis online, just as the Budget Office already publishes information at the federal level.

That way, our youths, who have been devoting too much of their valuable skills and talents to distorting information to suit their political biases, would have sufficient data and content to engage in more useful and productive work. Such efforts could help steer the ship of progress in our beloved nation in the right direction.

Let none of the critics claim that government does not listen and act on advice.

Let none of the critics come up with the excuse that the government does not listen to advice or act on it. That may have been true of past administrations, but the incumbent administration is not shy about reversing its policies when it realises that they are unpopular with the masses or lack pragmatism.

The increase in cash transfers to indigent members of society is a case in point. The threshold for beneficiaries had initially been set at a lower level, but President Tinubu subsequently increased the amount payable.

Another example can be cited from as recently as last week.

In this column last Tuesday, I identified the absence of commencement and end dates as the bogey of policies intended to be temporary but which eventually became permanent. Examples include the centralisation of policing since 1966 and the introduction of petrol subsidies in 1973.

I then wondered whether the administration would offer some reprieve from the burden of rising petrol prices by restoring some form of subsidy, as European and Asian countries are doing, or sustain its commitment not to reverse the removal of petrol subsidies and instead find alternative ways to ameliorate the unfolding cost-of-living crisis.

By Thursday, the government had announced a 30-day discount on petrol prices. Although the initiative is complex, the relief appears limited, and the measure may not produce the intended impact, its commencement and end dates are as clear as crystal.

Before I identified the shortcomings associated with the open-ended nature of policies intended to be temporary but which eventually became perpetual, commentators debating whether petrol subsidies were sustainable—including presidential candidates now clamouring for their restoration—had largely focused on the abruptness of the removal. They blamed Tinubu for failing to consult stakeholders beforehand, while promising to do better if elected.

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Opinion

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Why rebranding your rival is a fruitless strategy in politics

By Austine Ihonor

MODERN political campaigns are increasingly trapped in a paradox: desperate candidates spend billions defining their opponents rather than introducing their own manifestos. In the high-stakes, theatrical laboratory of contemporary Nigerian democracy, a curious ritual has overtaken the campaign manager's playbook. As political machineries gear up for the forthcoming elections, the strategy has invariably shifted from constructive self-promotion to an expensive, frantic exercise in public-relations alchemy: the attempt to "remarket" one's opponent.

This is not the standard, time-honoured practice of highlighting a rival's policy failures; it is an obsessive, multi-million-naira effort to completely re-engineer an adversary's public persona. It is the art of telling a highly discerning electorate that the leader they think they know is actually a completely different, uniquely terrifying phantom.

Yet, as current electoral cycles demonstrate, this strategic fixation has hit a wall of diminishing returns. What was once viewed as a lethal political maneuver has degenerated into an exercise in pure futility, often backfiring on the very candidates who deploy it. When a campaign abandons the heavy lifting of offering a forward-looking vision to act as an uninvited brand consultant for its enemy, it signals an institutional emptiness and a lack of a viable blueprint—a panic that modern Nigerian voters can smell from a mile away.

The calculus of the sinking ship

From an analytical and civic perspective, the decision to spend the bulk of a campaign's war chest redefining an adversary reveals a profound structural void. In political science, we often discuss the "positive premium"—the tangible electoral value

generated by a distinct, coherent policy narrative. When a candidate possesses no such blueprint to address pressing national challenges—such as inflation, currency stabilisation, infrastructural decay, or security—obsessive negative framing becomes the default currency.

Enter the psychological pivot. The desperate candidate operates on an outdated, Pavlovian model of voter behaviour, assuming the electorate can be conditioned entirely by fear, aversion, and ethnic or partisan anxieties. They treat the voter not as a rational civic actor, but as a consumer to be frightened away from a rival product.

This is where the satire writes itself: politicians now deploy highly produced, cinematic digital campaigns that attempt a bizarre feat of cognitive dissonance. They frame their rivals simultaneously as bumbling, incompetent characters incapable of basic governance, and masterfully sinister, terrifyingly powerful masterminds orchestrating systemic ruin. One is forced to wonder how a single human being can manage to be both utterly inept and terrifyingly Machiavellian before lunchtime. For the modern citizen navigating daily economic realities with sharp skepticism, this exaggerated messaging fails the basic test of logic.

The modern mechanics of backfire

This cognitive dissonance is precisely why the rebranding strategy fails so reliably in the contemporary media ecosystem. The modern Nigerian electorate—seasoned by decades of digital skepticism, highly urbanised, and deeply interconnected—does not consume these marketing efforts in a vacuum. Instead, three distinct structural barriers turn these attacks into political boomerangs:

The Diagnostic Filter: Today's citizens, particularly the youth demographic driving digital civic engagement, are casual scholars of media manipula-

tion. When an aggressive media blitz attempts to twist a rival's decades-old statement or association into a fresh act of treason, the public rarely registers the intended outrage. Instead, they analyse the mechanics of the ad itself. The focus shifts from the target's alleged flaws to the attacker's obvious anxiety. The messaging ceases to be an exposé; it becomes a diagnostic symptom of a sinking ship.

The saturation threshold: In an information environment saturated by 24-hour news cycles, viral WhatsApp broadcasts, and relentless social media commentary, public outrage has become a heavily depreciated asset. When every routine political disagreement or past administrative decision is framed by a campaign as a historic catastrophe, the collective public consciousness develops immunity. By over-marketing a rival's supposed villainy, desperate candidates inadvertently desensitize the very voters they need to mobilise. When everything is an emergency, nothing is.

The martyrdom premium: Psychological reactance tells us that human beings inherently resist overt, heavy-handed manipulation. When a political camp aggressively dictates how the public should feel about a specific individual, it often triggers an unintended protective instinct. The target of the non-stop negative marketing is gradually elevated to the status of an underdog or a victim of systemic persecution. This perversely solidifies their existing support base and attracts undecided voters who grow weary of the relentless, toxic hostility.

The parasitic campaign and its policy void

There is a profound poetic irony in the architecture of the purely negative campaign. Every hour dedicated to painting a rival in shades of villainy is an hour stolen from articulating a candidate's

own purpose and vision for national development. When a politician's identity becomes entirely parasitic—meaning their relevance exists solely in opposition to the person they are fighting—they effectively erase themselves and their platform from the ballot paper.

The voter is ultimately left wandering through a conceptual ghost town, a vast policy void. They are told in vivid, agonising detail what the candidate hates, fears, and despises, but they are left entirely in the dark regarding what that candidate intends to build, protect, or nurture if given the mandate of leadership. A political brand built exclusively on the demolition of another is not a sustainable platform; it is merely a pile of rhetorical rubble. Sovereignty at the ballot box

Democracy, at its philosophical core, requires a choice between competing futures, not just a referee report on competing flaws. Contrast styling and robust debate will always have a legitimate home in political campaigns, but the desperate obsession with entirely rewriting an opponent's history is a proven path to strategic exhaustion.

The ballot box, stubborn in its quiet dignity, ultimately rewards the architecture of hope and concrete ideas over the engineering of fear.

True statesmanship cannot be achieved by proxy, nor can a seat of power be earned simply by convincing the world that one's rival is unworthy of it. The political movements that endure are those that understand leadership is not about making your enemy look small, but about presenting a vision that is large enough for the entire nation. Ultimately, the ballot box rewards those who give the electorate something to vote for, not just someone to vote against.

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When shall we boast of uninterrupted power supply? (2)

By Anene Umennaka

Continued from yesterday

CONSUMERS regularly experience darkness over the perennial grid collapse. The erstwhile number two citizen Prof. Yemi Osibanjo in a ministerial performance review in justifying tariff increment by NERC was quoted to have said: "The other painful adjustment we have had to make in recent days is a review of electricity tariff regime. The recent service-based tariff adjustment by the Discos has been a source of concern to many of us. Let me say frankly, that like many Nigerians, I have been very unhappy about the quality of service given by the Discos. That is why we have directed that tariff adjustments be made only based on guaranteed improvement in service."

It is usually a ding-dong affair between NERC on the one part; and Civil Society Organisation (CSO) and Labour on the other part, anytime the former increases the tariffs. The latter insists on improves service before increments, while International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank pile pressures on the government to remove subsidy. During the 2020 increments while the government justified the upward adjustment of tariffs contending that 45 per cent of Nigerians segmented into Band A – E are enjoying between 13 to 24 hours of electricity, even the World Bank insisted 78 per cent of power consumers in Nigeria get less than 12 hours of supply. The increment was to meet liquidity challenges including an improvement in the provision of service. Consumers were no longer going to purchase cables, transformers, electric poles and other basic needs that should be the responsibility of the service providers - the Discos.

There were other increments in January 2022 and May 2024. While NERC defended the Discos for 2022 increments saying the adjustments were inevitable due to foreign exchange difficulties, inflation and insecurity in certain parts of the country which had prevented Discos from collecting their revenue; that of May 2024 affected only BANDA customer – a 250 per cent increment, from N68 per kilowatt hour spiraling to N225 kilowatt (KW)!

Most stakeholders are irked that the Discos and Gencos have not improved service still they keep on increasing the tariff. The mass Metering Programme did not also progress. 5,132,994 customers out of the 12,457,068 active electricity consumers are unmetered, NERC reported in its March and April 2026 metering status.

In March 2022, 14 power plant failed due to lack of gas and other issues. While power generating companies apportioned the blame on the government for not meeting its financial duty to them totaling N1.6 trillion then, the Nigeria Bulk Electricity Trading Company Plc claimed Gencos were paid. On the other hand Discos are blaming Transmission Company of Nigeria for running antiquated equipments leading to frequent collapse. Consumers continued to bear the pains of the sector. They cannot fathom the reason behind the tariff increases. According to the consumer rights advocates, the power sector is waxing, on the sweat of the consumers. Consumers have continued to provide electricity transformers, poles, wires and other necessities for their use, while ownership changes instantly to the privately owned distribution companies. Where is the fairness! However, NERC on 26th day of October, 2024 asked consumers to report Discos that still allow consumers to provide poles, trans-

formers, etc.

This leads us to ask what the regulatory body NERC is doing to address these inefficiencies? Experts have said that until NERC addresses the obvious loopholes in the electricity network. Consumers would likely experience tariffs increase without commensurate increase in power supply. These weaknesses have been aggravated by policy laxity and regulatory environments. NERC however in April, 2024 fined Abuja Electricity Distribution Company (AEDC) Plc for applying the latest tariff to all bands instead of Band A only and also ordered it to reimburse the affected customers. Despite the lapses, investors are demanding cost-reflective tariffs, while international financial institutions are insisting that the government should remove subsidy. On July 31, 2026, Tegbe, announced that electricity tariffs will be totally removed in 2027 but in phases.

A former chairman of NERC, Dr Sam Amadi earlier mentioned, was reported by the press to have summed it up saying that there would only be service improvement when Nigeria "has a more efficient policy, effective regulatory environment, and interventions!" This agrees, with what Yemi Oke, a professor of energy law said that, tariff increases would never address challenges in the power sector until "fundamental issues" are tackled. Monica Maduekwe, a sustainable energy expert is also on the same page with Amadi and Oke, that tariff increases would not solve Nigeria's electricity problem. Speaking during a media interaction in May, 2025, she added that if tariffs increase was the panacea to Nigeria's electricity crisis "it would have abated with the successive price hikes" in the past. She pinpointed the stumbling block to be "interference from entrenched interests whose agendas are misaligned with the goal of reliable electricity for all Nigerians."

Power supply to the network has been very dismal leading to decreased hours of supply to all bands of tariff. Yet, tariff the same. Of course, consumers have to resort to self-generation, and price of diesel has skyrocketed. Manufacturers Association of Nigeria (MAN) continually laments that alternative energy adds 40 percent to the cost of goods, making their goods uncompetitive to cheaper imports. MAN further said that 300 businesses have consequently shut down. World Bank says Nigerian businesses suffered a combined annual loss of \$29 billion because of unreliable power.

In view of all these hiccups in the power sector, particularly with regard to Gencos and Discos, some consumers and consumer rights advocates have called for a reversal of the privatisation. That reversal, remained the only feasible alternative, due to their persistence poor performance. In the words of Dr Owoko in a recent article: "until the Discos are dissolved and replaced with technically competent investors who are ready to invest heavily in distribution equipment and facilities, homes and industries will continue to suffer from poor electricity supply... Let the Discos die, so that Nigeria can have light."

But energy experts rather prefer that the Federal Government should be stricter and firmer with the non-performing Gencos and Discos. They said that performances agreement that led to the privatisation must be fulfilled by all. Further, that NERC and Bureau of Public Enterprises (BPE) need to be empowered by law to remove non-performing Gencos and Discos. That reversal of privatisation will be more expensive in time and resources.

Discos appear still to be blaming their predicaments on foreign exchange volatility, continued security threats in various part of the country like bombing of parts of the transmission network in the northern states. That Discos experience cable vandalism and theft nationwide. That, these factors all combined to affect Discos best effort at providing electricity. These same economic and security concerns affect customers as well. So government is urged to provide the needed or conducive environment for all.

In the twilight of his regime, the Muhammadu Buhari-led Federal Government had proposed a renewable energy plan (REMAP) that would generate 178,000MW in its efforts to transform energy supply in the country over the next 27 years. Nigeria has, as stated in the beginning, has one of the highest energy deficit in the world. Renewable energy generation in the country is 1,000MW as at present. The then minister of power said that Nigeria is therefore looking for investors to raise \$1.22 trillion to shift its energy sources to renewables! The objective of the gigantic plan was directed at ending energy impoverishment, tackle climate change and assist Nigeria in achieving Paris Agreement projections as well as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG). Renewable energy are expected to generate 42 per cent of all electricity globally, despite many obstacles.

But experts are all agreed that the plan was too ambitious and unrealistic, and therefore likely to fail. They called for a clear and implementable plan. That the country should start small. Gradually, with improvement, it will keep on increasing. They experts seem to be saying that Rome was not built in a day. That the focus now should be in checkmating the nepotism and corruption that constitute stumbling blocks to gradual progress in the power sector. They harped on attitudinal change, sincerity and eschewing of selfish interest for national interest. The experts underscored the fact that the country usually does not lack good plans but implementation. They emphasized the need for "effectiveness, efficiency and ethics in the public sector as catalyst of a lasting business environment".

Despite the criticisms above, the last regime seemed bent on scouting for the investors to raise \$1.22 trillion to transit from fossil to renewable energy. The plan as earlier stated was directed at ending energy impoverishment, tackle climate change and assist Nigeria in achieving Paris Agreement Projections, as well as the sustainable development goals. This is the position of the United Nations and developed countries. But fossil fuels advocates in the country favour using existing resources, particularly gas to power industries and homes, instead of importing renewable energy products, which comes at exorbitant if not, unaffordable costs to developing countries.

The then Minister of Science and Technology, Dr Ogonnaya Onu, who passed on 2024, seemed to have favoured a marriage of the two (fossil and renewable energy), when responding to an interview he said that the country has an abundance of crude oil, fossil fuels, and variants of renewable energy (solar, hydro, wind, geothermal and biomass), in commercial quantities, and a good mix of all these would greatly improve the energy supply in the country.

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World Report

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Putin agrees to resume three-way peace talks with Ukraine, U.S.

RUSSIAN President, Vladimir Putin, has agreed to resume the United States' mediated peace talks with Ukraine as soon as next month, the Kremlin said yesterday, after Putin met American envoy, Steve Witkoff in Washington's latest push to stop Europe's bloodiest conflict since World War II.

The negotiations, which took place at the Grand Imperial Palace, St Petersburg, was the ninth time Witkoff has met Putin in person. It began with a goodwill gesture from Russia - release of Stephen Hubbard, a retired United States school teacher held in Russia, whom U.S. President, Donald Trump had requested Kremlin chief to release earlier.

Yesterday's encounter unfolded amid concerns in Kyiv and among its allies that the U.S. is backing away from Ukraine, at times holding back real-time intelligence on Russian attacks and hobbling Ukraine's military communications.

The latest talks also came two years after Trump promised in his election campaign to end the Ukraine war within 24 hours.

The Kremlin said the new three-way peace talks, which would be at a technical level, may take place in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates, and will focus on how to guarantee the security of Ukraine and Russia once the war ends.

The talks may begin on or after November 10, it said. The last United States-mediated peace talks took place in February before the U.S. and Israel launched a war against Iran.

Kremlin was less upbeat however about the outcome of talks Witkoff had held a day earlier in Oslo with Ukrainian President, Volodymyr Zelenskiy; leaders of Finland and Norway as well as representatives of European Union (EU) and North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO).

Witkoff told Putin the talks had been characterised by some degree of momentum while a U.S. official said Ukraine had brought new ideas and proposals.

"These nuances, so to speak, do not entirely satisfy us", Kremlin aide, Yuri Ushakov, told reporters after the St Petersburg meeting, which lasted nearly three hours.

Ukraine and Russia remain far apart when it comes to any possible peace deal, though Trump has recently intensified pressure on Ukraine to strike a deal. He said on Tuesday it was time for Ukraine to end the war or face "a very bad thing."

Putin also used yesterday's talks to offer to help Trump deal with Iran, stressing that Russia had a decade's-long relationship with Tehran, which it has repeatedly offered to leverage in addressing U.S. concerns about Iran's nuclear programme.

U.S. tasks CAR authorities on security sector reform

By Ngozi Egenuka

THE United States has called on the authorities of Central African Republic (CAR), to accelerate security sector reform and take greater responsibility for restoring peace and security.

This was as the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilisation Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) moves towards transitioning its responsibilities to national institutions.

The U.S. representative for UN Management and Reform, Ambassador Jeffrey Bartos, made the call during a UN Security Council briefing on the country's socio-political situation in the New York City.

Bartos said the country had made progress towards durable peace and security with MINUSCA's support, noting that strengthening national and local institutions was helping to restore state authority.

He said the implementation of the peace process had continued to generate security gains, adding that Washington welcomed steps taken by MINUSCA towards

transferring responsibilities to national authorities.

According to him, the mission had already transferred security and corrections tasks to national authorities while electoral responsibilities were handed over to other entities following the successful completion of the electoral cycle.

He said the transition process involved cooperation between the Central African government, MINUSCA and other UN agencies.

"The Central African government and MINUSCA established a joint committee to assess and plan how to transition tasks. MINUSCA and the UN Country Team were also discussing the transfer of responsibilities", Bartos said.

He added that the mission was consolidating existing security gains while seeking to hand over tasks whenever national authorities had sufficient capacity to assume them.

Bartos however warned that the transition would face challenges, particularly as security improvements remained fragile in some parts of the country, including border areas.

Gambia to compensate victims of Jammeh's rule from seized U.S. mansion funds

THE Gambia will use funds received from the United States from the forfeiture of long-time ruler, Yahya Jammeh's property to pay victims of his rule, authorities have said.

The Gambia's Reparations Commission said it received \$2.5 million (£1.86million) from the sale of a mansion in Maryland owned by former leader of the West African nation.

The United States had in 2022, secured the right to sell the property on grounds that it was acquired through "criminal proceeds and misappropriated Gambian public funds."

Jammeh ruled The Gambia for over 20 years after taking over in the 1994 coup, a time marked by allegations of

human rights abuses forced disappearances and extrajudicial killings.

The Gambia Reparations Commission said Tuesday that it was pleased to inform victims, survivors and the public that it has received a total of \$2,573,414.10 from the sale of Jammeh's property.

It said it was committed to ensuring the funds were managed responsibly and transparently, with due regard to the rights and needs of victims and survivors.

Jammeh, who lost to Adama Barrow in the 2016 election, first accepted defeat and then, rejected the results.

He eventually stepped down in 2017 amid intense regional and international pressure.

Macron accuses foreign leaders of exploiting French riots

FRENCH President, Emmanuel Macron, has accused foreign leaders of exploiting the riots that erupted across the country last Saturday for electoral purposes.

Without naming them, he said they were campaigning for forthcoming elections at France's expense with their comments on the protest, which hinged on the cost-of-living.

Speaking on a visit to the Middle East, Macron described them as leaders, who are in campaign mode, "whether here in the region or on the

other side of the Atlantic." He added that the unnamed leaders had been influenced by fake videos generated by Artificial Intelligence (AI) about the riots.

Nearly 150 people have been jailed and more than 800 brought before the courts since the last weekend's riots, which gripped Paris and other cities including Lyon, Marseille and Nice.

Video of running battles between masked rioters and police, as well as property being destroyed and stores looted, spread across

social media.

The government admitted the police had "lost control" during the violence, which came after weeks of protests by students over conditions in high schools.

Macron vowed afterwards that the authorities would be uncompromising towards agitators from ultra-left fringe groups, which he blamed for much of the trouble.

Speaking in the Qatari Capital City, Doha, the French President said, "For me, there is no visible foreign interference in the events that took place. On

the other hand, there was foreign manipulation of information afterwards. Yes, and that gave rise to unacceptable and stupid comments from many people, including foreign leaders.

"We had people claiming that we had been invaded by hordes of migrants and Islamists, which is completely false."

Israeli President, Benjamin Netanyahu, said Tuesday in an interview with Israel's i24 channel that France, which has Western Europe's largest Muslim minority, had been hit by an invasion of extremist Islam.



Violence raged in Marseille along with other French cities.

World off track to end deforestation by 2030 amid loss of 10.7m hectares of forest

By Bertram Nwannekanma

THE world is falling significantly behind its pledge to end deforestation by 2030, with a cumulative shortfall of 10.7 million hectares of forest, an area roughly the size of Iceland, a new global assessment has found.

The 2026 Forest Declaration Assessment, released ahead of a major climate summit yesterday, said that although global deforestation declined by 15 per cent in 2025, the improvement was insufficient to reverse years of slow progress towards the target.

The report found that approximately seven million hectares of forest were lost to

deforestation last year, compared with about 8.2 million hectares in 2024.

However, annual forest loss remained far above the levels required to achieve zero deforestation by the end of the decade.

The assessment, compiled by a coalition of more than two dozen civil society and research organisations, tracks progress towards commitments made by countries, businesses and investors to halt deforestation and restore 30 per cent of degraded forest ecosystems by 2030.

It measures annual forest loss against a 2018-2020 baseline, when deforestation aver-

aged 8.3 million hectares a year, and assesses whether reductions are sufficient to bring the figure to zero by 2030.

According to the report, deforestation needed to decline by roughly one million hectares annually to keep the world on track. By 2024, forest loss should have fallen to no more than five million hectares, but it remained at about eight million hectares. The target for 2025 was 4.2 million hectares, against the actual figure of seven million hectares.

The report's principal author and lead consultant at Climate Focus, Erin Matson,

said the decline recorded in 2025 was welcome but should not be mistaken for a sustained turnaround.

Matson said the 10.7-million-hectare deficit represented the difference between the forest that would have been preserved if the world had remained on track towards the 2030 goal and the destruction that had occurred during the decade.

A report co-author and senior consultant at Climate Focus, Ivan Palmegiani, likened the growing shortfall to unpaid credit-card debt, warning that each additional hectare lost increased the burden of meeting the global commitment.

CRUDE OIL PRICE UPDATE Brent crude: \$106.51 WTI crude: \$95.64

FOREX MARKET UPDATE I&E window: N1,329.75

Money supply up N7.5tr as govt credit surges, private lending contracts

By Abigail Ikaghughu

NIGERIA's broad money supply climbed sharply in September, rising by N7.51 trillion to N146.60 trillion, according to the latest Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) data. The increase was driven by a surge in net credit to the government, which jumped from N6.36 trillion to N39.40 trillion from N33.04 trillion in August.

The expansion underscores the growing role of public sector borrowing in shaping liquidity conditions, raising concerns about inflationary pressures, crowding out of private investment, and the sustainability of fiscal driven monetary growth.

Meanwhile, credit to the private sector fell by N537.6 billion, or about 0.6 per cent, from N84.47 trillion in August to N83.93 trillion in September, despite the expansion in money supply.

The latest CBN data showed that broad money supply, measured by M3, grew by 5.4 per cent from N139.09 trillion in August, extending the upward trend recorded since the beginning of the year.

Money supply rose from N123.95 trillion in January to N125.19 trillion in April and N129.54 trillion in May, before climbing to N133.27 trillion in June and N139.09 trillion in August. It reached N146.60 trillion in September.

Net credit to the government rose to N124.34 trillion in September from N117.51 trillion in August, representing an increase of N5.83 trillion, or about 5.0 per cent. The data did not provide a breakdown of the factors behind the increase.

The decline in private sector credit came despite the CBN's decision to reduce its benchmark interest rate during the month. The available figures

did not provide a sectoral breakdown of lending or establish the reasons for the decline.

The latest increase in money supply followed the CBN's decision to cut the Monetary Policy Rate (MPR) by 350 basis points to 23 per cent at its 307th Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) meeting, marking the largest reduction in the benchmark rate since December 2006.

Meanwhile, currency outside banks increased to N4.92 trillion in September from N4.87 trillion in August, representing a monthly rise of about N48.7 billion.

Narrow money, which comprises currency and highly liquid deposits, also rose from N43.11 trillion in August to N44.05 trillion in September, while demand deposits increased from N38.24 trillion to N39.12 trillion.

Net foreign assets declined to N30.90 trillion in September from N35.75 trillion in August, representing a decrease of N4.85 trillion, or about 13.6 per cent.

The rise in money supply reflected an increase in funds within the financial system, although the data do not establish how much of the additional liquidity has translated into consumer spending or added to inflationary pressures.

IDAN flags workplace design as hidden threat to productivity, ROI

By Gloria Nwafor

THE Interior Designers Association of Nigeria (IDAN) has called on business leaders, developers and policymakers to treat interior design as a critical investment in workplace productivity, employee wellbeing and organisational performance, rather than as a finishing touch to building projects.

The association said the design of offices and other indoor spaces could influence how effectively people work, stressing that decisions on lighting, ventilation, acoustics, safety and space planning should be considered from the beginning of a project.

IDAN President, Jacqueline Aki, gave the charge at a press conference, ahead of its National Interior Design Summit (NIDS), under the theme, 'Interiors as Infrastructure'.

Citing research by the World Green Building Council, Aki indicated that better indoor air quality can improve office productivity by between eight and 11 per cent.

She also cited research by the University of Salford in the United Kingdom, which linked classroom design to a difference of up to 16 per cent in pupils' progress over a year.

The findings, she stressed, reinforced IDAN's position that interior design extends beyond aesthetics to the planning and organisation of spaces to support the people who use them.

Beyond the corporate environment, Aki said the association also extends the argument to public infrastructure, with Project NEXUS, which will focus on the Sickle Cell Centre in Idi-Araba, Lagos, identified as a practical example of translating the summit's theme into design action.

Nigeria's telecom regulator targets operators over poor call quality

By Adeyemi Adepotun

THE Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC) has reaffirmed its commitment to protecting telecommunications consumers, declaring that operators will be held accountable for service failures and poor service quality as the Commission intensifies regulatory measures to improve customer experience across the country.

The Executive Vice Chairman of the NCC, Dr Aminu Maida, made the commitment at the 95th Telecom Consumer Parliament in Lagos, with the theme "Enhancing Consumer Experience: Strengthening Service Quality and Consumer Protection in Nigeria's Digital Economy." He stressed that effective regulation must translate into tangible improvements in the daily experiences of consumers.

According to Maida, the Commission remains focused on enforcing service standards, protecting consumer rights, and ensuring that telecommunications operators deliver the quality of service promised to subscribers. He noted that con-

sumers deserve reliable connectivity, transparent billing, and accessible avenues for redress whenever service expectations are not met.

Maida stated that NCC, as the regulator, has an obligation to protect consumers by setting clear standards, holding service providers accountable, and ensuring that there is a fair way to seek redress. We must judge our work by the difference it makes to your experience.

"For a trader waiting to confirm a customer's payment, a network failure can mean a lost sale, while a student trying to submit an assignment can miss a deadline because of a slow connection. These everyday experiences should guide our conversation today, because people want their phones to work, their charges to make sense and someone to take responsibility when things go wrong," he said.

Speaking on the theme of the event, Maida said, "Our theme, 'Enhancing Consumer Experience: Strengthening Service Quality and Consumer Protection in Nigeria's Digital Economy', speaks directly to our responsibility."



Director, Corporate Communications, National Information Technology Development Agency (NITDA) Mrs. Hadiza Umar (left); Director, Special Duties and Stakeholders Management and Partnership, Dr. Aristotle Onuma; Director General, Kashifu Inuwa; Founder and Chairman of Signal Alliance Technology Holding (SATH), Collins Onuegbu; Deputy Director, Special Duties and Stakeholders Management, Mrs. Uche Akaloro and Special Assistant to DG on Strategic partnership, Mrs Iklima Musa at the tech outlook 2027 event in Lagos.

Brewers slide into losses as weak demand, tax hikes bite

By Helen Oji

THE breweries subsector of the Nigerian Exchange Limited (NGX) is facing mounting pressure as weak consumer demand, rising operating costs and higher taxes negatively impact the performance of listed companies, pushing their share prices into negative territory year-to-date (YTD).

This is despite improved earnings growth recorded by some of the major players in their half-year results.

Data from the Nigerian Exchange Limited (NGX) as of Tuesday, October 20, 2026, showed that International Breweries Plc, with market capitalisation of N1.68 trillion, had lost 29.8 per cent of its share price value since the begin-

ning of the year, while Champion Breweries, with a market capitalisation of N1.3 billion, had depreciated by 28.6 per cent. Nigerian Breweries Plc achieved a marginal 0.3 per cent rise YTD.

Operators noted that the performance reflects the challenges confronting brewers as households contend with high living costs and reduced purchasing power, limiting demand for products that consumers may consider non-essential during periods of economic hardship.

According to them, a sustained recovery in the subsector will depend on improvements in household purchasing power, stronger consumer demand and the ability of brewers to adjust

their pricing and operating strategies without further weakening sales volumes.

The operators expressed concerns about the impact of subdued consumer spending, excise duties and other operating expenses on the earnings prospects of breweries.

Executive Director of Halo Capital Management Limited, Dr Paul Uzum, said weak consumer demand was affecting several consumer goods companies, particularly those producing items that households could cut back on when their disposable incomes came under pressure.

He said investors were avoiding breweries because the difficult economic conditions facing

Nigerian households had made it harder for companies in the sector to achieve significant sales growth.

According to him, beer and other alcoholic beverages face additional demand pressures when consumers prioritise essential spending over discretionary purchases.

Uzum also identified government taxation as another challenge confronting breweries, noting that repeated changes in excise duties had increased the pressure on companies' operating costs and profitability.

"The sector has faced changes in excise duties on beer, stout, wine and spirits since June 2018, when revised rates took effect under the former administration.

Digitalisation exposes Nigeria, African ports to escalating cyber risks

By Adaku Onyenuchey

THE increasing adoption of digital technologies and artificial intelligence (AI) in port operations could interrupt trade, disrupt cargo movement and undermine the reliability of maritime supply chains if cybersecurity is not treated as an integral part of maritime security.

The President of the Port Management Association of West and Central Africa (PMAW-CA), Dr Abubakar Dantsoho, who gave this warning, also stated that the growing threat of cyberattacks to port operations, international trade and economic stability requires stronger cybersecurity measures, regional intelligence shar-

ing and common digital standards across African ports.

Speaking at the African Ports Conference in Casablanca, Morocco, Dantsoho cited cyber incidents involving South Africa's Transnet, the Port of Nagoya in Japan and DP World terminals in Australia as examples of how attacks on digital infrastructure could disrupt port operations and international commerce.

Recall that the Nigeria Customs Service (NCS) had suffered a cyber-attack on the B'Odogwu platform, where hackers hacked the system until it was resolved.

Dantsoho, who is also the Managing Director of the Nigerian Ports Authority (NPA), stressed that the digital transfor-

mation of African ports must be accompanied by adequate security arrangements to protect operational systems, cargo information, revenue collection and the exchange of data among port stakeholders.

According to him, although artificial intelligence can improve efficiency and decision-making, cybersecurity remains fundamental to ensuring that ports can continue to function during attempts to compromise their systems.

Dantsoho, who is the Vice President of the International Association of Ports and Harbours (IAPH) African Region, warned that the growing interconnection of port systems, government agencies,

shipping companies, terminal operators and other service providers could create vulnerabilities if appropriate safeguards were not implemented.

Dantsoho particularly cautioned against allowing digital platforms designed to simplify trade procedures to become single points of failure capable of disrupting entire port communities.

Dantsoho said Nigeria's National Single Window and the Port Community System would depend on the ability of port authorities and their partners to protect the systems from cyber threats while ensuring that essential operations could continue during disruptions.



2027 NNPC/RENAISSANCE JV SABBATICAL AND POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH INTERNSHIP PROGRAMME

Renaissance Africa Energy Company Limited (Renaissance), operator of the Nigerian National Petroleum Company Limited (NNPC), Renaissance, TotalEnergies and Agip Energy and Natural Resources Joint Venture (Renaissance JV), invites applications from suitably qualified candidates to apply for the 2027 Sabbatical and Postgraduate Research Internship Programme.

POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH INTERNSHIP FOR UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

The Postgraduate Research Internship provides opportunities for Nigerian postgraduate students (MSc, M.Phil., and PhD) to gain industry-related work experience and conduct topical research within Renaissance Africa Energy Company Limited.

 **Duration:** 12 Months (Non-renewable)

TEAMS / DISCIPLINES:

- **Environment:** Impact Assessment and Environmental Compliance Monitoring.
- **Occupational Health:** Health Promotion; and Epidemiology / Statistics.
- **Pipeline Availability:** PhD candidate in Mechanical Engineering, Chemical Engineering, Materials Engineering, or Oil & Gas Engineering, with at least three (3) years of pipeline engineering experience in design, construction, or integrity assessment.
- **Exploration:** PhD Intern - Geology / Geophysics, AI in exploration workflow.

SABBATICAL ATTACHMENT FOR UNIVERSITY LECTURERS

The sabbatical attachment offers University lecturers from the rank of Senior Lecturer and above, opportunity to undertake research and other activities that will contribute to Renaissance Africa Energy Company Limited's business objectives. It also provides an avenue to acquire industry-related experience and contribute to teaching and research activities at the Renaissance JV Centres of Excellence (CoEs).

 **Duration:** 12 Months (Non-renewable)

TEAMS / DISCIPLINES:

- **Environment:** Impact Assessment and Biodiversity, Environmental Toxicology, Air Quality Assessment, Hydrobiology, Water Chemistry, Hydrogeology, Ecology, etc.
 - **Corporate Relations:** Social Performance (Social Impact Assessment and Management).
 - **Corporate Relations:** Host Community Development Trust (HCDT)/ Stakeholder Relations.
 - **Community Health:** Consultant Community Health, Obstetrics & Gynecology, and Pediatrics.
 - **Nigerian Content Development:** A Professor in any Engineering Discipline with interest in either Process or Project Engineering.
 - **NNPC/Renaissance-JV Centre of Excellence in Geosciences and Petroleum Engineering, University of Benin, Benin City:** Geology, Geophysics, and Petroleum Engineering.
 - **NNPC/Renaissance-JV Centre of Excellence in Marine and Offshore Engineering, Rivers State University, Nkpulu-Oroworukwo, Port Harcourt:** Marine/Offshore Engineering and Naval Architecture.
- Exploration:** Geology / Geophysics, AI in exploration workflow.

METHOD OF APPLICATION

All applications and supporting documents should be sent to **university-relations@renaissanceafrica.com** with the relevant Team/Discipline clearly stated as the email subject.

Applications from candidates should consist of the following:

- i. Application letter stating team/discipline of interest.
- ii. Curriculum vitae including contact phone number, email address, and contact information of three referees.
- iii. For sabbatical position, a titled, one page summary of how the candidate intends to add value to the Renaissance business during the 12 months sabbatical.
- iv. For the Research Internship position, a proposal including: study background, technical objectives, methodology, data required and expected outcome.

Note:

- » Applications open on 19 October 2026 and close on 2 November 2026.
- » Renaissance and Its Joint Venture partners DO NOT DEMAND PAYMENT FROM APPLICANTS. The application is entirely FREE of charge.
- » Renaissance and Its Joint Venture partners DO NOT ASSIGN 'Representatives'/'Agents' to assist applicants' process applications.
- » Applications from persons who have previously participated in the programme will not be considered.
- » Application letter without Team/Discipline of interest clearly stated will NOT be considered.
- » Applications received after the deadline will not be considered and ONLY shortlisted applicants will be contacted.

DATA PROTECTION NOTICE

- Data Protection Notice.
- The Renaissance Africa Energy Company Limited is committed to data privacy.
- Processing of Personal Data Collected by NNPC/Renaissance-JV.
- Personal data collected by The Renaissance African Energy Company Limited, Operator of the NNPC/Renaissance /TotalEnergies/AENR Joint Venture will be used exclusively for the purpose of selection of candidates. The information will not be used for an incompatible purpose.
- Renaissance is the Controller for the processing of your personal data and will not use your personal data for direct marketing purposes.
- In the event the personal data needs to be processed by, transferred to, or exchanged with a third party, appropriate contractual safeguards will be put in place to ensure that the third party will take adequate measures to safeguard the privacy of the data.
- As a data subject, you have the right to object to the processing of your personal data on legitimate compelling grounds except when it is processed to comply with a legal obligation or is to be used for a purpose for which you have given your implied consent.
- The Renaissance Africa Energy Company Limited, Operator of the NNPC/Renaissance/TotalEnergies/AENR Joint Venture will only retain the data for as long as it is necessary to serve the purpose of collection or to the extent necessary to comply with applicable law or to protect the rights itself, affiliates, joint venture or the data subject concerned.
- We have implemented technology and policies with the objective of protecting your privacy from unauthorised access and improper use. For inquiries or concern, please contact: **university-relations@renaissanceafrica.com**

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Energy for people and planet...



Women entrepreneurs urged to collaborate, leverage tech to grow businesses

By Victor Gbonegun

FORMER Commissioner for Industry, Trade and Cooperatives in Edo State, Mrs. Afie Braimoh, yesterday charged women entrepreneurs' to embrace collaboration as a critical strategy to grow in business in the country.

She spoke at the NECA's Network of Entrepreneurial Women (NNEW) 2026 summit, entitled: "Rise, lead and transform" in Lagos. The forum featured fire side chats, and panel discussion on how women can leverage digital adoption, Artificial Intelligence (AI) and the media to grow their business and ways to become women of influence in the society.

Braimoh said to rise, lead and transform, there was need to empower women to know what is important in business and trending the path to development.

"Women are the bedrock of any economy and we can do so much more, but we're so under-represented in the global market, and even locally. Women should be empowered with information, technology, AI. It's no longer about big companies, it's about women learning to collaborate. Every woman cannot be doing the same thing. When we come together, and bring our best skills and strengths together, we grow together. We must learn to reach out to another woman so we can all grow together," she said

She further appealed to the government to elevate women status by creating enabling environment to grow out of the survival mode.

Getty Images goes bankrupt

GLOBAL visual media company and photo agency, Getty Images, filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy yesterday, formalising restructuring plans unveiled over a week ago as part of its move to go private.

Getty announced last week, plans to file for bankruptcy, marking a major reset after its planned merger with rival Shutterstock collapsed under the weight of heavy debt and growing competition from AI-generated imagery.

Getty, which was founded in 1995, said the affiliates of the Getty family and Koch Equity Development, which committed to provide up to \$533 million in new equity, will own 100 per cent of the company after the restructuring.

Getty said it launched a solicitation process to secure formal approval for its reorganization plan announced last week.

The visual-content provider said it will continue operating in the ordinary course throughout the process, with no impact on content contributors, partners, customers, employees or vendors.

Getty Images expects to complete the restructuring by year-end.

In a filing at the Delaware bankruptcy court, the company listed both estimated assets and liabilities in the range of \$1 billion to \$10 billion.

Commercial paper market surges 407% to N129.4b in September

By Helen Oji

NIGERIA's commercial paper market recorded a sharp increase in activity in September 2026, as the value of new commercial papers quoted on the Exchange rose by 406.65 per cent to N129.37 billion from N25.53 billion in August.

Data from the September 2026 financial markets report showed that 14 commercial papers valued at N129.37 billion were quoted during the month, representing an increase of N103.84 billion based on the reported figures.

The growth in new quotations also lifted the total outstanding value of commercial papers by 14.74 per cent, or N73.86 billion, to N574.99 billion in September from the preceding month. The increase occurred as the value of new commercial papers quoted during the period exceeded maturities worth N55.51 billion, according to the report.

Commercial papers are short-term debt instruments through which companies raise funds to finance working capital, meet operating expenses and address other short-term funding needs. They provide businesses with an alternative to conventional bank borrowing and allow eligible issuers to access investors through the capital market.

FMDQ Exchange provides a platform for the quotation and trading of eligible debt instruments, enabling issuers to access the domestic financial market and investors to participate in corporate debt offerings.

The September figures indicated a rebound in activity following the sharp decline recorded in August, when commercial papers valued at N25.53 billion were quoted on the Exchange.

Beyond the commercial paper market, the report showed that the total outstanding value of non-sovereign bonds declined

by 0.34 per cent, or N10.09 billion, month-on-month to N2.95376 trillion.

The decline in non-sovereign bonds contrasted with the expansion recorded in commercial papers, which are generally used to meet shorter-term financing requirements, while bonds are commonly issued to raise funds over longer periods.

A look at the companies whose commercial papers were quoted on FMDQ Exchange in September 2026 showed that Ojaja Pan Africa Limited floated N25.53 billion through FMDQ commercial papers within the period.

The company raised N25.53 billion through the quotation of three series of commercial

papers on the FMDQ Exchange, providing the company with access to short-term funding from the Nigerian debt market.

The commercial papers, valued at N25.53 billion, were quoted under the company's N100 billion commercial paper issuance programme.

The quotation comprised Series 1 commercial papers valued at N4.80 billion, Series 2 worth N1.36 billion and Series 3 amounting to N19.37 billion.

Insurer posts N3.05b profit, up 86.5%, on stronger capital base

By Bankole Orimisan

VERITAS Kapital Assurance has said profit after tax rose by 86.5 per cent to N3.05 billion in 2025 from N1.63 billion in 2024, despite declines in insurance revenue and total assets, reflecting the mixed earnings and growth outlook facing Nigerian insurers amid recapitalisation pressures.

The company's Chairman, Babatunde Irukera, disclosed this at its 49th yearly general meeting in Abuja, where he said profit before tax recovered to N3.156 billion from a loss of N1.485 billion in 2024.

Gross premiums written edged up marginally to N23.733 billion from N23.694 billion, while shareholders' equity increased by 27 per cent to N15.173 billion from N11.917 billion, reflecting an improvement in the company's capital position.

However, insurance revenue fell by three per cent to N22.602 billion from N23.330 billion, while total assets declined by 9.6 per cent to N29.877 billion from N33.060 billion during the period.

Irukera attributed the performance to the company's resilience amid a challenging economic environment, adding that successful recapitalisation under the Nigerian Insurance Industry Reform Act (NIIRA) 2025 had strengthened its capital base and underwriting capacity.

He said the stronger capital position would enable the company to compete more effectively, take on larger and more complex risks, and maintain the required standards of corporate governance and financial stability.

The chairman expressed appreciation to shareholders for their support during the recapitalisation exercise, adding that the company would use its strengthened capital base, workforce and management experience to pursue growth opportunities and improve returns.

Shareholders at the meeting commended the company's leadership for navigating prevailing economic challenges. Although no dividend was declared, they welcomed the successful recapitalisation and the payment of claims during the year.

The company's performance comes as Nigeria's insurance industry adjusts to higher minimum capital requirements introduced under NIIRA 2025, which raised the thresholds to N10 billion for life insurers, N15 billion for non-life operators, N25 billion for composite insurers and N35 billion for reinsurers.



Head, Approved Schemes and Inclusion, Stanbic IBTC Pension Managers, John Okhueleigbe (left); Chairman, Nigeria-South Africa Chamber of Commerce, Dr Ijeoma Jidenma and Past Chairman, Nigeria-South Africa Chamber of Commerce, Osayaba Giwa-Osagie (SAN) during the Nigeria-South Africa Chamber of Commerce (NSACC) September 2026 Breakfast Session, held in Lagos.

NSIWC seeks end to ad hoc salary reviews, pushes wage reform

From Divine Obasesam, Abuja

THE National Salaries, Incomes and Wages Commission (NSIWC) has called for a more sustainable approach to wage administration in Nigeria, advocating an end to ad hoc salary reviews in favour of a predictable system that balances workers' welfare with productivity, economic realities and the Federal Government's capacity to meet its financial obligations.

The call featured prominently at the Commission's board retreat in Abuja, which brought together board members, senior government officials and other stakeholders to examine its strategic direction and role in shaping national wage policy.

The retreat, which was held in Abuja yesterday, was themed: "Towards a New Era of Wage Governance: Vision, Strategy and Institutional Renewal."

Opening the deliberations, the Chairman and Chief Executive of the Commission, Junaidu Bindawa, said the retreat provided an opportunity to assess the Commission's institutional capacity, identify areas requiring improvement and establish priorities for more effective performance.

He said wage administration went beyond periodic salary reviews, noting that remuneration decisions had wider implications for workers' purchasing power, industrial relations, public expenditure and

the performance of public institutions.

Bindawa stressed the need for credible research, reliable data and objective analysis to ensure that recommendations to the government reflected both workers' legitimate expectations and the country's economic circumstances.

He also called for stronger cooperation between the board and management, improved administrative processes and greater accountability, urging participants to develop practical recommendations that could be implemented and measured.

In a keynote by the Secretary to the Government of the Federation, Senator George

Akume, and delivered by the Permanent Secretary, General Services Office, Dr Ibrahim Abubakar Kana, the Commission was urged to strengthen wage governance through improved research, equitable remuneration, social dialogue and institutional capacity building.

The address emphasised that wage decisions must take account of workers' welfare, government revenue, competing expenditure commitments and the need for fiscal sustainability.

It also identified constructive engagement among government, organised labour and employers as essential to building trust and preventing industrial disputes.

'Africa's digital tax rules intensify compliance burden for businesses'

By Benjamin Alade

AFRICA's expanding digital economy is facing tighter tax scrutiny as governments across the continent strengthen value-added tax (VAT) rules for cross-border digital services, increasing compliance obligations for multinational technology companies and businesses operating in multiple markets.

A report by professional services firm PwC, titled "VAT in Africa: Digital Services 2026," highlighted the changing regulatory landscape and the need for businesses to understand country-specific requirements covering tax registration, invoicing, transaction scope and remittance obligations.

The report, published on October 12, examines developments in the taxation of elec-

tronically supplied services across African markets where PwC operates. It is based on information available as of August 15, 2026, and follows an earlier edition published in 2024.

The developments have implications for digital platforms, software providers, streaming services, online marketplaces and other companies supplying services across national borders, particularly where businesses serve customers without maintaining a substantial physical presence in the countries where those customers reside.

For Nigeria, PwC said the tax framework has been reshaped by four laws: the Nigerian Tax Act, Nigerian Tax Administration Act, Nigeria Revenue Service (Establishment) Act and Joint

Revenue Board of Nigeria (Establishment) Act. These laws establish VAT obligations for non-resident taxable suppliers serving Nigerian customers.

Under the framework outlined by PwC, non-resident suppliers making taxable supplies to Nigerian businesses and individual consumers are required to register for VAT, include the tax on their invoices and file monthly returns. The standard VAT rate remains 7.5 per cent for qualifying supplies, subject to statutory exemptions and zero-rating.

The rules are particularly relevant to international digital businesses that earn revenue from Nigerian customers through online subscriptions, advertising, cloud computing, digital content and platform-based services.

The Nigerian framework also addresses situations where a foreign supplier fails to charge VAT on a taxable transaction. Depending on the applicable rules and circumstances, the Nigerian recipient may be required to account for the tax through a reverse-charge mechanism. This makes it important for local businesses purchasing services from overseas suppliers to assess their own compliance obligations rather than assuming responsibility rests solely with the foreign provider.

Across Africa, however, the rules are not uniform. PwC's publication provides country-specific guidance for markets including Nigeria, Ghana, Kenya, South Africa, Egypt, Morocco, Uganda and Zambia, among others. Differences in VAT rates, registra-

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Different stroke for different folks:

Germany hunts for workers as Nigeria buckles under unemployment

Germany, Europe's largest economy, is confronting an ageing population and a growing shortage of skilled workers, forcing the country to look beyond its borders for talents to sustain key industries and economic growth. Nigeria, by contrast, has one of the world's largest and fastest-growing youth populations, yet struggles to translate this demographic advantage into productive employment. Against this backdrop, NGOZIEGENUKA who was in Germany, examines the country's response to its workforce challenge through education, vocational training, labour-market reforms and migration policies. Her findings offer important lessons for Nigeria on how to equip its young population with market-relevant skills, create pathways to decent employment and position the country to benefit from the rapidly changing global world of work.

NIGERIA currently sits on one of the greatest advantages in the world today. It is not only the abundance of natural resources that gives the country an edge, but also its young and energetic population. According to data from the International Labour Organisation (ILO), Nigeria ranks first in Africa and approximately 12th globally when measuring the absolute size of its youth workforce, with a labour force of about 73 million people.

Between 3.5 million and four million young Nigerians enter the labour market every year. Of this number, about 1.7 million are graduates from universities and polytechnics, while thousands of young people search for opportunities every year. Yet, despite this enormous human resource advantage, Nigeria continues to struggle with the challenge of providing employment for its teeming youths.

Young Nigerians are frequently told that there are no jobs available in the professions they studied and that they should consider learning a skill. While acquiring practical skills is important, the bigger question remains: why has a population of this size not translated into an equally large number of opportunities?

While Nigeria has not figured out how to fill this vacuum, Germany is searching for enough workers to sustain its economy as a result of its ageing population. The country has built a system where practical skills are not viewed as inferior alternatives to academic qualifications. Technical skills are highly valued and considered essential part of the economy. This difference in perception has significant consequences for both countries.

Germany's workforce dilemma

ACCORDING to Statista, Germany is increasingly relying on skilled migration because the number of people available to work is expected to decline significantly in the

coming decades. Nigeria, meanwhile, has one of the largest pool of young people globally, but is still working to convert that demographic advantage into economic opportunities.

The lesson from Germany is not simply about migration. It is about how a country prepares its people, connects education with industry, values technical skills and builds systems that allow individuals to contribute meaningfully to the economy.

At the German Institute for International and Security Affairs (Research Division Global Issues), discussions on demography, skilled labour shortages and economic transformation highlighted the scale of Germany's workforce challenge. A researcher at the institute, David Kipp, confirmed that Germany's working population is ageing, with millions expected to leave employment in the coming years. Between 2024 and 2039, about 13.14 million people are expected to reach retirement age, creating pressure on the country's labour market.

To worsen the situation, the country's fertility rate has also remained low, with approximately 1.3 children per woman, a figure that reflects a long-term demographic shift as reported by German Federal Statistical Office (Destatis). Kipp explained that Germany's current workforce is about 45 million people. Without net migration, projections suggest that this figure could reduce significantly by 2060.

Again, the challenge is not simply having fewer people. It is having fewer people with the specific skills required to keep important sectors running. Areas facing shortages include healthcare, education, engineering, skilled trades, energy, construction and information technology. This is a cheery news for foreigners, including Nigerians who have such skill-sets. Unfortunately, not every applicant gets the opportunity.

A consultant at the Thuringian Agency for Skilled Personnel Marketing, Maximilian Schlüter, explained it better. "Germany's labour shortage does not mean every foreign applicant automatically has an opportunity waiting. Mi-

gration has to be based on matching skills with actual economic needs," he said.

The outcome of this philosophy is that Germany operates on an approach that is built around structured migration rather than simply bringing in people. Before the updated Skilled Immigration Act, there was just one way to migrate which was through a recognised qualification, meaning that one needed to possess a vocational or University degree that was recognised in Germany. However, with the new Act, there are three pillars for skilled labour migration. They are: qualification pillar, which allows one migrate to Germany based on the fellow's credentials; two, experience pillar, that allows someone who doesn't have a German recognised qualification but has worked for a long time have a path to migrate and lastly, the potential pillar, which means that even if a person doesn't currently have an employer in Germany, such a person can travel and search for a job in Germany.

To get the blue card, which is for university degree holders, one need to have an employment contract which meets a certain salary threshold. Interestingly, the threshold has been lowered to allow more migration. On the experience pillar, someone who wants to migrate and work in Germany needs to prove that he has a state-recognised degree in his home country, that he has worked for at least two years in that profession and has had a salary threshold of 3,800 Euros. This, however, doesn't work in all professions. For example, sensitive sectors like medical and electrical fields require qualified German-standard certifications to be eligible for work.

Underscoring the exigency of the times, such eligibility processes, which used to be complex and time-consuming and had to be obtained before one travels to Germany, have now eased up. It is now possible to start the process while already in Germany. The implication is that an applicant may have an employer who allows him or her to come to Germany with a recognition partnership agreement. Under this arrangement, the employer supports the procedure such that the person can start work even outside the fellow's core professional competence until the recognition process is completed. Despite the allure of these offers, international recruitment comes with a lot of challenges with language barrier, which is a major drawback.

Language at the foundation of German migration

ACROSS the institutions visited by The Guardian, and even among migrant workers, one message was consistently repeated - learning German before travelling significantly improves the chances of success. Language is not only



President Bola Ahmed Tinubu

German Chancellor, Friedrich Merz

about securing employment. It is also about integration into society, understanding workplace culture and reducing dependence on others. For Nigerians interested in Germany, learning the language before leaving the country is the first consideration. Although some new migration pathways have reduced language requirements at the entry stage, practical experience shows that people with stronger German language skills have better outcomes.

Formal recognition is A2 for German language as this can get you approval to migrate to Germany, but most employers want foreigners with at least B1 level. Although this level of understanding is still insufficient, faster opportunities are accessible to people with B2 level. Experts noted that individuals who arrive without language skills often spend valuable time trying to learn German, while also searching for employment. Because some job-search pathways have limited periods, this can reduce their chances of finding suitable work. The recommendation was therefore simple: preparation should begin at home.

Germany's search for skilled workers not for everyone

GERMANY'S growing demand for workers has created opportunities, but officials repeatedly emphasised that migration must be based on skills, preparation and realistic expectations. Germany is not simply looking for people to fill any available position. It is looking for people whose qualifications match areas where the economy has genuine needs.

The most frequently mentioned sectors include healthcare, nursing, engineering, construction, energy, information technology, electrical professions, transport, manufacturing and skilled trades. However, there is an important distinction between needing workers and having vacancies available for every applicant. This is because some industries receive enough applications domestically, while others continue to struggle to find qualified professionals. This is why Germany, under the Skilled Immigration Act, has moved away from an older system where employers had to first prove that no German or European worker was available before considering someone from outside Europe.

That requirement changed as Germany recognised that demographic changes had created a different reality. The previous system created delays because companies had to complete lengthy processes before recruiting internationally. Today, the approach is more focused on making it easier for employers to access global talent while still ensuring that workers have the necessary skills.

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Germany's working population is ageing, with millions expected to leave employment in the coming years. Between 2024 and 2039, about 13.14 million people are expected to reach retirement age, creating pressure on the country's labour market. To worsen the situation, the country's fertility rate has also remained low, with approximately 1.3 children per woman, a figure that reflects a long-term demographic shift

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Participants at the themed trip in Germany

ICPC urges NSITF to open recruitment, procurement processes to scrutiny

From **Collins Olayinka, Abuja**

THE Independent Corrupt Practices and other Related Offences Commission (ICPC) has urged the Nigeria Social Insurance Trust Fund (NSITF) to involve it as an observer in recruitment, promotion and procurement exercises to strengthen transparency and public confidence.

The ICPC Chairman, Dr Musa Adamu Aliyu, made the

call during the inauguration of the NSITF Anti-Corruption and Transparency Unit (ACTU) and its regional and branch champions at the Fund's headquarters in Abuja.

Aliyu also urged NSITF management to provide adequate funding, office facilities, and representation on relevant standing committees to enable the unit to discharge its mandate effectively.

He described the inaugura-

tion as an important step towards strengthening the Fund's internal mechanisms for promoting integrity, transparency and accountability.

The ICPC chairman explained that the commission and the Office of the Head of the Civil Service of the Federation established ACTUs to identify systemic weaknesses, mitigate corruption risks, promote ethical conduct, and improve compliance with established rules and procedures. He stressed that the unit was designed to

complement management, not compete with or replace it.

Aliyu congratulated the newly inaugurated members and urged them to discharge their responsibilities with diligence, integrity, impartiality and professionalism.

He warned them against relationships or actions that could compromise their independence and credibility, assuring them of the commission's continued support in strengthening governance within the Fund.

Earlier, the Managing Director and Chief Executive of

NSITF, Oluwaseun Faleye, described the inauguration as a renewed commitment to building an institution anchored on integrity, accountability and public trust.

Faleye said the initiative was not intended to witch-hunt staff but to promote preventive measures that would help the organisation avoid administrative lapses and corruption risks.

"There is really no cause for concern. It is not a witch-hunt, nor an investigative or interrogative process. It is rather a collaborative process

that guides us from making mistakes we will regret down the line," he said.

He urged staff to see the ACTU as a partner in institutional improvement. He encouraged its members to create an environment where colleagues could freely share information and report suspected wrongdoing.

Faleye said the unit's credibility would ultimately depend on its practical contribution to improving the Fund's integrity and accountability, rather than its formal establishment.

Union hails Rüffer's fight for women's rights

By **Gloria Nwafor**

THE Precision, Electrical and Related Equipment Senior Staff Association (PERESSA) has paid tribute to German-Swiss humanitarian, Anne Rüffer, for her contributions to protecting vulnerable women and girls, including survivors of violence, in Nigeria.

The association's National President, Rufus Olusesan, paid tribute to Rüffer, who recently died in Switzerland at age 69, saying her humanitarian work will remain an enduring legacy for the people and communities she supported.

Rüffer, founder of Hearts100, supported relief efforts for vulnerable families during the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, providing food, livelihood assistance and other critical aid across Lagos, Ogun, Benue, Plateau, Kaduna and Ebonyi states in partnership with CEE-HOPE Nigeria.

Her support also helped establish the Hearts of Hope Shelter in Lagos in 2021, providing protection, healthcare, psychosocial

support, and legal assistance to women and girls fleeing violence. The facility was renamed Anne Rüffer's Shelter in 2024 in recognition of her contributions.

Beyond shelter services, she supported economic empowerment initiatives for women and campaigns against gender-based violence and female genital mutilation.

Olusesan said PERESSA cherished Rüffer's humanitarian contributions, describing her as a committed advocate for vulnerable populations whose work transcended national boundaries.

He also commiserated with CEE-HOPE Nigeria and its founder, Betty Abah, over the loss of a dependable ally, cherished friend and partner in humanitarian service.

The PERESSA president noted that Rüffer continued to mobilise funds and support humanitarian activities while battling illness in her final years, refusing to allow the distance between Switzerland and Nigeria to weaken her commitment.

Expert argues human wisdom remains irreplaceable despite AI's evolution

By **Gloria Nwafor**

Artificial intelligence (AI) reshapes workplaces and careers, leadership expert and author Adejisola Atiba, has stressed that human wisdom, sound judgment and compassion remain irreplaceable despite rapid technological advancement.

Atiba said the ability to draw lessons from experience, understand human relationships, and make purpose-guided decisions will remain essential to effective leadership, even as AI increasingly transforms how people live and work.

She stated this in an extract from her book, "Beyond AI: The Human Leadership Edge," under The Wisdom Advantage Edition, where she examined the importance of human experience, mentorship and purposeful leadership in an increasingly technology-driven world.

According to her, while AI can

process information and identify patterns, it cannot replace the depth of human experience, lessons learned from failure or the perspective developed through difficult decisions and personal relationships.

"The world is changing at extraordinary speed. Artificial intelligence is transforming industries, redefining careers, and reshaping how we live and work. Yet amid this transformation, something remains irreplaceable: the human capacity for judgment, compassion, perspective, and purpose," she said.

Atiba argued that technological advancement should not make people feel that their relevance has diminished, noting that their experiences, insights and ability to guide others remain valuable as AI becomes increasingly integrated into professional and personal life.

She, however, noted that experience alone does not necessarily

translate into wisdom, explaining that individuals must reflect on their experiences, acknowledge past mistakes and apply the lessons learned to make meaningful contributions to others.

She challenged individuals, particularly those entering new phases of their personal and professional lives, to look beyond conventional measures of success, including career advancement, positions held and personal achievements, and consider how their accumulated knowledge could benefit society.

"At some point, the question is no longer simply, 'What have I accomplished?' It becomes, 'What will I do with everything I have learned?'" she said.

The author identified mentorship, continuous learning, knowledge-sharing, and helping others navigate challenges as key ways individuals can turn their experiences into lasting contributions.

She said the leadership frame-

work underpinning her four-edition series rests on six dimensions: character, self-leadership, human connection, human intelligence, future readiness, and purpose and impact.

She said these qualities underscore the need for people to develop capabilities beyond technical competence, especially as AI continues to change professional responsibilities and expectations.

Atiba explained that the four editions of the series address different stages of personal and professional development.

She said the Undergraduate Edition focuses on character, confidence, human connection and future readiness. At the same time, the Emerging Leaders Edition seeks to strengthen judgment, courage and purposeful decision-making among individuals assuming greater responsibilities.

Workers' organisations seek active trade union participation in labour migration governance

By **Gloria Nwafor**

TRADE unions and workers' organisations are to work together to protect the rights of migrant health and care workers, ensuring that expanding labour migration opportunities translate into decent work.

The commitment emerged from a Trade Union Roundtable on Promoting Decent Work for

Health and Care Workers organised by the International Labour Organisation (ILO) under its Migrant Care project.

The roundtable brought together trade unions and workers' organisations, along with representatives of regional and international trade union federations, to discuss coordination between countries of

origin and destination.

The workers' organisations identified risks that can accompany migration, including misinformation, unethical recruitment, excessive recruitment costs, informal employment, difficulties in recognition of qualifications, discrimination and barriers to fundamental principles and rights at work.

The unions stressed that cross-border cooperation is essential because protection cannot stop at the point of departure.

They said migrant workers

need reliable information when deciding whether to migrate, support before departure, representation and access to remedies while employed abroad, and continuity of rights and social protection when they return.

They called for no recruitment fees for migrant workers, transparent contracts, recognition of qualifications, freedom of association, portable and adequate social protection, and joint monitoring involving ILO constituents in origin and destination countries.

Vice President of Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA), Sonia George, noted that trade union collaboration is particularly important in the care economy, especially as demand for elderly, long-term, and home-based care rises and women make up a substantial share of care workers.

According to her, it emphasises workers' choice and agency regarding the type and location of their employment.

She said it links the choices directly to workers' physical and

mental well-being and calls for decent wages, recognition of skills and experience, and decent working conditions at both origin and destination.

Noting that the resulting statement places trade unions at the centre of labour migration governance, she said it calls for developing, finalising, implementing, and monitoring bilateral labour migration agreements with the active participation of unions from both origin and destination countries.

Moniepoint wins SME MfB award for third consecutive year

By **Victoria Nwachukwu**

MONIEPOINT Microfinance Bank has won the SME Microfinance Bank of the Year award for the third consecutive year at the 14th BusinessDay Banks and Other Financial Institutions (BAFI) Awards.

Co-founder and Group Chief Executive Officer of Moniepoint Inc., Tosin Eniolorunda, also won the SME Finance Transformation Leader of the Year award at the ceremony.

The recognition follows a year of expansion for the bank, which, according to its 2025 year in review, disbursed more than N1 trillion in credits to thousands of small businesses.

The bank said businesses that accessed the credit recorded an average transaction value growth of more than 36 per cent.

The bank also reported serving more than six million active businesses and powering

eight in every 10 in-person payments in Nigeria.

In 2025, it said it processed N412 trillion in transaction value across more than 14 billion transactions.

Speaking on the award, Senior Vice President, Distribution Network Sales at Moniepoint, Ezekiel Sanni, who represented Eniolorunda at the event, said the recognition reinforced the bank's commitment to supporting small businesses.

"We are honoured to be named SME Microfinance Bank of the Year by BusinessDay. Small businesses are the backbone of the Nigerian economy, and this award strengthens our commitment to give them the credit, payments and tools they need to scale," Sanni said.

He added that the bank would continue expanding access to credit and investing in the network serving small businesses across the country.



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Lawal-Binani feud: Old rivalry, new political platform

The political differences between former Secretary to the Government of the Federation (SGF), Babachir Lawal, and Senator Aishatu Ahmed (Binani), which began in the African Democratic Congress (ADC), have resurfaced in the Nigeria Democratic Congress (NDC), threatening to divide the party's North-East leadership caucus and potentially weaken its competitiveness in next year's general election, JOY DENNIS reports.

IN quick succession, developments in the Nigeria Democratic Congress (NDC) took a dramatic turn. First, former SGF Babachir Lawal cut short his purported retirement from politics and joined the NDC. Shortly afterwards, the party's national leadership announced his appointment as leader of its North-East regional chapter.

Upset by the appointment, six NDC governorship candidates from the North-East rejected Lawal's recognition as the party's zonal leader, describing it as an imposition and an undemocratic decision.

This was not the first time Lawal and Binani had taken opposing positions on party matters. Their disagreement began over control of the ADC structure in Adamawa State. Binani and her group accused Lawal of imposing the party's leadership, culminating in a disputed state congress and their eventual departure from the ADC.

After exploring alternative platforms, Binani's group joined the emerging NDC. She subsequently secured the party's governorship ticket in Adamawa, while her supporters began building its structure ahead of the 2027 election.

However, before the new entrants could consolidate their position, the ADC presidential primary produced former Vice President Atiku Abubakar as the party's standard-bearer. Lawal criticised the process, describing it as a charade and an example of political corruption.

After expressing his objections in a widely circulated statement, Lawal announced his decision to quit partisan politics. Barely three weeks later, however, he appeared at the residence of NDC national leader, Senator Henry Seriake Dickson, where he was unveiled as a new member and leader of the party's North-East regional chapter.

Old foes collide

LAWAL'S entry into the NDC revived his political differences with Binani. The latest confrontation became public in late September 2026, when six NDC governorship candidates from Adamawa, Bauchi, Borno, Gombe, Taraba and Yobe rejected his appointment as the party's North-East leader.

The candidates said the appointment was made without consultation with state chapters and other stakeholders who had helped build the party's structures and mobilise support across the region. They described their opposition as collective and final, urging the national leadership to review its decision.

Binani was among the six signatories, turning what might have remained an organisational disagreement into another episode in her rivalry with Lawal.

The roots of the confrontation can be traced to the crisis that engulfed the ADC in Adamawa earlier in the year. By April, the party had fractured into competing factions,

with Lawal, Binani and former Senator Ishaku Abbo associated with different camps. The dispute centred on control of the party's state structure and the legitimacy of rival leadership arrangements.

The disagreement also reached the courts. In April, an Adamawa High Court restrained the ADC from conducting a planned congress amid a dispute involving rival factions led by Sadiq Dasin and Saidu Komsiri.

Former NDC National Publicity Secretary, Shehu Yohanna, said Lawal backed the Dasin-led faction, while the rival camp was associated with Binani. The court intervention underscored the depth of the struggle over the party's organisation in the state.

Binani's faction subsequently announced its departure from the ADC. At a stakeholders' meeting in April, the group declared a mass resignation, citing what it described as the collapse of internal democracy and manipulation of party congresses.

The group rejected the leadership emerging from the disputed exercises, alleging that the process was designed to impose predetermined candidates. In May, Binani joined the NDC and received her membership card from Dickson.

Dickson announced her as the party's leader in Adamawa pending internal democratic processes. Binani said she was attracted by what she described as the NDC's commitment to structured, policy-driven governance.

Lawal, who resigned from the ADC in June, also criticised the party's primaries, alleging widespread manipulation in favour of Atiku. He said he did not want to be associated with what he described as a rigging machine.

On September 22, nearly four months after leaving the ADC, Lawal joined the NDC. His appointment placed the two former political allies-turned-adversaries in the same party, setting the stage for another confrontation.

Their shared history in the ADC has made the current dispute difficult to separate from their personal and political differences. While Binani's faction accused the ADC of undermining internal democracy, Lawal condemned the alleged manipulation of its presidential primary. Both subsequently

joined the NDC, but their conflicting experiences in the former party have followed them into their new political home.

Disputed office, doubtful loyalty

IN a jointly signed letter rejecting Lawal's appointment, the six governorship candidates argued that the lack of consultation and inclusiveness could undermine the party's electoral prospects in the North-East.

The signatories were Aishatu Dahiru Ahmed (Adamawa), Ibrahim Muhammad Kashim (Bauchi), Rear Admiral Kashim Ibrahim (Borno), Babayo Ardo (Gombe), Mohammed Sani Yahaya (Taraba) and Ibrahim M. Shitu (Yobe).

Responding to the protest, Lawal said he had neither requested the appointment nor received a formal offer before the appointment was announced. He maintained that he accepted the position out of respect for Dickson, Peter Obi and Rabiu Kwankwaso, adding that the decision originated from the national leadership.

The opposing positions exposed a disagreement over the basis of authority within the party. While the six candidates argued that regional stakeholders should have been consulted, Lawal maintained that the national leadership had the power to determine the party's leadership structure.

The candidates, however, insisted that their role in building the party from the ground up entitled them to a voice in decisions affecting their political environment.

The dispute escalated when Lawal questioned the motives behind the protest and alleged that an external influence was coordinating opposition to his appointment.

In a statement on his Facebook page, he alleged that a woman seeking the Adamawa governorship was behind the opposition, apparently referring to Binani.

He also accused some party members of working against the NDC's presidential ticket and suggested that rival political interests had planted moles within the party.

Lawal further claimed that Professor Mohammed Sani Yahaya of Taraba and Dr Babayo Ardo of Gombe had contacted him to dissociate themselves from the protest, alleging that their names and signatures had been used without their authorisation.

He linked the controversy to the 2027 presidential contest, arguing that the NDC ticket of Obi and Kwankwaso was central to his political engagement. He alleged that opposition to his appointment was linked to interests aligned with Atiku, the ADC presidential candidate.

The allegations widened the disagreement from a question of consultation over regional leadership to competing claims about political loyalty and the influence of rival opposition camps.

Challenging the political weight of the protesting candidates, Lawal argued that the NDC's electoral ambitions extended beyond governorship contests to legislative seats across the six North-East states.

"The NDC's 2027 campaign requires a broader structure than individual governorship campaigns," he said.

The candidates' position, however, is that their responsibility for winning governorship elections makes them important stakeholders in decisions affecting their campaigns.

The disagreement raises a central question about the balance between national party authority and regional political interests: can a party leadership impose a zonal structure without securing the support of those expected to campaign and contest elections in the region?

While the six candidates insist that consultation was necessary, Lawal maintains that the national leadership had the authority to appoint him.

Binani's counter

THE Binani campaign organisation, rejecting Lawal's allegations, accused him of making unsubstantiated claims that could create divisions within the NDC.

In a statement, the campaign's Director of Media and Public Affairs, Mathias Yohanna, described Lawal's allegations as "unsubstantiated allegations and baseless accusations."

Rather than accepting Lawal's argument that the six candidates were acting against the NDC's presidential ticket, the campaign maintained that Binani had participated in a democratically convened meeting of governorship candidates where decisions concerning the North-East were taken.

It also reaffirmed its position that Kwankwaso should remain the party's leader in the North and criticised Lawal for describing some governorship candidates as "so-called gubernatorial candidates" and "nincompoops."

The campaign argued that Lawal's former position as SGF did not entitle him to address political figures in such terms. It also questioned his claim to substantial electoral influence.

As part of its response, the campaign asked whether one individual could determine the political outcome of the entire North-East. It cited Lawal's reported support for Obi during the 2023 presidential election and questioned why Obi did not win Lawal's Banshika Ward in that contest.

The argument did not directly resolve the question of who should lead the NDC in the North-East. It nevertheless highlighted the competing claims of the two camps over their capacity to mobilise grassroots support and deliver electoral victories.

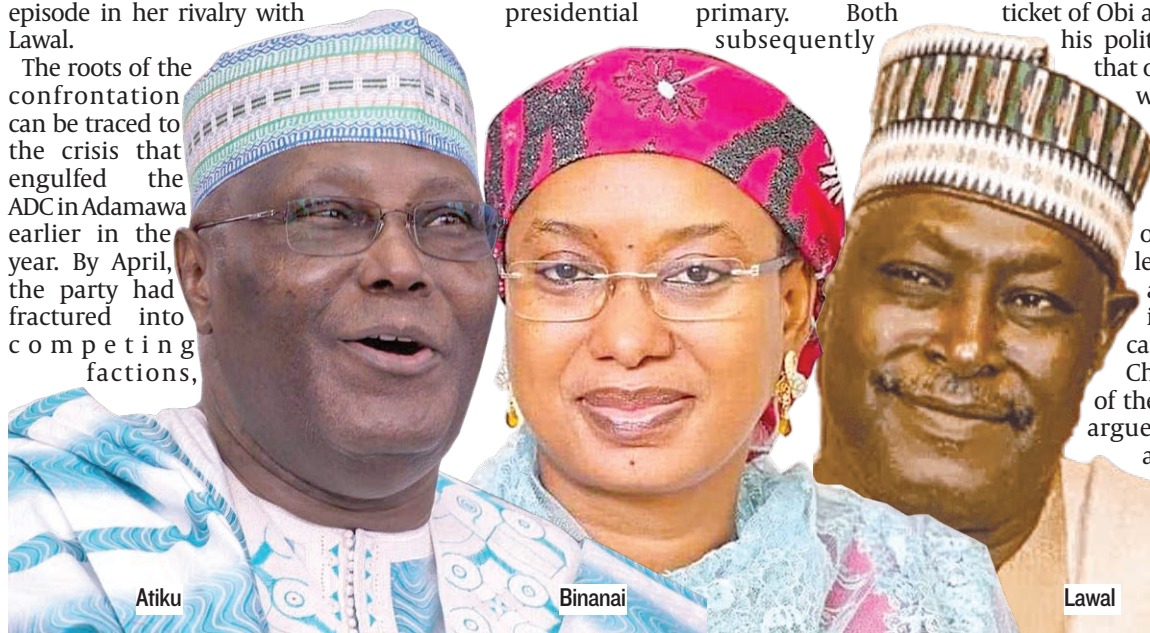
While acknowledging Lawal's right to express his views, the Binani campaign said it was concerned about the manner of his intervention and its political implications. Yohanna urged the NDC national leadership to intervene and ensure that the party's constitution and principles guided the resolution of the dispute.

What remains unresolved is whether the NDC leadership can establish a regional structure acceptable to both its national leadership and its governorship candidates.

Ultimately, the Lawal-Binani confrontation has moved beyond the struggle over the ADC structure in Adamawa to a wider contest over who controls the NDC's political machinery in the North-East.

With the 2027 election approaching, the dispute's electoral implications will depend on whether the party can establish an acceptable chain of authority, resolve disagreements over regional leadership and keep its state-level candidates working within a coherent political structure.

The disagreement raises a central question about the balance between national party authority and regional political interests. Can a party leadership impose a zonal structure without securing the support of those expected to campaign and contest elections in the region?



Atiku

Binani

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Global health workforce shortage may hit 11.1m by 2030

From Nkechi Onyedika-Ugoeze (Abuja) and Ijeoma Nwanosike (Lagos)

THE global shortage of health workers could reach 11.1 million by 2030, despite a significant increase in the number of medical professionals worldwide over the past two decades, the World Health Organisation (WHO) has warned. The projection is contained in the organisation's first yearly report, National Health Workforce Accounts: Health Workforce Levels and Trends 2026, which assesses global workforce levels, trends and challenges using official country data.

According to the report, the global density of doctors, nurses, midwives, dentists and pharmacists rose by 52 per cent, from 44.8 per 10,000 people in 2006 to 67.9 in 2025. The global health and care workforce now exceeds 70 million.

However, the increase has not translated into equitable access to healthcare, with substantial disparities persisting between regions and countries.

The density of medical doctors in the WHO European Region was 13 times higher than in the African Region, while that of nurses and midwives was six times higher, the report found. The disparities reflect the uneven distribution of health workers and persistent shortages that continue to restrict access to essential health services in many parts of the world.

"Despite gains in workforce production and data reporting, uneven and severe shortages of health and care workers remain, and health worker density remains strongly corre-

lated with national income," said Dr Khassoum Diallo, Acting Unit Head of Health Workforce Policies and Data at the WHO Academy.

He said addressing these inequalities was essential to achieving universal access to healthcare.

The report identified the ageing of health workers and the wider population as major challenges that could further widen the gap between healthcare demand and available personnel. While the retirement of experienced professionals could worsen staffing shortages, longer life expectancy and population ageing are increasing demand for health services.

Data from 122 countries showed that nearly one in four doctors was aged above 55 and likely to retire within the next decade. In high-income countries, the proportion was nearly one in three. The report also projected that 67 countries would have insufficient health workers to meet their populations' needs by 2030.

Diallo described workforce ageing as an emerging crisis requiring urgent action, particularly in high-income countries facing the combined pressures of retiring professionals and growing health-

care demand.

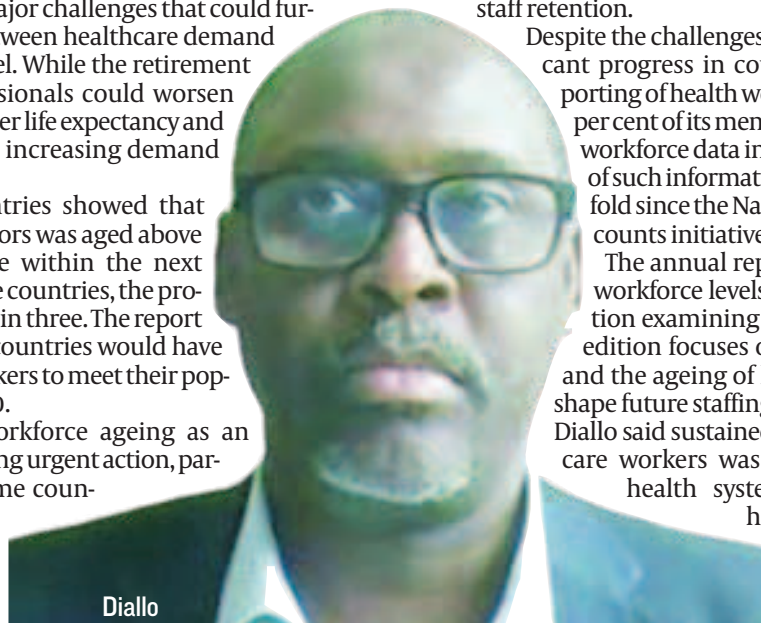
"Ageing is the hidden health workforce crisis that requires urgent attention. It is creating a double pressure on health systems, primarily in high-income countries," he said.

He stressed the need for stronger data systems to guide policies on workforce planning, education, employment and staff retention.

Despite the challenges, the WHO reported significant progress in countries' collection and reporting of health workforce data. More than 90 per cent of its member states actively reported workforce data in 2025, while the availability of such information had increased nearly 20-fold since the National Health Workforce Accounts initiative was launched in 2017.

The annual report series will track global workforce levels and trends, with each edition examining a specific theme. The 2026 edition focuses on how population ageing and the ageing of health professionals could shape future staffing requirements.

Diallo said sustained investment in health and care workers was critical to strengthening health systems, safeguarding global health security and advancing sustainable development.



Diallo

'Why Nigeria must strengthen maternal care, data systems to prevent over 400,000 stillbirths'

Oghome Emembo is the National Lead, Stillbirth Prevention and Care (SPEED) Initiative. In this interview with NKECHI ONYEDIKA-UGOEZE, she explains how the absence of self-prenatal care, congenital syphilis, constant exposure to carbon monoxide and gaps in emergency obstetric care worsen stillbirth cases in the country.

There are nearly 1.9 million stillbirths annually, with more than 40 per cent occurring during labour. Most stillbirths could be prevented with quality healthcare. What is stillbirth, what signs may indicate it, and what are the major risk factors?

ACCORDING to the World Health Organisation (WHO), stillbirth is the loss of a baby at or after 28 weeks of gestation, either before or during labour. Several factors can contribute to stillbirth, including inadequate self-care during pregnancy. While clinical management is essential, pregnant women should register for antenatal care as early as possible and complement it with appropriate self-care practices.

Self-care during pregnancy involves the knowledge and adoption of practices within a woman's control that can help protect her health and reduce the risk of complications, including stillbirth. Attending antenatal appointments alone may not be enough if a woman's lifestyle or environment undermines the benefits of clinical care.

For instance, exposure to carbon monoxide from cooking with firewood or other polluting fuels, as well as second-hand smoke, can pose risks during pregnancy. A woman may attend antenatal appointments, take folic acid, and receive medical examinations but still inhale harmful pollutants at home or at work.

Research has linked carbon monoxide exposure to foetal hypoxia, a condition in which an unborn baby

receives insufficient oxygen, potentially leading to serious complications.

Another consideration is sleeping position in late pregnancy. Pregnant women are advised to sleep on their side, left or right, rather than on their backs. If a woman wakes up lying on her back, she should turn onto her side. Sleeping on the back in later pregnancy can compress major blood vessels, reducing blood flow to the baby.

Syphilis during pregnancy is another important risk factor. The infection can pass from mother to child and cause serious complications, including stillbirth.

Although the WHO promotes dual HIV and syphilis testing and the triple elimination initiative, some pregnant women remain unscreened. Others do not attend antenatal care and may consequently miss essential screening, treatment and preventive interventions. Women who attend antenatal care should ensure that they are screened for syphilis. Integrating syphilis testing with HIV screening has made the process easier in many settings.

Awareness of foetal movements is also important. Pregnant women need to understand their baby's usual movement patterns and seek prompt medical attention if they notice a significant reduction or change in movement.

Complications can develop between antenatal appointments, making it important for women to remain attentive to their health throughout pregnancy. They spend much more time outside healthcare facilities than within them, so they need the knowledge and support to recognise potential warning

signs and seek care promptly.

Antenatal care should also include appropriate counselling and psychological support for women experiencing intimate partner violence. Healthcare providers must create a safe and supportive environment in which women feel comfortable discussing their concerns and circumstances. This can help providers identify risks early, determine appropriate interventions, protect maternal and foetal health, and improve pregnancy outcomes.

How can pregnant women become more involved in and aware of their pregnancy?

People living with hypertension are encouraged to monitor their blood pressure at home, while those with diabetes monitor their blood sugar levels.

Why, then, is there still a gap in the level of awareness and personal responsibility needed to help prevent stillbirths?

We sometimes hear of women attending weddings or social gatherings, unaware that their babies have died in the womb, perhaps eight or even 12 hours earlier. This raises serious questions about how women are involved in monitoring their pregnancies and recognising potential complications.

When people suspect they have a health condition, they often take steps to

check their status. A woman who suspects she is pregnant may use a pregnancy test kit, while someone with diabetes may carry a glucometer to monitor blood sugar levels. However, a pregnant woman may be carrying a baby whose heartbeat has stopped without realising it. This highlights a gap in women's involvement in prenatal care that must be addressed if we are to make meaningful progress in preventing stillbirths.

Another important issue is the absence of adequate perinatal bereavement care in Nigeria.

Perinatal bereavement care refers to the compassionate and respectful support provided to a woman after the loss of a baby during pregnancy or around childbirth. How she is treated by healthcare workers, her community and policymakers can significantly influence her psychological and emotional recovery, as well as her readiness for a subsequent pregnancy.

Unfortunately, such care remains largely absent in Nigeria. We are strongly advocating for change and hope to initiate and pilot a perinatal bereavement care protocol in the country.

The way women are spoken to and treated after stillbirth matters. So do the stigma, harassment, sociocultural practices and beliefs they may encounter. In our society, a woman's womanhood is often judged by her ability to become a mother. You can imagine the emotional burden this places on a woman who has experienced stillbirth.

Such painful and stigmatising experiences can undermine her psychological and emotional recovery, com-

plicate the grieving process and affect her confidence about conceiving again and carrying a subsequent pregnancy to term.

What warning signs should women look out for to help prevent stillbirth?

There are general warning signs during pregnancy that should prompt a woman to seek immediate medical attention, although these signs do not occur in every case. One woman may experience certain symptoms while another may not, which is why personal awareness and involvement in pregnancy care are essential.

One warning sign is vaginal bleeding during pregnancy. Another is a change in the baby's movements. Research shows that it is not only reduced foetal movement that matters; changes in the usual pattern of movement are also important. If a woman notices a significant change in her baby's movements, she should seek urgent medical assessment.

Women with a history of recurrent stillbirths or previous pregnancy complications, including pre-eclampsia, also require close clinical monitoring.

Gestational diabetes is another condition that needs appropriate management throughout pregnancy to reduce the risk of complications. These conditions require careful monitoring and timely intervention to help improve pregnancy outcomes and reduce the risk of stillbirth.

Every woman's experience is different, and symptoms may vary from one pregnancy to another. While general warning signs are important, a person-centred approach to antenatal care remains essential. Healthcare providers must recognise each woman's individual circumstances and risks, while ensuring that she understands when and how to seek medical help.

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



Emembo

Pharmacists blame energy, logistics costs for unaffordable medicines

By Ijeoma Nwanosike

WITH the cost of medicines remaining high and unaffordable for many Nigerians, the Pharmaceutical Society of Nigeria (PSN) has called for measures to address rising energy, transportation and logistics costs.

In April 2026, the Federal Government approved tariff adjustments across 127 product lines, including a 20 per cent tariff on antimalarial medicines, under the 2026 Fiscal Policy Measures to stimulate growth and ease the cost of critical imports.

However, PSN President, Ayuba Tanko, said lower import duties and incentives for pharmaceutical companies might not translate into appreciable price reductions if other production and distribution costs remained high.

Speaking ahead of the society's 99th Annual National Conference, Tanko explained that pharmaceutical manufacturers relied heavily on diesel to power their factories,

making them vulnerable to rising energy costs. Higher transportation and distribution expenses also increased operating costs, which were eventually reflected in medicine prices.

He noted that manufacturers needed to remain profitable and would adjust prices to accommodate rising production and distribution expenses.

While acknowledging the government's efforts to reduce medicine prices, Tanko said a more comprehensive approach was needed to tackle the multiple factors driving costs.

He urged the Federal Government to consult the leadership of the Pharmaceutical Manufacturers Group of the Manufacturers Association of Nigeria (PMG-MAN) to identify key cost drivers and develop practical solutions.

He cautioned that policies formulated without adequate industry consultation could overlook significant expenses

affecting pharmaceutical production and distribution.

The PSN also called for increased investment in research and the commercialisation of Nigeria's medicinal plants to strengthen local medicine production and improve affordability.

Its National Secretary, Gafar Mandehin, urged the government to strengthen collaboration among research institutions, relevant agencies and pharmaceutical manufacturers to translate promising research findings into marketable products.

He also called for incentives to encourage pharmaceutical companies to invest in viable research and develop commercially available medicines.

Mandehin said stronger links between researchers and industry could help Nigeria harness its medicinal plant resources, expand local production and reduce dependence on medicines that many Nigerians struggle to afford.

By Ijeoma Nwanosike

THE Medical and Dental Council of Nigeria (MDCN) has cleared six doctors of a prima facie case of professional misconduct over the death of Mrs Lovelyn John at Gynescop Specialist Hospital, Lagos, while referring another practitioner, Dr Joseph Yahaya, to its disciplinary tribunal.

The decision was communicated in a letter dated October 5, 2026, by the Medical and Dental Practitioners Investigation Panel, which examined complaints arising from the circumstances surrounding John's death.

Those cleared are Professor Jude Ehiabhi Okohue, proprietor of Gynescop Specialist Hospital; Dr Adeyi Taiwo Olugbenga; Dr Chukwuabuka Igbokwe; Dr Olawale Enig-

MDCN clears six doctors, refers one to disciplinary tribunal

bokan; Dr Owoseni Taiwo; and Dr Charles Anunobi.

Yahaya, who was directly involved in the patient's management, was referred to the Medical and Dental Practitioners Disciplinary Tribunal for further proceedings. The council clarified that the referral does not amount to a finding of guilt or a final determination of professional negligence. Yahaya will have the opportunity to respond to the allegations and present his defence before the tribunal.

Similarly, the decision not to refer the other six doctors means the panel found insufficient grounds for disciplinary proceedings

against them at the preliminary stage. It does not resolve every possible question of liability arising from the patient's death.

The development comes as a coroner's inquest into John's death continues before the Lagos State Coroner's Court. The proceedings are expected to examine the evidence and clarify the circumstances surrounding her death.

Although a post-mortem examination has been conducted, determining the medical cause of death is distinct from establishing whether professional negligence occurred.

Negligence requires an assessment of the treatment provided, the applicable stan-

dards of care, the clinical evidence and whether an alleged breach caused or materially contributed to the death.

The panel's decision also does not establish whether the hospital bears institutional liability, which would depend on the relevant evidence and applicable legal principles.

The ongoing inquest and disciplinary proceedings will address separate aspects of the case, with the tribunal considering the allegations against Yahaya and the coroner examining the circumstances surrounding John's death. The outcome of the proceedings will depend on the evidence and findings of the competent authorities.

Forum urges parties to prioritise healthcare in 2027 campaign

From Nkechi Onyedika-Ugoeze, Abuja

THE Nigeria UHC Forum has urged political parties and candidates to make universal health coverage (UHC) a central issue in the 2027 elections, with measurable commitments to increased health financing, expanded health insurance and stronger primary healthcare services.

The forum said the elections offered an opportunity to translate existing health policies and agreements into concrete actions that would guarantee Nigerians access to quality, affordable healthcare without financial hardship.

Speaking at a stakeholder policy engagement workshop in Abuja, themed "Leveraging 2027 Election to Advance Nigeria's UHC Quest," the forum's Co-convenor, Mrs Moji Makanjuola, said the 2023 elections demonstrated the importance of political engagement in advancing health reforms but stressed the need for sustained advocacy throughout the electoral cycle.

She recalled that the forum's Citizens-Led Health Agenda, launched ahead of the 2023 elections, helped place health priorities on the political agenda, contributed to their inclusion in the ruling party's manifesto and informed policy discussions with President Bola Tinubu's administration.

The forum was also recognised in January 2024 as a partner in implementing the Nigeria Health Sector Re-

newal Investment Initiative Compact, she said. However, Makanjuola noted that the forum's pre-election engagement in 2023 covered only two states and that advocacy weakened after the polls.

"That is the lesson we carry into 2027," she said, urging stakeholders to develop a broader strategy covering the period before, during and after the elections.

She said the workshop would review the Citizens-Led Health Agenda, identify priority demands for political parties, assess state-level health challenges and develop a civil society roadmap for engagement.

Despite existing frameworks, including the National Health Act, National Health Insurance Authority Act, Basic Health Care Provision Fund and Health Sector Renewal Investment Initiative, Makanjuola said many Nigerians still paid for healthcare out of pocket, while access and service quality remained uneven across states.

"Let us seize that opportunity to ensure that UHC becomes not just a development aspiration, but a political commitment and a measurable priority for Nigeria," she said.

Also speaking, Chairman of the Health Sector Reform Coalition, Dr Muhammad Lecky, urged political parties and candidates to focus on implementing existing health sector commitments rather than making new promises without clear delivery plans.

Institute rejects nutrition council bill, seeks unified regulation

From Nkechi Onyedika-Ugoeze, Abuja

THE Institute for Dietetics in Nigeria (IDN) has urged the National Assembly to discontinue consideration of HB 2659, warning that the proposed Nutritionists Registration Council of Nigeria could create overlapping regulatory authorities, undermine professional standards and expose Nigerians to unqualified practitioners.

Speaking to journalists in Abuja, IDN President, Tajudeen Ahmed, called on lawmakers to prioritise the Dietitians Council of Nigeria (Establishment) Bill, 2022, and urged the Federal Government to support a unified regulatory framework for nutrition and dietetic practice.

Ahmed argued that HB 2659, promoted with the support of the Nutrition Society of Nigeria (NSN), could establish a parallel regulatory

body with overlapping responsibilities for professional education, accreditation, registration, clinical practice and disciplinary procedures.

He warned that competing councils could trigger institutional conflicts, duplicate regulatory costs and create uncertainty for practitioners, educational institutions, employers and patients.

Ahmed said the issue was not opposition to regulating nutrition professionals but the need for clear professional qualifications, defined scopes of practice and safeguards to protect patients.

He explained that qualified dietitians and nutritionists-dietitians are trained to conduct nutritional assessments, provide medical nutrition therapy and manage patients with conditions such as diabetes, kidney disease, cancer and severe

malnutrition. Their duties may also include prescribing therapeutic diets and participating in enteral and parenteral nutrition management.

He cautioned that inadequate training or the improper assignment of clinical responsibilities could lead to serious complications, disability or death. Practitioners undertaking such duties, he said, must possess the required academic qualifications, supervised clinical training, internship experience and professional competence.

The IDN president also distinguished between contributions to nutrition science and the qualifications required for clinical practice.

He noted that the NSN accommodates professionals from disciplines including biochemistry, agriculture, food science, physiology,

medicine, pharmacy and public health. While acknowledging their contributions to nutrition research, food security and policy development, he argued that membership of a scientific society should not automatically qualify individuals to provide clinical nutrition and dietetic services.

Ahmed urged lawmakers to ensure that legislation clearly defines protected professional titles, minimum entry qualifications and clinical functions reserved for appropriately trained and registered practitioners.

He also warned that separate councils could complicate the regulation of academic programmes, particularly as many Nigerian universities, polytechnics and colleges of health sciences and technology offer integrated Nutrition and Dietetics programmes.



The Chairman of conference planning committee, Pharmaceutical Society of Nigeria (PSN), Derrick Osondu (left); National Publicity Secretary, Lizette Ezenekwe; PSN President, Ayuba Tanko and the National Secretary, Gafar Mandehin during a press conference ahead of the society's 99th Annual National Conference tagged 'Ijele'.

Experimental lung cancer treatment reduces tumours, muscle loss in mice

By Glory Sunday

An experimental lung cancer treatment has shown promise in reducing tumours and limiting muscle and weight loss associated with the disease in mice, researchers at Oregon State University have reported.

The treatment uses tiny fat-based particles to deliver messenger RNA (mRNA) into tumours, instructing cells to produce follistatin, a protein involved in muscle growth. The findings, published in the *Journal of Controlled Release*, could offer a new approach to tackling cancer cachexia, a condition that causes severe muscle and body weight loss in people with advanced cancer, sometimes despite adequate food intake.

Cachexia can leave patients weak and reduce their ability to tolerate cancer treatment.

To develop the experimental therapy, researchers designed the particles to attach to vitronectin, a protein naturally found in the blood, helping direct them towards lung tumours rather than allowing them to accumulate mainly in the liver.

After injecting the particles into mice with lung cancer, the team found that those receiving the tumour-targeting treatment had a greater reduction in tumour burden than animals given particles designed to deliver their contents mainly to the liver.

The treated mice also ate more, maintained more body weight and retained more muscle and fat during the study. The researchers believe that delivering follistatin directly to tumours could help address both tumour growth and the physical wasting associated with cancer.

However, the treatment has not been tested in humans, and the findings in mice do not establish whether it would be safe or effective in patients. Further studies are needed before human clinical trials can be considered.

Cancer cachexia remains difficult to manage because controlling tumour growth does not necessarily prevent the loss of muscle and body fat. The researchers are investigating whether targeted delivery of follistatin could help tackle both problems.

Borno records 68% reduction in stillbirths in four hospitals

By Njadvara Musa, Maiduguri

BORNO State Government has recorded a 68 per cent reduction in stillbirths and a 54 per cent decline in maternal mortality at four healthcare facilities implementing the Safer Births Bundle of Care (SBBC) programme since 2023.

The Commissioner for Health and Human Services, Prof. Baba Malam-Gana, disclosed this at a retreat organised by the Nigerian Medical Association (NMA) in collaboration with the Borno State Contributory Healthcare Management Agency (BOSCHMA) in Maiduguri.

He attributed the gains to coordinated interventions aimed at improving maternal and newborn healthcare and preventing avoidable deaths during pregnancy and childbirth.

The participating facilities are the State Specialist Hospital, Gunge Maternity, Yerwa Clinic and Mala-Kachalla Clinic, all in Maiduguri Metropolitan Council.

Malam-Gana said the state was integrating the programme with other maternal and perinatal health initiatives, including measures to prevent postpartum haemorrhage. He added that the government planned to expand the programme beyond Maiduguri to healthcare facilities across the remaining 26 local councils to improve access to quality maternal healthcare.

The commissioner, however, expressed concern over doctors' absence from public

hospitals despite receiving regular salaries. He said the government would adopt a carrot-and-stick approach, including engagement and electronic attendance monitoring, to strengthen accountability and ensure healthcare professionals were available to attend to patients.

Earlier, the NMA state chairman, Dr Kaka Ghazali, said the retreat was designed to strengthen leadership capacity following the association's recent election.

Ghazali, however, faulted the omission of medical doctors from the state's recent promotion and transfer exercise, which involved more than 100 other civil servants.

He reiterated the new leadership's commitment to improving healthcare delivery and urged the public to appreciate the challenges confronting medical practitioners.

BOSCHMA Executive Secretary, Dr Saleh Kaza, identified limited residency training opportunities, difficult examinations, slow promotions, burnout, insecurity, poor remuneration and unsafe postings as factors affecting doctors.

He called for stronger political commitment and the removal of institutional bottlenecks hindering medical training, research and career progression. Kaza urged the government, medical professionals and other stakeholders to strengthen collaboration to improve healthcare delivery in the state.

Lagos plans affordable health insurance scheme for residents

By Wahab Quadri

THE Lagos State Government is developing health insurance packages for different categories of residents, including low-income earners, as it moves to enforce compulsory health insurance and improve access to affordable healthcare.

The Commissioner for Health, Prof. Akin Abayomi, disclosed this at the Business of Health Conference in Lagos, saying the initiative was aimed at bridging the gap between healthcare costs and residents' ability to pay.

He said the state had domesticated the National Health Insurance Authority Act, 2022, and made health insurance compulsory through an Executive Order signed in July 2024. The government was now preparing to formalise enforcement of the policy.

Abayomi said Governor Babajide Sanwo-Olu was expected to announce the next steps within one or two weeks, while the Lagos State Health Management Agency (LASHMA) and the Ministry of Health were developing packages to accommodate different income groups.

He said the policy was critical because many residents struggled to afford increasingly expensive medical services.

"Bear in mind that most Lagosians, Nigerians, are on or just below the poverty line. So all this sophisticated infrastructure that we're building, who's going to pay for it?" he asked.

According to him, about 76 per cent of Lagos residents pay for healthcare out of pocket, while only about two per cent have health insurance, a situation the government hopes to reverse.

He warned that investment in hospitals, medical personnel, equipment and medicines would not be sustainable unless residents could afford the services provided.

"You can have a very sophisticated care delivery system, but if you cannot pay for that health, then that supply side will struggle and it may eventually go into economic hardship and collapse," he said, linking the problem to the migration of medical professionals.

Abayomi said doctors were overworked, nurses overburdened and patient volumes high, while medicine and diagnostic costs continued to rise. Advances in treatment, including precision cancer drugs, robotics and remote interventions, were also making healthcare increasingly expensive.

He noted that Lagos and the Federal Government were investing in modern hospitals, private-sector partnerships and a new University of Medicine and Health Sciences. However, he stressed that infrastructure development must be matched by sustainable financing.

He said compulsory health insurance could strengthen the sector's financial base and potentially inject trillions of naira into healthcare, helping sustain services and ease pressures contributing to the exodus of medical professionals.

The conference also examined opportunities

to strengthen local healthcare delivery and address workforce shortages.

The Director of Smile Doctor Foundation and convener of the conference, Dr Funmilayo Adeniyi, said she became concerned about the shortage of health workers while expanding her dental practice, as competent professionals often left within two to six months to work abroad.

She said visits to universities to engage medical students revealed that many were already planning to leave Nigeria rather than build careers locally.

However, Adeniyi said the challenges presented opportunities for entrepreneurs and young medical professionals to develop affordable services for underserved populations.

"There is a large market for people going to the informal sector in search of care. If we package affordable solutions, people will pay for them," she said, urging young doctors to collaborate and build sustainable healthcare businesses.

The Vice-Chancellor of the University of Lagos, Prof. Folasade Ogunsola, also urged young Nigerians to explore opportunities at home rather than regard relocation abroad as the only path to professional success.

She said the country's challenges could create opportunities for innovation and investment, stressing that value creation was essential to building successful businesses.

Ogunsola added that better healthcare delivery required accountability and improved hospital standards. Poor patient relations, she said, could discourage people from seeking care at formal health facilities.

She called for standardised hospital management practices and enforceable standard operating procedures to improve service delivery and patient outcomes.



Abayomi

Forum urges parties to make healthcare key 2027 campaign issue

From Nkechi Onyedika-Ugoeze, Abuja

THE Nigeria UHC Forum has urged political parties and candidates to make universal health coverage (UHC) a central issue in the 2027 elections, with measurable commitments to increased health financing, expanded health insurance and stronger primary healthcare services.

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She recalled that the forum's Citizens-Led Health Agenda, launched ahead of the 2023 elections, helped place health priorities on the political agenda, contributed to their inclusion in the ruling party's manifesto and informed policy discussions with President Bola Tinubu's administration.

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ary 2024 as a partner in implementing the Nigeria Health Sector Renewal Investment Initiative Compact, she said. However, Makanjuola noted that the forum's pre-election engagement in 2023 covered only two states and that advocacy weakened after the polls.

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the National Health Act, National Health Insurance Authority Act, Basic Health Care Provision Fund and Health Sector Renewal Investment Initiative, Makanjuola said many Nigerians still paid for healthcare out of pocket, while access and service quality remained uneven across states.

"Let us seize that opportunity to ensure that UHC becomes not just a development aspiration, but a political commitment and a measurable priority for Nigeria," she said.

Also speaking, Chairman of the Health Sector Reform Coalition, Dr Muhammad Lecky, urged political parties and candidates to focus on implementing existing health sector commitments rather than making new promises without clear delivery plans.

He called for increased health financing, stronger primary healthcare and wider health insurance coverage, adding that effective enforcement of the National Health Insurance Authority Act was essential to achieving universal coverage.

The forum's Co-convener and Chief Executive Officer of Development Governance International Consult, Dr Gafar Alawode, urged states to prioritise health coverage for poor and vulnerable people and ensure that allocated funds translated into services.



Minister of Health, Muhammad Pate

PUBLIC NOTICE

OIL PIPELINE ACT (CAP 338) LFN 1990

APPLICATION FOR OPERATION OF A GAS PIPELINE LICENCE

Notice is hereby given in accordance with section 8 of the Oil Pipeline Act, (CAP 338 Laws of the Federation of Nigeria, 1990) that INDORAMA ELEME FERTILIZER & CHEMICALS FZE has applied for an operational License to enter upon, and take possession of 20 (Twenty) years a strip of Land for the purpose of operating a new **65 KM Long and twenty (20) Inch diameter from KP-17 (OB OB)/KP-11 (AGPC) to Indorama Eleme Fertilizer & Chemicals FZE, Eleme** at the Rivers State.

On the route of which is demarcated on the ground key markers and is herein described: -

DESCRIPTION:

The pipeline shall be constructed along the existing right of way owned by NAOC (OANDO) from OBIAFU/OBRIKOM gas plant to an entry point at the Indorama Eleme Fertilizer & Chemicals FZE. The right of way is about 65 km in River’s state (Nigeria). The route traverses mostly on dry land, crosses some roads and a rail track, as shown on the drawing (Ref No. NG-AGPC-GEN-DV-PPL-DWG-0001_D1_Pipeline Overall Route Map R1) and herein described as follows: -

All that strip of land is approximately 65 KM long, situated in River’s state, the route of which traversed dry land, and as shown on the drawing (Ref. No. PTS Map for Proposed 20-inch ANOH Gas Plant to Indorama Complex-76 KM). The width of the Right of way (ROW) is 15 meters.

The route of the Line is described in the following text: where in the following text the bearing

Phase 2 pipeline shall start from a point at KP 17 (OB-OB) / KP 11 (AGPC), the tie-in point of the completed 20” x 11km pipeline during phase 1 at the GPS coordinate (KP 17 (OB-OB) / KP 11 (AGPC) as detailed below:

PT3	254181.825mE	584831.456mN
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The ROW then runs for a distance of 4864.3025 m with a bearing 193° to PT4

PT4	257877.700mE	581667.841mN
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Then Runs for a distance of 221984.741m with a bearing of 131° to PT5

PT5	266915.734mE	561626.787mN
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Then Runs for a distance of 2328.0824 m with a bearing of 156° to PT6

PT6	269181.060mE	561089.883mN
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Then Runs for distance of 9883.1021m with a bearing of 103° to PT7.

PT7	278533.883mE	557896.075mN
-----	--------------	--------------

Then Runs for a distance of 5229.9976m with a bearing of 109° TO PT8.

PT8	281937.720mE	553925.336mN
-----	--------------	--------------

Then Runs for a distance of 8993.8555m with a bearing of 139° to PT9

PT9	285246.867mE	545562.383mN
-----	--------------	--------------

Then Runs for a distance of 10205.659m with a bearing of 158° to PT10

PT10	289004.228mE	536073.563mN
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Then Runs for a distance of 1047.1153 with a bearing of 158° to PT11

PT11	289179.489mE	535041.219mN
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PT11 is 170° at Indorama facility.

The Row of way crosses the following major roads:

288322.761mE	537759.842mN	46m	PH-ABA Express way
286559.323mE	542049.642mN	20m	Eneka-Igbo-Etche Road 2
283085.495mE	550817.127mN	16.5m	Igwurita-Chokocho Road
265919.013mE	563689.329mN	16.8m	Port Harcourt/Owerri Road
262335.666mE	571815.666mN	23m	Port Harcourt-Owerri Road

And a Railway track cross

288941.739mE	536058.883mN	1.2m	Narrow Guage
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Where it terminates to the existing Oando right of way from OBOB to Eleme.

All bearing and distance are approximate and all bearings refer to the direction of traverse line:-

1.

This Pipeline of 20inch diameter along the described Pipeline route to be installed with a minimum soil cover of 2.0 meters.
2.

A copy of a plan of the Pipeline route identifying the land affected can be inspected during all normal working hours at the Ministry of lands and Surveys, Port Harcourt or Nigerian Midstream and Downstream Petroleum Regulatory Authority, Owerri or the offices of the aforesaid Company.
3.

Any person who considers that his land or interests will be injuriously affected by the grant of the License should lodge orally or in writings not less than 07 days before the hearing date in Paragraph 6, with the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Lands and Survey, Port Harcourt notice of objection stating the interest of the objection and the grounds of the objection.
4.

Any public officer who receives a verbal objection in the course of his duty shall record the name and address, interest and grounds of objections and shall forward such details to the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Lands and Survey, Port Harcourt.
5.

The Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Lands, and Survey, Port Harcourt shall enquire into the objection (If any) duly lodged in accordance with paragraphs 3 and 4 above at his office at Port Harcourt at 10am on the **3rd, day of December,2026** giving all parties an opportunity to be heard. A report thereof shall be sent without delay to the Nigerian Midstream and Downstream Petroleum Regulatory Authority, Abuja

Dated this 30th day of September 2026

For: Nigerian Midstream and Downstream Petroleum Regulatory Authority

Experts question preparedness, contact tracing gaps

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

through entry points and receive treatment at a private hospital without triggering an immediate alert and the necessary public health response.

Saheed said authorities needed to establish the patient’s movements and interactions, adding that heightened vigilance around travellers arriving from outbreak-affected areas should be treated as a public health precaution rather than discrimination.

He also called for dedicated infectious disease hospitals in every state, warning that preparedness required functional facilities, trained personnel, established protocols and sustained surveillance before emergencies occur.

Virologist Oyewale Tomori similarly called for comprehensive contact tracing, warning that the number of potentially exposed people could run into hundreds, depending on the patient’s movements and interactions.

Tomori said everyone who travelled on the same flight as the patient should be included in the tracing exercise, alongside people she encountered after arriving in Nigeria. He warned that limiting the exercise to 44 contacts would raise questions about the seriousness of the response.

He also urged authorities to investigate the patient’s com-

plete travel history, including whether she passed through Lagos airport before arriving in Abuja, to identify possible contacts across locations. Tomori further expressed concern about the lack of visible surveillance at the country’s airports and called for stronger monitoring of travellers from affected areas.

A member of the Academy of Medical Sciences Rapid Response Initiative Group, Prof Boaz Adegboro, recommended tracing and testing passengers on the flight from Uganda, expanding access to Ebola test kits, and informing healthcare workers and the public about symptoms requiring prompt medical attention.

FAAN intensifies vigilance at airports over Ebola outbreak in Abuja

THE Federal Airports Authority of Nigeria (FAAN) has intensified vigilance across the country’s airports following the confirmation of an imported case of Ebola Virus Disease in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja.

FAAN, in a statement by its Director, Public Affairs and Consumer Protection, Henry Agbebire, said it was working with the Nigeria Centre for Disease Control and Prevention (NCDC), Port Health Services, the Nigeria Civil Aviation Authority (NCAA) and other relevant agencies to support ongoing efforts to contain

the disease.

FAAN said it was maintaining heightened vigilance across airport operations and would continue to coordinate with public health authorities, align its response with further guidance and support additional measures considered necessary to protect passengers, airport personnel and the wider public.

The agency urged passengers, airport users, airlines and other stakeholders to remain calm, vigilant and co-operative with health officials.

The authority also advised the public to rely on verified information and avoid spreading unconfirmed reports about the outbreak.

Atiku demands audit of alleged N10b preparedness fund

FORMER Vice President Atiku Abubakar has demanded a public audit of the N10 billion reportedly announced for Ebola preparedness, questioning how the funds were spent following the confirmation of a case in Abuja.

Atiku alleged that the case exposed gaps in disease surveillance and the protection of healthcare workers, urging the Federal Government to account for the funds and ensure that frontline personnel had adequate protective equipment.

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

PUBLIC NOTICE

KEFFESO HOST COMMUNITIES' DEVELOPMENT TRUST REMOVAL/ADDTION OF TRUSTEES

THIS IS TO INFORM THE GENERAL PUBLIC THT THE ABOVE NAMED HAS APPLIED TO THE CORPORATE AFFAIRS COMMISSION (CAC) FOR REMOVAL/ APPOINTMENT OF NEW TRUSTEES UNDER PART 'F' OF THE COMPANIES AND ALLIED MATTERSACT (CAMA) 2020.

OLD TRUSTEES

1. HRH MOSES THEOPHILUS
2. MR SELE-EPRI MATTHEW
3. DR. HENRY AMAEGBERI
4. MISS EBISINTEI GABRIEL APAINGOLO
5. MISS DEIVINE YINLAYEFA EZETU
6. CHIEF MISSION WOULF TUERIDEI
7. MR. ABRAHAM URBEL
8. MR. LUCKY KELVIN ZEBULUN

THE REMOVED TRUSTEES ARE

1. MISS WATARI TONTETEMIE WILSON
2. DR. DAVIDSON NUMONDE

THE NEWLY APPOINTED TRUSTEES ARE

1. CHIEF CLEMENT GODWILL TOBIAH
2. MISS PRECIOUS BARANAYE OWEILANYO

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

THE AIMS AND OBJECTIVES REMAIN SAME.

ANY OBJECTION TO THIS REGISTRATION SHOULD BE FORWARDED TO THE REGISTRAR-GENERAL CORPORATE AFFAIRS COMMISSION, 420, TIGRIS CRESCENT, OFF AGUYI IRONSI STREET. PMB 198, MAITAMA ABUJA, WITHIN 28 DAYS FROM THE DATE OF PUBLICATION.

SIGNED: **SECRETARY**

Education

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Guardian Nigeria GuardianNigeria 08136370421 Guardiannigeria

Alausa's quest for world-class system amid potential, protests

When President Bola Tinubu redeployed Dr Tunji Alausa from Health to the Ministry of Education in October 2024, the presidency was apparently seeking answers to the perennial problems that have plagued the education system for decades. Some two years later, Alausa has overseen a ministry in constant flux, with ambitious steps, policies, controversies, and reversals of decisions that have caught the eye and sometimes left the nation breathless.

IYABO LAWAL explores the contours and straight lines.

NIGERIA'S education sector requires emergency intervention. Dr Tunji Alausa has supervised the ministry for some two years, and his tenure has been marked by a flurry of policy announcements, high-profile reversals, and controversies that have pitted him against university unions, parents, and other stakeholders.

Alausa arrived with a structured agenda, unveiling the Nigeria Education Sector Renewal Initiative (NESRI), a six-pillar masterplan anchored on Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) and skills; Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics and Medicine (STEMM); out-of-school children and Almajiri education; girl-child education; data and digitalisation; and education quality assurance.

One of Alausa's first acts was to reverse the 18-year minimum admission age policy introduced by his predecessor, Tahir Mamman, declaring in November 2024 that the 18-year cap was unsustainable and setting the benchmark at 16 years, with waivers for exceptionally intelligent students.

But critics said it encourages underage university entry without maturity.

Under Alausa's tenure, yearly admissions surpassed the one-million mark for the first time in the 2025 admission cycle. The Unified Tertiary Matriculation Examination (UTME) candidates secured admission, pushing the success rate to 50.3 per cent. However, 706,418 approved admission places remained unfilled that same year.

The Nigerian Education Loan Fund (NELFUND), established under the Student Loans (Access to Higher Education) Act signed into law on April 3, 2024, has become a cornerstone of the Tinubu administration's education agenda. Student loan is Tinubu's flagship, but Alausa is the implementer.

Alausa's curriculum reform for 2025/2026 reduced subject overload, reintroduced Nigerian History, hitherto removed from primary and junior secondary curricula in 2007, and added Civic and Heritage Studies for Senior Secondary School students (SSS1-3).

The newly developed subject integrates Nigerian History with Civic Education. He also banned nursery school graduation ceremonies and the practice of bundling workbooks with textbooks, which he described as "sheer extortion" of parents.

There was also the reversal of the 2022 National Language Policy, which had mandated mother-tongue instruction in early childhood and primary education.

In November 2025, Alausa announced that English would be reinstated as the sole language of instruction, citing "mass failure rates in the West African Senior School

Certificate Examination (WASSCE) and the Unified Tertiary Matriculation Examination (UTME) in certain geopolitical zones that had adopted mother-tongue teaching.

The announcement drew sharp condemnation from some stakeholders, who noted that China and India have successfully used indigenous languages in early education.

The education minister also proposed scrapping the long-standing 6-3-3-4 system in favour of a 12-year uninterrupted basic education model, eliminating the junior-secondary/senior-secondary divide. The goal is to keep children in school until at least age 16 and reduce dropout rates.

The proposal, submitted as a migration plan while retaining the current 6-3-3-4 structure, frames retention as the strategy.

Of the approximately 30 million pupils who enrol in primary school, only 10 million transition to junior secondary one, and roughly six million reach senior secondary school. Yet, many teachers and parents complained of abrupt implementation without adequate consultation, training or infrastructure.

The Nigeria Union of Teachers (NUT) warned that without better financing, the reforms would falter, citing persistent gaps in laboratories, ICT facilities, and instructional materials. Critics argue that reducing subject counts is meaningless if schools lack the capacity to deliver practical, skills-based learning.

Alausa has positioned TVET as a centrepiece of his reform agenda. Students in federal and state technical colleges now enjoy free tuition, accommodation, and feeding, with a monthly stipend of N22,500.

The government's free TVET programme attracted over one million applications, with 160,000 trainees supported through approximately 1,200 centres nationwide.

The government has set a target of creating one million export-linked jobs and producing 10 million globally certified Nigerians by 2030 under its National Talent Export Programme.

In January 2026, Alausa unveiled the Federal Government-ASUU Agreement, ending a 16-year renegotiation stalemate. The agreement provided for a 40 per cent increase in the Consolidated Academic Allowance for academic staff, effective January 1, 2026. A new professorial credit allowance was introduced, with professors receiving an additional N1.8 million per year and academic readers N840,000 yearly.

Implementation commenced in February 2026, with some federal universities already reflecting the approved salary increase. However, by September, fresh concerns emerged about full implementation, with some institutions unable to pay the full salary package and unions threatening to strike.

The Tertiary Institutions Staff Support Fund (TISSF), a zero-interest loan scheme of up to N10 million per applicant, was launched in August 2025 and administered by the Bank of Industry (BOI). As of June 2026, the 2025/2026 cycle had been completed, with over N13 billion disbursed to 7,450 academic and non-academic staff across 153 public tertiary institutions, while over 42,000 applications were processed through the digital platform.

Universities accounted for 52 per cent of disbursements, colleges of education 25 per cent, and polytechnics 23 per cent. Female beneficiaries accounted for only 19 per cent of

recipients, a disparity the ministry has acknowledged. Notably, ASUU and the National Association of Academic Technologists (NAAT) were conspicuously absent at the scheme's launch, raising questions about union buy-in.

The proposed concession of King's College, Lagos (a 117-year-old institution) to the King's College Old Boys Association (KCOBA) has become one of the biggest controversies of his tenure.

Alausa held emergency talks with the Trade Union Congress (TUC) and other unions, assuring staff that they would remain civil servants, with options to transfer within Lagos, and that there would be no fee increase under the concession.

He also announced a seven-member high-level committee to review the agreement, while insisting the concession would proceed.

Under the agreement, KCOBA is expected to finance, rehabilitate, modernise, operate and maintain the institution, while admission principles for unity schools remain unchanged and the agreement does not provide for an automatic increase in school fees.

Alausa sparked national outrage when he described several disciplines, particularly in the social sciences, as "irrelevant" and suggested that NELFUND loans should not be granted to students pursuing such degrees.

The National Association of Nigerian Students (NANS) condemned the remarks, arguing that fields such as Economics, Political Science, Sociology, and Psychology are globally relevant and that the problem lies in outdated curricula, not the disciplines themselves.

The government said more than one million out-of-school children returned to classrooms in the 30 months after Alausa's appointment, and nearly 6.7 million girls have benefited from interventions to improve access and retention.

The Nigeria Education Data Infrastructure (NEDI) has enabled the government to monitor enrolment, infrastructure, teachers, and learning outcomes across more than 240,000 schools nationwide.

The Digital National Education Management Information System (DNEMIS) has registered 32 million learners, with NEDI assigning every learner a unique National Learners Identity Number linked to their National Identity Number.

However, as of September 2026, only 124,548 schools had submitted data on DNEMIS, representing a 58.4 per cent reporting rate out of 213,235 schools across the country.

Two textbook policies define Alausa. The minister set a minimum benchmark of 70 per cent for textbooks to qualify for ranking, warning that substandard instructional materials will no longer be allowed. After receiving the report from the country's first national textbook assessment and ranking exercise, he described books scoring 25 per cent as trash.

It is the first time Nigeria has ranked textbooks nationally, involving publishers, the Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC), and the Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC).



Alausa

framework seeks to cut education costs by introducing durable, reusable textbooks designed to last four to six years. This directly confronts forced yearly purchases. He also banned publishers from bundling textbooks and workbooks, which makes it impossible for younger siblings to reuse books, and mandated that the workbook be separated from the core textbook.

States like Abia, Imo, Plateau, Anambra, Osun and Edo have domesticated this by banning non-transferable textbooks and nursery graduation ceremonies.

However, publishers protest that the 70 per cent benchmark will kill the local industry, with most books scoring below 50 per cent due to poor paper quality.

Alausa also established a seven-year moratorium on new federal universities, polytechnics, and colleges of education, a necessary response to unchecked proliferation, with some universities receiving fewer than 100 UTME applications, and some none at all.

Nigeria's first Artificial Intelligence (AI) in Education Task Force has been launched to develop guidelines and standards for teacher training and the deployment of AI solutions, alongside a training programme for 6,000 senior secondary school teachers to integrate AI in classrooms.

One of the most structurally ambitious reforms is migrating WAEC, NECO, and NABTEB examinations from paper-and-pencil tests to full computer-based testing (CBT). In December 2024, the government set a three-year timeline to complete the transition, targeting full CBT for school candidates by 2026.

Alausa explained that CBT will curb examination malpractice and align Nigeria with global best practices. Early data suggest some gains: the 2026 introduction of CBT for WAEC's SSCE contributed to a 1.11 percentage-point reduction in malpractice, though cheating via mobile phones, AI-enabled websites, and organised syndicates persists.

However, stakeholders have consistently warned that the timeline is hasty given Nigeria's infrastructure gaps. Critics noted that millions of pupils, especially in rural areas, have never used a computer, and many schools lack reliable electricity, devices or internet connectivity.

The Education Rights Initiative (ERI) and others have called for a phased transition, potentially extending to 2028, to avoid widening inequalities between urban and underserved communities.

Alausa has remained firm, declaring "no going back on CBT" even as technical failures and operational challenges dog the rollout.

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New report tasks Nigeria on workplace, future-ready skills

By Iyabo Lawal

POLICYMAKERS in Nigeria and globally have been urged to prioritise durable skills that will be essential in future workplaces.

The recommendation is contained in the Futures 2026 report, which convened 58 experts in education, policy-making and the future of work to examine how education systems can equip young people for the future.

The report was led by HP, the Global Learning Council and the Education Leaders Forum.

According to the document,

policy-makers should develop clear blueprints to help students build durable skills such as creativity, critical thinking, communication and collaboration, and ensure that such skills are not treated as secondary or extracurricular.

It stated that durable skills are becoming the core infrastructure of future readiness and must be resourced, timetabled and assessed accordingly.

The report also recommended the design of future skills-building programmes for public systems and low-resource contexts to prevent durable skills from becoming

another source of inequality, using methods such as teacher-mediated artificial intelligence, low-bandwidth delivery, and predictable costs.

It further called on policy-makers to keep literacy, numeracy and identity-forming learning at the core of education, while using creative, hands-on approaches to deliver both fundamentals and durable skills simultaneously.

The report said durable skills must become a core part of education systems rather than an optional addition, and called for greater support for educators who remain central

to helping students develop creativity, critical thinking, communication and collaboration skills valued by employers.

It noted that assessment remains the biggest bottleneck to widespread building of durable skills, adding that education systems need to create standardised assessment pathways for durable skills that are recognised by higher education institutions and employers across geographies.

The report also argued that Nigeria and other education systems should take students'

voices into account when creating durable skills-based curricula.

The Chief Commercial Officer at HP and Chair of HP Futures, David McQuarrie, said that educators, policy-makers and employers share a responsibility to prepare young people for the opportunities and challenges of their lives and careers.

He said as artificial intelligence (AI) transforms how people learn and work, education systems must do more to help students develop, demonstrate and continuously strengthen capabilities that will remain valuable regardless of how technology evolves.

The Director and Global Head of Education Business and Strategy at HP, Mayank Dhingra, said experts in the report called for new education models that take durable skills into account, and for students to be offered interoperable, transnational means to

credentialise their skills so that higher education institutions and employers share a common benchmark.

He added that experts also called on policymakers to take immediate action to ensure AI-era readiness and durable skills ownership does not become another source of structural inequality.

The survey for the report was conducted online between May and June, and received 6,206 responses from students in 37 countries across versions published in English, Spanish, Portuguese, Bahasa Indonesia, Italian and Arabic.

Respondents ranged from under 12 to over 25 years old, with 88 per cent stating an age between 12 and 17.

The report also convened 58 experts for roundtable discussions and one-to-one interviews, and compiled case studies from schools, universities, employers, non-governmental organisations and public systems.



Mrs Mary Awoniyi (left); Chairman of Anniversary Planning Committee, Mr Dave Nwanze; and Mr Olukayode Adeegbe, all members of Lagos City College Class of 1976 at a news conference to announce celebration of their 50 years of graduation in Lagos, recently.

LACCOSA '76 set gives back to alma mater

By Omowunmi Sanni

MEMBERS of the 1976 set of Lagos City College Old Students Association (LACCOSA), Sabo, Yaba, are set to reward students and provide medical care for teachers as part of activities commemorating their 50th anniversary.

Briefing reporters yesterday at the college premises, Chairman of the Planning Committee, Mr Dave Nwanze, said the weeklong event would involve the donation of materials to the school, a medical outreach for teachers and staff, and the award of cash prizes to the best students in science, art, and commercial classes.

Nwanze was supported at the briefing by some of the members, including Mr Kunle Sanyaolu, Kayode Adeegbe, Mary Awoniyi, Prof Taiwo Ajala, Mr Tony

Bello, among others.

Nwanze described the golden jubilee anniversary, themed: "Uncommon Grace," as a significant milestone for the set.

While shedding more light on the activities lined up for the event, Nwanze said the set will make a glorious return to the college tomorrow, and will feature mentorship lectures for the current students on the "Path to Success," the commissioning of the set's Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) project, and an inter-religious thanksgiving service.

The celebrations will be rounded up on Saturday, October 24, with a Gala Night at the Radisson Blu Hotel, Ikeja.

Nwanze added that members would give mentorship lecture to current students to motivate them.

In their assessment of public secondary education in the past and now, Sanyaolu said that while he would not agree that the standard has dropped, there is an urgent need for the government to improve the provision of infrastructure to schools.

Sanyaolu also stressed the need for teacher training and employment of more teachers so as to meet the stipulated teacher-pupil ratio. He lamented that most schools are currently overcrowded making teaching and learning difficult.

Commenting on the previous interventions of old students generally in the college, Nwanze lauded the association as a whole, saying the body had rehabilitated laboratories, installed a solar-powered ICT centre, provided furniture and other teaching aids.

Organisation opens applications for fifth cohort

By Adelowo Adebunmi

ACAREER development initiative has opened applications for the fifth cohort of its MET Stars Academy programme as it celebrates five years.

Applications for cohort five opened on October 15 and will close on November 15, 2026. The programme is expected to draw participants from across the six geopolitical zones.

The initiative, which focuses on talent development for technology, marketing, and entertainment sectors, marked the anniversary with a media and partner luncheon in Lagos.

Speaking at the event, the founder, Bolaji Junaid, said the project started with a vision to bridge the gap between young people's potential and available opportunities, and has now built a foundation to expand its work.

Junaid added that the next phase is about building an institution that can continue to open doors for young Nigerians and develop professional talents beyond its founders.

The programme has, in the last five years, reviewed over 430 applications across four cohorts, placed over 35 young professionals in jobs, built a community of over 180 members and engaged more than 60 mentors locally and in the diaspora.

Its MET Stars Academy content is said to have reached over five million people organically.

MET Stars Academy is the organisation's flagship programme, providing practical industry experience, mentorship and access to professional networks.

Speaking at the event, a member of the Board of Trustees, Taopheek Babayeju, said the project addressed the need to balance entrepreneurship and intrapreneurship in nation-building, stressing the need for skilled professionals who can strengthen organisations and lead teams.

Another mentor, Folake Johnson, said she was drawn to the programme by its recruitment and mentor selection processes.

'Varsities must rethink assessment methods in AI age'

By Iyabo Lawal

THE Vice-Chancellor of the University of Ghana, Prof. Nana Aba Amfo, has urged universities across Africa to fundamentally rethink how they assess students, as artificial intelligence (AI) tools increasingly enable the generation of essays and answers without genuine understanding.

Amfo said the traditional reliance on written assignments and conventional examinations is no longer sufficient to measure learning in an era where competent-looking essays can be produced in seconds.

She raised the question: "If a student can generate an

apparently competent essay in seconds, what exactly are we assessing when we ask for that essay?"

She made the remarks in her keynote paper delivered at the formal opening of the University of Lagos (UNILAG) International Week.

In her address, Amfo said the rapid adoption of AI in education should not be viewed solely as a crisis, but as an opportunity to interrogate teaching methods and redefine learning outcomes.

She recommended a shift towards assessment formats that test reasoning and application, including oral examinations, project-based assessments, portfolios, presenta-

tions and practical demonstrations.

"We must distinguish between a student who can produce an answer and one who understands how to arrive at, evaluate and defend that answer," she said.

Amfo cautioned universities against two extremes - treating AI only as a threat to academic integrity or celebrating it uncritically as a fix for challenges in the sector.

According to her, the central question for higher education is how AI can be deployed to strengthen learning without eroding the intellectual capabilities that education is meant to build.

"The real challenge is to ask

how AI can strengthen learning without weakening the intellectual capabilities that education is supposed to develop."

She urged institutions to embed digital literacy and applied artificial intelligence across all disciplines, arguing that graduates must understand the technologies reshaping work, governance and everyday life.

She added that technological competence alone is inadequate without an understanding of the social inequalities, ethical concerns, and responsibilities associated with the development and deployment of such technologies.

Universities, she said, should produce graduates who can think critically about technology, not just use it, and African universities must move from being passive consumers of innovation to active contributors in shaping AI systems.

The university administrator expressed concern over the marginal representation of African languages in the datasets that power most AI models.

She observed that many AI tools still struggle with local names, accents, expressions and culturally specific meanings.

She warned that as these systems become more central to

education, they risk deepening linguistic and epistemic inequalities rather than expanding access to knowledge.

"If these systems become increasingly central to education, we must ask whether they will expand access to knowledge or reinforce existing linguistic and epistemic inequalities," she said.

She called on African universities to contribute their languages, indigenous knowledge systems, research outputs and ethical perspectives to the global development of AI.

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Education

UNILAG seeks collaborative research to tackle global challenges

By Omowunmi Sanni

THE University of Lagos (UNILAG) has called for greater interdisciplinary research and collaboration among academics, policy-makers and industry leaders to address interconnected global challenges such as food insecurity, public health, housing deficits and environmental sustainability.

The Vice-Chancellor, Prof. Folasade Oguniola, made the call at the institution's 19th Research Conference and Fair, themed: "Sustainable frontiers: Integrating systems for food security, health, housing, and humanity to combat global challenges."

Oguniola said global challenges have become increasingly complex and interconnected, requiring innovative and sustainable approaches beyond disciplinary boundaries.

She noted that food system failures could trigger security concerns, housing crises could worsen public health inequalities, while technological solutions without humanistic perspectives might overlook empathy and cultural contexts.

"To combat these intersecting global challenges, we must stop operating in silos. We must cross the frontier into radical integration," she said.

She urged partnerships among agricultural scientists, data scientists, architects and public health experts, and challenged researchers to assess whether their work bridges disciplinary divides and improves the wellbeing of marginalised communities.

Earlier, the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academics and Research), Prof. Matthew Ilori, said the conference attracted over 500 abstracts across eight thematic areas, reflecting the university's research capacity.

In his keynote address, the Chief Executive Officer of Degeconek, Abiodun Adesanya, stressed the need to balance energy security with sustainability.

Speaking on oil and gas development and the global energy transition, Adesanya said fossil fuels still account for a substantial proportion of global energy consumption despite growing investment in renewables, attribut-

ing it to rising energy demand.

He said renewable energy was expanding, but oil and gas remained important to transportation, manufacturing and production of materials such as plastics and fertilisers, adding that energy transition policies must consider countries' economic and developmental realities.

On Nigeria, he said the national grid remains largely dependent on gas-fired thermal stations and hydroelectric plants, while distributed solar is expanding, noting that growing energy needs require additional investment.

He highlighted the potential of oil and gas resources in south-west Nigeria, particularly within the Dahomey Basin, and said commercialising gas resources there could provide additional feedstock for power plants serving Lagos and its environs.

He also drew attention to reported oil seepage around the Amuwo-Odofin area of Lagos and urged researchers in geosciences and engineering to contribute to studies on the region's energy resources.

He proposed exploring floating solar installations on the Lagos lagoon to expand clean energy generation on campus, saying a pilot project could improve electricity supply for teaching and research activities.

Also speaking, the Chairman of Mutual Benefits Group, Dr Akinade Ogunbiyi, stressed the importance of insurance and risk management in promoting sustainable development and protecting livelihoods.

He explained that insurance enables losses suffered by a few to be covered through contributions from a larger pool of insured people, providing financial protection and helping recovery after unforeseen events.

Ogunbiyi linked insurance to the Sustainable Development Goals, particularly expanding access to financial services, and expressed concern over Nigeria's low insurance penetration, which he put at about 0.5 per cent compared with a global average of seven per cent.

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A cross section of UNICEF, Airtel Africa and Yaba College of Technology management staff during the team's visit to the college to assess the digital learning and youth skills initiative programme, yesterday.

College elects Adepetun as second president

By Princess Olaleye

THE St. Joseph's College, Ondo Old Boys' Association, 1981 Set, has elected Chief Ade Adepetun as its second president, ushering in a new era of leadership for the alumni body.

The election, which was described by Adepetun as an epochal and monumental event in the annals of the association, marks a seamless and peaceful transition of responsibilities in recent times.

In his acceptance speech, Adepetun said the inauguration represented not just a change in leadership, but a reaffirmation of the values that have held the association together over the years.

He pledged to consolidate on the gains recorded by his predecessor, while charting a new course for the association defined by unity, love, welfarism, transparency and accountability.

He emphasised that the General Assembly would remain the supreme body of the association, while the Executive Committee would serve only as trustees of the collective will of members.

To reinforce this principle, he promised to run an open-door and open-book policy, granting members unrestricted access to the association's records and ensuring that all decisions are openly debated and collectively agreed upon.

"Our mantra shall be 'One

for all; all for one,'" Adepetun declared, stressing that no divisions, caucuses or cliques would be tolerated under his leadership.

He assured members that the association would truly belong to everyone, regardless of status, background or location, adding that inclusiveness would be the hallmark of his administration.

Looking ahead, Adepetun outlined several priorities for his tenure, including strengthening existing structures and programmes to ensure the association remains on a solid footing.

He said the new leadership would harness members' expertise by creating committees that would draw on the diverse talents and expe-

riences of alumni across various professional fields.

He also said his executive would collaborate with the national body, currently led by Prof. Olufemi Mimiko, as well as other alumni sets and corporate organisations, to advance the objectives of the association.

Adepetun paid tribute to the sacrifices of members, acknowledging their physical, spiritual, emotional, moral, and financial contributions to the association's growth over the years.

He assured that with their continued support and God's guidance, the association's glorious flight to unstoppable progress and greater greatness had only just begun.

Finalists emerge for 2026 Malta best teachers' competition

By Omowunmi Sanni

THE top 10 finalists for the 2026 edition of the Malta Teacher of the Year competition, organised by the Nigerian Breweries-Felix Ohiwerei Education Trust Fund, have emerged following the panel of judges' second-phase assessment of entries.

The finalists emerged from 213 teachers who advanced to the second phase of the competition, with the top 10 recording the highest scores during the assessment.

The selection marks another milestone in the 12th edition of the initiative, which recognises outstanding teachers and celebrates their invaluable contributions to education in Nigeria.

The top 10 finalists are Egwu Ngozi of Ibeku High School, Abia State; Ephraim Inyangudo of

Comprehensive Secondary School, Ediene Abak Local Government Area, Akwa Ibom State; Edumu Christopher of MasterCare International School, Asaba, Delta State; Isaac Endurance of Bethel Secondary School, Benin City, Edo State; and Adeboye Vincent of Ikole City College, Ikole, Ekiti State.

Others include Obiora Uzoamaka of Deeper Life High School, Amokpo Nike, Enugu East local council, Enugu State; Yusuf Ganiyat of Wisdom International School of Excellence, WISE, Sauka, Lugbe, Abuja; Adeyemo Victoria of Lanre Awolokun High School, Gbagada, Lagos; Omotayo Akintunde of Ilugun High School Junior, Elega, Abeokuta, Ogun State; and Okegbemi Olukemi of Ilado/Sagbo Community Grammar School, Iseyin, Oyo State.

Envoy, author, others to campaign for literacy in Africa

By Adelowo Adebunmi

AUTHOR and Cultural Storytelling Ambassador, Denise Ajayi Williams, and African Union (AU) Ambassador to the United States, Constantina Adelina Gaspar, are among dignitaries expected at an event aimed at promoting literacy across Africa.

The event, Gardens of Hope for Africa: A benefit for books for Africa is scheduled to hold on November 10 in the United States.

The organisers said the event will have an in-person gathering and a free public livestream under the theme: 'Gardens of hope for Africa: Knowledge today.'

Williams, who is the Founder and Executive Producer of BAPS Animation Studios, is billed to present a session titled 'Akiti live: Yoruba storytelling and book signing.'

The session will include an interactive read-aloud of her Akiti the Hunter children's book series, which draws on Yoruba folklore and explores themes of cultural heritage, courage, imagination, and

heroism.

Williams described literacy as central to global development, cultural understanding and collaboration, noting that early childhood literacy is critical to growth, industrialisation and the promotion of positive societal values among young people.

She said: "Stories inspire, culture endures and children lead. Akiti was born from Yoruba tradition, and every time I get to share him with a room full of readers, I'm reminded that African storytelling doesn't just belong in the past; it belongs on today's stage, next to every other hero children look up to."

Organisers disclosed that donors have committed to funding a container of about 100,000 books each for Kenya, Nigeria and Ghana, amounting to about 300,000 books.

They said the November 10 event is intended to build on the initial commitment and expand global book ecosystems in the benefiting countries, while also seeking matching gifts to increase the impact of donations.

Rotary Club empowers 300 students with learning materials

By Adelowo Adebunmi

THE Rotary Club of Festac Town has donated educational materials to about 300 students at Festac Girls Secondary School and Christhill Schools in Amuwo Odofin, Lagos, as part of activities marking Rotary International's basic education and literacy month.

The students received exercise books, mathematical sets, dictionaries and past examination question papers to support their academic pursuits and examination preparation.

Speaking during the presentation, the President of the Rotary Club of Festac Town, McAnthony Echefu, said the initiative reflects the organisation's commitment to pro-

moting education and literacy among young people.

He said the club decided to focus on learning materials because they are basic tools that directly impact students' ability to learn, revise and prepare adequately for both internal and external examinations.

Echefu urged individuals, faith-based organisations and community groups to support education, noting that government alone cannot address the numerous challenges facing the sector.

He added that collaborative efforts from the private sector and civil society are needed to improve learning outcomes and expand access to quality education.

Nigeria at 66: The productivity of dignity

By Mohammed Manga

UNDER the baobab of Zazzau, where we last weighed the quiet architect, the elders have a second teaching. They say: “You do not know who is a good host until you have watched how he treats a guest who has nothing to offer.” They also say: “A home is not measured by the height of its fence, but by the softness of its welcome at a small door.”

There is a small door in every country that no anthem mentions. It is not the grand gate of parliament, nor the polished entrance of a central bank. It is the small counter where a mother asks for a certificate, where a graduate asks for a stamp, where a trader asks why a transfer failed. Nations are not judged by how loudly their drums beat at parades, but by how softly that small door opens when a citizen who has nothing to offer knocks.

Every human being has known that door. You have woken before dawn, folded your documents in a transparent file, rehearsed your greetings, arrived before the gate opens — and then you have waited while a system blinks and a stamp decides. In that waiting, something more than minutes is spent. What is spent is trust. And trust, once spent, is the most expensive currency a country can lose.

At independence, a country makes a quiet promise — that its people will no longer need to wait endlessly for what is rightfully theirs. That promise is not only freedom from foreign rule, but freedom from small, avoidable delays at home.

As Eleanor Roosevelt taught, “All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights.”

Dignity is not imported courtesy. It is the first promise of freedom. It is also a productive force. It is infrastructure — the invisible road on which all other roads travel.

Observing patterns over decades, one sees clearly that the next productivity revolution will not come from funding alone or commodity cycles, but from the simple, measurable decision to treat time as sacred and citizens as owners.

What does dignity produce? The evidence is verifiable

Estonia rebuilt after Soviet rule. Today 99 per cent of public services are online 24/7, filing taxes takes three minutes, and almost all banking is online. Its government reports digitisation saves over 1,400 years of working time and 2 per cent

of GDP annually. That saving was not from oil. It was from dignity at counters.

Kenya launched Huduma to ease access. Today, 57 centres employ 2,600 staff serving about 28,000 daily, offering 171 physical services and over 25,000 digital services, serving 15 million in the last year with 83 per cent satisfaction.

Portugal pioneered Citizen Shops where diverse services share one roof and satisfaction is tracked. One visit can complete several requests in under an hour.

If nations with far smaller populations transformed by respecting time at counters, Nigeria with approximately over 200 million enterprising citizens, the youngest workforce, and vast creativity can transform even more — turning courtesy into GDP, jobs, and trust.

The productivity of dignity begins by returning time, the poor man’s currency. A mother spends a whole day for a certificate that a verified portal could confirm in minutes. A trader spends a whole day to resolve a failed transfer that a responsive helpdesk could clear in ten minutes. A patient spends a whole day moving between the card room, lab and cashier for a result that a single window with status updates could deliver the same day.

As Benjamin Franklin reminded us, “Time is money.”

Beyond time, it restores trust and investment without roadshows. When cards are traceable, tokens reconcile instantly, permits arrive predictably, citizens believe. Trust once restored becomes capital that no roadshow can buy.

As Francis Fukuyama argued, “Trust is the expectation that arises within a community of regular, honest behaviour.”

As Warren Buffett warned, “It takes 20 years to build a reputation and five minutes to ruin it.”

Deeper still, it deepens citizenship — the quiet

feeling of belonging that trust creates. A young Nigerian who obtains a document without knowing someone at the top begins to believe he belongs, and belonging makes him stay and build.

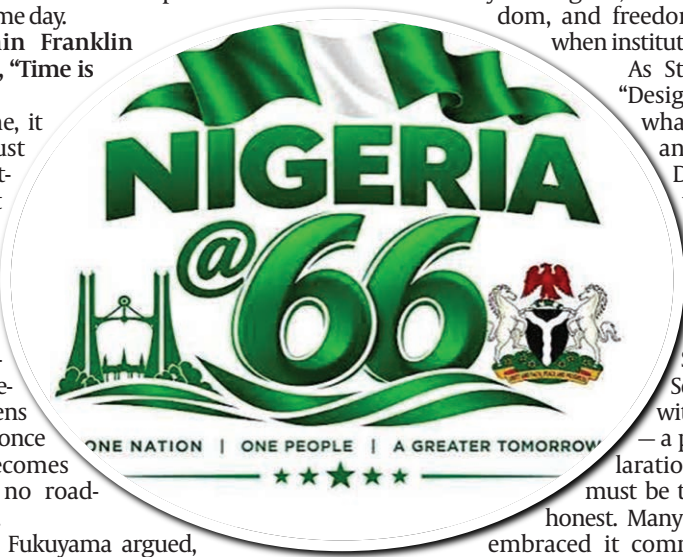
As Maya Angelou taught, “People may not remember exactly what you did, but they will always remember how you made them feel.”

Beyond belonging, it creates data, jobs and willing compliance across sectors. Dignified systems generate verifiable records and data replaces rumour in planning. When health records are traceable, lives are saved and absenteeism falls. When school records are transparent, learning improves. When farm inputs and extension services arrive predictably, yields rise and food prices stabilise. When energy metering is verifiable and renewable billing is clear, households and investors trust. When tourism visas and cultural permits are timely, hospitality grows. When graduates can register businesses on a portal in hours, they create jobs rather than queue for months. In each case, assets become capital, unemployment falls, GDP grows, poverty is alleviated.

As Amartya Sen argued, “Development is freedom, and freedom is only real when institutions deliver.”

As Steve Jobs said, “Design is not just what it looks like and feels like. Design is how it works.”

Nigeria understood this early. In 2004, Nigeria established SERVICOM — Service Compact with All Nigerians — a pioneering declaration that service must be timely, fair, and honest. Many agencies have embraced it commendably and become champions. At this milestone, the opportunity is to celebrate those champions and expand that spirit across public and private sectors. As Mahatma Gandhi taught, “A customer is the most important visitor on our premises. He



The altar of fire, a heart of meekness: Appraising Jerry Eze’s ministry

By Dan Aibangbe

THE Streams of Joy man, Pastor Jerry Eze, is a dynamic prayer general, a firebrand preacher and a versatile evangelist. Known for the iconic slogan, What God cannot do does not exist,

Pastor Jerry consistently demonstrates that God is still in the business of performing extraordinary wonders through men who remain upright, humble, and completely surrendered to Christ

In an era where spiritual leadership is frequently audited by the metrics of the world, true authority remains a matter of consecration, alignment, and divine endorsement. Few ministers in contemporary Christendom embody this reality as profoundly as Pastor Jerry Eze. Emerging as one of the most remarkable spiritual forces of our time, his life stands as a living testament to what happens when a man lays down professional prestige, yields fully to the Holy Spirit, and chooses a path of absolute consecration. From the corporate corridors of international development to the global stage of intercessory fire, Pastor Jerry Eze has redefined modern ministry, proving that signs and wonders are not the products of charisma, but the natural residue of a life lived in unbroken fellowship with God.

Before millions of believers across continents began tuning in every morning to the New Season Prophetic Prayers and Declarations (NSPPD),

Pastor Jerry Eze was building a promising career in international development. Serving as a communications specialist with high-profile global bodies, including the World Bank and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), he operated in environments that demanded high intellectual rigour, strategic diplomacy, and corporate finesse. Yet, the call of God was a burning fire that no career advancement could quench. Stepping away from the security and global prestige of world-class organisations, he made the ultimate pivot, trading corporate boardrooms for the place of prayer, corporate strategies for divine mandates, and professional accolades for the mandate to win souls. That decision marked the genesis of a spiritual awakening that now reverberates around the globe.

Mentored by the spiritual field marshal and legend of faith, Bishop David Oyedepo, pastor Jerry is doubtless one of a kind.

What makes him such an exceptional minister of the Gospel is his rare blend of spiritual authority and deep Christlike humility. He is a paradox of holy intensity and gentle grace. On the altar, he manifests a lion-like spiritual prowess, a man of unyielding, bold authority who confronts darkness and commands territorial shifts. His prayer style, widely recognised for its high-octane intensity, hits like a machine gun, releasing rapid, focused, and spirit-charged petitions

that shatter strongholds. Yet, when the prayer climax subsides, that same spiritual lion transitions effortlessly into a shepherd of profound meekness and soft disposition. His gentle nature, accessible persona, and absolute truthfulness reflect a servant who has never allowed the weight of global recognition to inflate his spirit.

This unique temperance is accompanied by an extraordinary prophetic gift characterised by surgical precision. Pastor Jerry does not trade in vague generalities or calculated guesses; his prophetic ministry cuts through spiritual cases with supernatural accuracy. He speaks into specific lives, situations, and medical diagnoses with details that leave audiences stunned and minds renewed. Yet, despite the staggering accuracy of his prophecies and the massive power evident in his ministrations, he guards his life with an uncompromising commitment to righteousness. In a generation where scandal often taints great gifts, Pastor Jerry stands as an impeccable individual, a young, vibrant man of God without a trace of financial, moral, or doctrinal scandal, living openly as a husband, father, and minister whose integrity remains unblemished.

At the core of this miraculous ministry is an unwavering passion for soul winning and a deep love for people.

He is a man with a larger-than-life vision, his heart softer than butter in compassion, always willing and ready

to help the needy.

Each year, he provides succour to widows by building homes for them. He has also invested hundreds of millions of naira into empowering young entrepreneurs to launch their own businesses. Today, his ministry continues to receive widespread global recognition for its transformative impact.

In honour of his contributions to humanity during the Covid 19 crisis, the State of Dallas unanimously conferred state citizenship on pastor Jerry.

Whether ministering to thousands in packed arenas during global crusades or speaking through a screen to millions joining the early morning NSPPD, his heart beats distinctly for the lost and the hurting. He does not merely lead prayers; he carries the burdens of his global congregation on his heart, interceding daily for families, nations, and struggling believers. He harbours a zero-tolerance policy toward sin, repeatedly preaching that power without purity is a tragic deception. He refrains from playing with sin in any form, constantly reminding believers that the true measure of spiritual strength is not just the miracles one works, but the holy life one lives before an all-seeing God.

Perhaps the secret behind the explosive signs, instant healings, and groundbreaking financial breakthroughs recorded on his platform lies in his personal discipline. Pastor Jerry Eze leads a lifestyle anchored in

deep sacrifice, relentless fasting, and rigorous personal holiness. He understands that spiritual authority is not gifted on the altar of compromise; it is forged in the secret place of consecration. His uprightness before God forms the bedrock upon which the supernatural rests. The abundant, undeniable testimonies that spill out of NSPPD daily - terminal diseases dissolved, hopeless medical cases reversed - are simply heaven’s response to a man who has refused to touch God’s glory or compromise His standards.

As a young, vibrant leader, Pastor Jerry Eze represents a fresh wave of divine revival. He has mobilised millions of viewers every single morning into a disciplined army of intercessors, uniting believers across different time zones, languages, and denominations. Ultimately, Pastor Jerry Eze stands as a profound testament to the power of a life fully surrendered to God, proving that true spiritual dominion is born not of human strategy, but of relentless consecration and genuine love for humanity. As he continues to kindle the fires of revival across the globe through his ministrations and his expansive humanitarian works, he remains an enduring beacon of hope, a general of faith whose uncompromised devotion bridges the gap between heaven and men, leaving an indelible imprint on this generation. *Dan Aibangbe is a Media & Public Relations Consultant*

Diseased organ, tissue donation bill scales first reading

From Adamu Abuh, Abuja

THE House of Representatives has passed for second reading a bill seeking to establish a national framework for deceased organ and tissue donation and transplantation, with provisions to protect patients, prevent organ trafficking and ensure equitable access to life-saving medical procedures.

The bill, sponsored by the Deputy Speaker, Benjamin Kalu, and six other lawmakers, was passed at plenary yesterday and referred to the relevant committee for further legislative action.

The proposed legislation seeks to regulate the entire process of deceased organ donation, from the identification and authorisation of potential donors to the recovery, preservation, allocation, and transplantation of organs and tissues.

It also provides for the establishment of a National Deceased Donation and Transplantation Authority to oversee the system, enforce standards and coordinate donation and transplantation activities across the country.

Leading the debate on the bill's general principles, one of its co-sponsors, Patrick Umoh, said organ and tissue donation offered a remarkable opportunity for one person's

Reps to make Nigeria drone manufacturing hub

death to give another person a chance at renewed life.

He, however, stressed that the process involved significant legal, ethical and medical responsibilities that required a

clear regulatory framework to protect donors, recipients and their families.

Umoh warned that the absence of an effective legal framework could expose vul-

nerable people to exploitation and undermine public confidence in organ donation.

ALSO, the lawmakers moved to position Nigeria as a regional and international hub for drone manufacturing, advancing a bill to establish a le-

gal and institutional framework for developing indigenous capacity to design, produce, and commercialise drone technology.

The bill, sponsored by the Deputy Speaker, Benjamin Kalu, and 12 other lawmakers, passed second reading during plenary yesterday.

Titled "A Bill for an Act to Provide for the Development, Promotion and Industrialisation of the Nigerian Drone Industry and for Related Matters," the proposed legislation seeks to reduce the country's dependence on imported drone technology by promoting local research, manufacturing, investment and skills development.

Leading the debate on the bill's general principles, one of its co-sponsors, Satomi Ahmad, said Nigeria needed a coordinated framework to translate technological innovations into commercially viable products that meet domestic demand and compete in international markets.

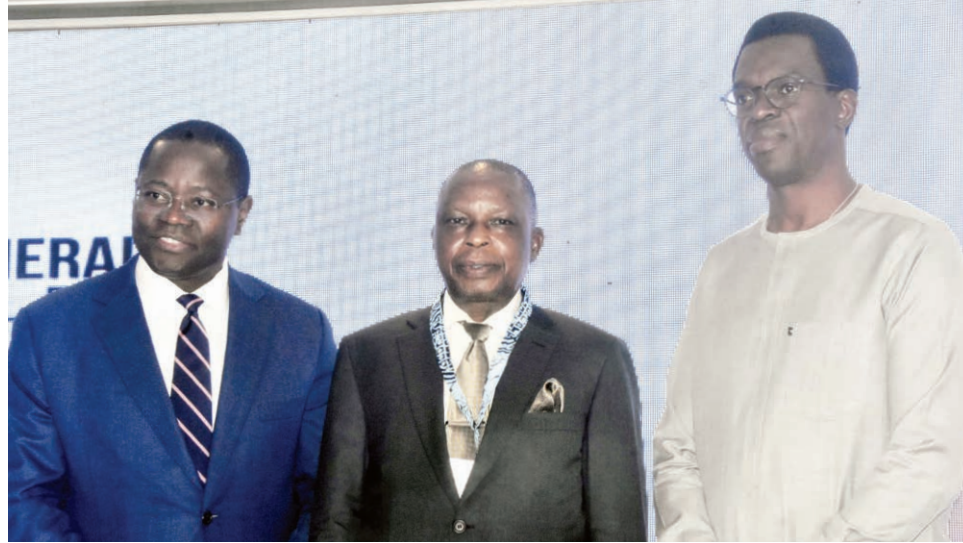
He said the legislation would promote indigenous research and development, strengthen local manufacturing capacity, attract investment, create jobs and position Nigeria as a competitive centre for drone production and related services.

Ahmad lamented that the country's dependence on imported technology was limiting opportunities for local innovation, employment generation and industrial growth.

He argued that without deliberate government support for manufacturing and commercialisation, indigenous enterprises could struggle to transform promising ideas into viable products.

The lawmaker urged his colleagues to support the bill, which he said would address these challenges through targeted incentives, government procurement preferences, innovation funding and local-content requirements.

He said: "The future belongs to nations that can transform technological innovation into industrial capacity, economic prosperity and national security."



Director-General, African Finance Corps, David Bamlango (left); Attorney General of the Federation and Minister of Justice, Lateef Fagbemi; and Director of the African Legal Support Facility, Oliver Pogon, during the African Attorneys General Roundtable in Abuja yesterday.

PHOTO: NAN

Anambra seeks N70b stabilisation fund to tackle erosion, insecurity

From Joseph Chibueze, Abuja

ANAMBRA State has sought N70 billion from the stabilisation fund to tackle insecurity, erosion, infrastructure deficits and mounting pressure on public services, as economic disruptions threaten livelihoods, government revenue and investor confidence.

The request, presented to the Revenue Mobilisation, Allocation and Fiscal Commission (RMAFC) in Abuja, comes as the state grapples with more than 1,000 erosion sites, rising public expenditure and disruptions to commercial activities across its major econom-

ic centres.

Presenting the state's case, the Secretary to the State Government, Chiamaka Nnake, said the proposed funding would support priority investments in security, environmental protection, healthcare, education, agriculture, solid minerals and tourism.

She disclosed that Anambra, with an estimated population of 8.9 million, a gross domestic product (GDP) of approximately \$12.7 billion and a projected 2026 budget of N766 billion, had increased its Internally Generated Revenue (IGR) from about N2.2 billion to

N7.2 billion.

However, she identified insecurity, flooding, erosion, inflation and rising public service costs as major constraints on the state's finances and economic development.

Nnake also said sit-at-home orders and restricted movement had disrupted commercial activities, weakened government revenue and undermined investor confidence in an economy driven by commercial and industrial centres such as Awka, Onitsha and Nnewi.

The request is now before RMAFC's Indices and Disbursement Committee for

technical assessment. The committee said it would scrutinise the state's financial records, project costs, feasibility and expected socioeconomic benefits before making any recommendation.

A major component of Anambra's funding request is environmental protection, with the state estimating that about N170 billion would be required to address identified critical erosion sites.

According to Nnake, more than 1,000 erosion sites have been identified across the state, affecting 146 communities at varying levels.

Max Shipping denies responsibility for Kula boat tragedy

From Ann Godwin, Port Harcourt

REACTIONS have continued to trail the reported deaths of 10 persons in a boat mishap in Kula Community, Rivers State, on Tuesday night.

Max Shipping Services Limited has expressed sadness over the incident, urging security agents to investigate the circumstances surrounding the tragedy.

The company, in a statement dated October 21, 2026, and signed by its legal officer, Ikeh Chidimma Sylvia, denied responsibility for the incident, insisting that its involvement in the area was limited to the ownership and retrieval of its vessel, ANAMBRA BASIN FSO, which it said was hired to Menal Technical Services Limited.

The incident reportedly occurred amid a dispute over oilfield operations at OML 55, following an alleged oil spill and community members' move to halt further operations pending remediation and compensation.

A Community elder, Anab Sara-Igbe, blamed the deaths of the youths on the alleged failure of the firm involved to peacefully resolve the oil spill dispute and commence remediation.

However, the firm, in the statement, said it was concerned about reports linking the vessel's recovery operation to the alleged deployment of armed personnel and the subsequent boat capsizing.

Oba of Benin receives looted artefact from Kingdom of Netherlands

From Joseph Kanjo, Benin

OBA of Benin, Ewuare II, has received another stolen artefact from the Kingdom of the Netherlands as a gift to mark his 10th coronation anniversary.

Executive Director of Museum de Fundatie Netherlands, Beatrice Von Bormann, presented the artefact in the pres-

ence of the Portuguese Ambassador to Nigeria, Mr Paulo Martins Santos. Bormann said she was happy to return the object that has been in the museum since 1937.

Bormann said an investigation traced production of the artefact to the 18th Century, saying the artefact has travelled round the world. She said it symbolised reincarnation and the

Olokun Deity.

Upon receiving the artefact, Oba Ewuare II recalled that his forebears had sought to adopt the Catholic faith introduced by the Portuguese in the 15th Century, stressing that the people stood firmly by their traditional worship.

Oba Ewuare II said the Benins have their spiritual portal to ascend communication to God.

80 million children exposed to lead poisoning in Nigeria, says FG

From Nkechi Onyedika-Ugoeze, Abuja

THE Federal Government has raised the alarm over the estimated 80 million Nigerian children exposed to lead poisoning and called for a decisive shift from detecting exposure to preventing it at its source.

Consequently, the government has unveiled a five-year strategic plan aimed at preventing and eliminating the threat posed by toxic substances to public health and the environment.

Speaking at the commemoration of the 2026 International Lead Poisoning Prevention Week on Wednesday in Abuja, the Minister of State for Health and Social Welfare, Dr

Launches five-year elimination plan

Adekunle Salako, said lead poisoning remained a major public health and environmental challenge in Nigeria, with potentially devastating and lasting consequences, particularly for children, pregnant women and women of child-bearing age.

According to the minister, individuals can be exposed to lead without showing immediate symptoms, making prevention, early identification and timely intervention critical to protecting vulnerable populations.

He said: "We cannot treat our way out of lead poisoning; we must prevent exposure wher-

ever possible."

Salako explained that the Federal Government was strengthening a multisectoral response through the Inter-Agency Working Group on Lead Poisoning Prevention and Elimination, which brings together relevant ministries, departments and agencies, development partners and other stakeholders.

He said the new strategic plan would provide a national framework for coordinated action to strengthen surveillance, address environmental and occupational sources of exposure, improve regulatory enforcement and establish clear-

er accountability mechanisms. The minister added that a costed three-year national roadmap was being developed to translate the plan's priorities into practical, time-bound and measurable interventions.

He urged state governments, regulatory agencies, development partners, industries, civil society organisations and communities to ensure the plan was implemented rather than left as a policy document.

Salako also identified Lagos, Ogun, Zamfara, and Sokoto as priority states for developing state-specific lead prevention and control action plans, reflecting the different sources and pathways of exposure across the country.

Tinubu to inaugurate PBAT Door-to-Door Movement's Abuja office

By Seye Olumide

THE First Lady, Oluremi Tinubu, will on Friday inaugurate the Abuja headquarters of the President Bola Ahmed Tinubu (PBAT) Door-to-Door Movement, as the group intensifies grassroots mobilisation for President Bola Tinubu's re-election bid in 2027.

In a statement, the National Coordinator of the movement, Sunday Adekanbi Asuku, said the inauguration would bring together the organisation's leaders, political stakeholders, coordinators and supporters.

The office is expected to serve as a strategic centre for coordinating the movement's activities in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) and supporting its nationwide mobilisation programme.

The movement is convened by High Chief Government Oweizide Ekpemupolo, popularly known as Tompolo, who serves as its Grand Patron. It aims to promote the Tinubu administration's Renewed Hope Agenda through direct engagement with residents and communities. Asuku said the inauguration would strengthen the organisation's grassroots network and improve coordination among its state, local council and ward structures ahead of the 2027 general election. The movement's strategy involves taking the administration's policies and programmes directly to households, markets, workplaces, religious centres and other community gathering points, while encouraging residents to express their concerns.

Court rejects withdrawal application in Offa robbery trial

From **Aramide Mansur**, Ilorin

KWARA State High Court sitting in Ilorin yesterday declined an application asking it to withdraw from the trial of suspects in the Offa robbery incident and return the case to the chief judge, ruling that the applicant did

Female drivers seek CNG conversion, inclusion in transport reforms

By **Isaac Chibuife**

AGainst the backdrop of high fuel costs cutting members' earnings, the Female Drivers Association of Nigeria (FEDAN) has requested inclusion in the federal government's Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) conversion programme and transport reforms.

Describing CNG as a cheaper alternative, FEDAN President, Eunice Odeghe, lamented in Abuja yesterday that none of the members had benefited from the CNG conversion programme.

According to her, "Sometimes you buy fuel for N30,000, and it gives you just a few litres. You travel long distances and may get only two passengers, paying less than N1,000. You cannot make ends meet."

Odeghe said women were ready for training and vehicle conversion, with about 200 women trained from scratch, while others joined afterwards, adding that a few members had already converted theirs at their own cost.

She further called for more CNG stations, regretting that drivers spend up to six hours in queues, just as the recently announced fare reductions for commercial drivers at the NNPC stations were a good idea but were poorly implemented.

Emir hails Tinubu's completion of Buhari's projects

From **Murtala Adewale**, Katsina

THE Emir of Daura, Umar Faruq, has backed President Bola Tinubu for re-election in 2027, saying that he is not an enemy of the North and has demonstrated unwavering commitment to developing the region.

He listed the projects to include the completion of critical capital projects that were initiated by the late President Muhammadu Buhari.

The monarch, who spoke in Kano yesterday during the commissioning of the third section of the N252.89 billion, 118-kilometre Abuja-Kaduna-Zaria federal highway, described Tinubu as an epitome of a true Nigerian who wants the progress of the country.

not show sufficient grounds for recusal and reassignment.

The case, presided over by Justice Olalekan Ajayi, involves a former Senate President, Dr Bukola Saraki, former governor of the state, Abdulfatah Ahmed, his former chief of staff, Yusuf Abdulwahab, and his former political aide, Alabi Olalekan.

In a motion on notice by the defence lawyers, led by Mr Kamaldeen Ajibade, SAN, counsel to Saraki had alleged a likelihood of bias, pointing to the court's earlier involvement with the facts of a civil suit arising from the same subject matter.

The counsel argued that, while Saraki and Ahmed are the first and second defen-

dants in the present criminal proceedings, they were the third and fourth defendants in the civil matter, with the principal issues for determination in the civil suit substantially intertwined with the allegations that were yet to be determined in the instant criminal charge.

However, after reviewing the application, the support-

ing affidavit and counter-affidavit, the court struck out certain paragraphs of both affidavits for failing to comply with Section 115 of the Evidence Act, which governs affidavit evidence.

Applying the test set out by the Supreme Court in *Sifax Nig. Ltd v. Phoenix Capital Ltd*, the court also held that, in particular, the applicant did not show how the court's continued hearing of the charge would create real or apparent bias in the eyes of a reasonable and informed observer.

Consequently, the court raised, suo motu (of its own accord), the question of whether the trial had already commenced. It then adjourned the matter to November 5, 2026, to allow the parties to address it on that point.

Saraki and others were allegedly linked to the case, with reports saying that the victims of the Offa robbery later sued the Kwara State Government and Ahmed in civil proceedings, arguing that Saraki and Ahmed should be prosecuted.



Senior Special Assistant to the President on Technical, Vocational and Entrepreneurship Education (TVEE), Dr Abiola Arogundade (left); with the Special Adviser to the President on Homeland Security, Maj.-Gen. Adeyinka Famadewa (rtd), after a meeting on the non-kinetic approach to insecurity in Nigeria, at the Presidential Villa in Abuja, yesterday. PHOTO: NAN

Tinubu, Obi, Yusuf celebrate Kwankwaso at 70

From **John Akubo**, Abuja

PRESIDENT Bola Tinubu has congratulated the presidential candidate of the Nigeria Democratic Congress (NDC), Senator Rabiu Kwankwaso, on his 70th birthday, saying their political differences would not diminish his affection for the former governor of Kano State.

In a birthday message yesterday by his Spokesman, Bayo Onanuga, Tinubu described the former minister of defence as a longstanding associate whose political relationship dated back to their time in the National Assembly in 1992, till they became governors in 1999.

He noted that their political paths had differed over the years before they came together in 2013 to form the All Progressives Congress (APC), describing him as an influential figure in Nigerian politics.

For his part, the presidential candidate of the NDC, Peter Obi, said he values his relationship with Kwankwaso, particularly their shared conversations and common commitment to the country's development.

In his birthday message, Obi acknowledged Kwankwaso's decades of public service, stating that the milestone was an oppor-

tunity to reflect on a life devoted to public service, the lessons of experience, and the possibilities that lie ahead.

Praying for God's blessings, good health, renewed strength and wisdom for the celebrant, the former governor of Anambra State disclosed that their relationship was strengthened by a shared vision of a country where every citizen could access opportunities, live in security and enjoy dignity.

Also, Kano State Governor, Abba Yusuf, described Kwankwaso's 70-year milestone as an important occasion to celebrate his life, leadership and contribu-

tions to the development of Kano in particular and Nigeria as a whole.

Acknowledging the former governor's role in the state's political development, Yusuf noted that the birthday provided an opportunity to reflect on the NDC vice-presidential candidate's years of public service and contributions to governance, infrastructure development and the growth of democratic participation in Kano.

He prayed to Almighty Allah to grant Kwankwaso good health, long life and renewed strength to continue contributing to the development of the state and the nation.

Wike pitches Tinubu's infrastructure, reforms as opposition kicks

From **Azimazi Momoh Jimoh**, Abuja

THE Minister of the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Nyesom Wike, has identified infrastructure development and administrative reforms under President Bola Tinubu's administration as key advantages in the ruling All Progressives Congress (APC) bid for re-election in 2027.

Wike, who is also the coordinator of the FCT Presidential Campaign Council, said the administration's projects and achievements would form the basis of its campaign, insisting that its performance, rather than political promises, would be presented to voters.

In the meantime, a faction of the People's Democratic Party (PDP), led by former Minister of Special Duties and Inter-Governmental Affairs, Kabiru

• Rainbow Coalition, threat to democracy, says PDP faction

Turaki, has urged party members to disregard Wike's Rainbow Coalition being organised to campaign for Tinubu's re-election.

Insisting that opposition parties should offer Nigerians an alternative to the incumbent government rather than praise it, the spokesperson, Ini Ememobong, described the coalition as a major threat to electoral democracy, warning that it could push Nigeria towards an electoral monarchy.

Speaking yesterday at the Rainbow Coalition stakeholders' meeting in Abuja, the minister expressed confidence that the FCT and Rivers State, where he disclosed an assigned responsibility to coordinate the president's re-

election, would deliver their votes to Tinubu in the January 16, 2027 election.

According to Wike, the administration's record in the FCT, particularly in infrastructure, security and institutional reforms, would strengthen its appeal to residents ahead of the election.

The reforms, he noted, included addressing the longstanding concerns over the representation of FCT indigenes in governance, as well as their opportunities for career advancement in the civil service.

Among others, Wike said the establishment of the FCT Civil Service Commission, the appointment of permanent secretaries, and the emergence of a head of service had created opportunities for

workers to advance to the highest levels of their careers.

However, Ememobong argued in a statement yesterday that "the paramount duty of the opposition is to provide an alternative to the incumbent, not to massage their ego. If opposition parties are to ally, they will do so among themselves, not with the governing party."

The faction also criticised Wike for urging PDP members to collapse their political structures for Tinubu's re-election, describing the move as shameful. Rather, it urged party members to remain loyal to the PDP as the group awaits a Court of Appeal judgment in its bid to take over the party's leadership.

Bauchi APM suspends chairman as Matawalle gifts cars to returning APC lawmakers

From **Rauf Oyewole** (Bauchi) and **Tunde Omolehin** (Sokoto)

CRISIS is brewing in the Bauchi State chapter of the ruling Allied People's Movement (APM) following the party's removal of the state chairman, Auwal Isah, and installation of Nasiru Marafa in an interim capacity.

Leading other party executives, the state APM Secretary, Mohammed Yahaya, told a news conference yesterday that Isah's removal followed a loss of confidence in his leadership due to actions allegedly inconsistent with the party's constitution.

Yahaya listed the other reasons to include a "lack of financial accountability, absence of proper meeting records, operating without an official party bank account, and unconstitutional handling of party affairs."

Meanwhile, the Minister of State for Defence, Bello Matawalle, has provided vehicles for the eight Zamfara State House of Assembly lawmakers who recently returned to the All Progressives Congress (APC) after a political disagreement.

Presenting the vehicles, the Managing Director of the Nigeria Agricultural Insurance Corporation (NAIC), Yazid Danfulani, said it was part of Matawalle's efforts to promote unity, cohesion and political understanding among APC stakeholders in the state.

Dangote Cement charges drivers on safety

By **Opeyemi Babalola**

IN the drive for safety-consciousness, the Group Managing Director of Dangote Cement Plc, Arvind Pathak, has urged the company's drivers to always make safety their foremost priority, warning that "no delivery is worth a life."

Speaking during the company's 2026 Drivers' Safety Retreat for Ibese Plant drivers, held at Ibese in Ogun State, Pathak stressed that while drivers remain critical to the success of Dangote Cement's nationwide distribution network, their well-being and safe return after every journey matter even more.

Pathak, speaking on the theme, "Think Safety, Act Safely," reminded participants that they represent the brand on the highways and are responsible for extending that duty beyond transporting the product.

Nevertheless, he assured that the company would continue to invest in initiatives that support drivers' welfare, capacity development and safer transport operations, noting that drivers remain indispensable partners in its growth journey.



WAFU B Women's Champions League Qualifier

CAF takes Edo Queens, Ampem Darkoa replay to Egypt

By Christian Okpara

INSTEAD of the previously advertised Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, the Confederation of African Football (CAF) has directed Edo Queens and Ghana's Ampem Darkoa to play the continuation of their WAFU Zone B qualifying final in Egypt on October 28 or 29, 2026.

In a letter addressed to both clubs, CAF referenced the WAFU Zone B qualifying final played on September 5, 2026, and the subsequent decisions of the CAF Organising Committee for Women's Football dated September 26, 2026 and the CAF Appeal Board dated October 16, 2026.

According to CAF, the match will resume from the start of extra time with the score at 2-2, with two periods of 15 minutes to be played, followed by a penalty shoot-out if the score remains level.

CAF also confirmed that match officials different from those appointed for the original match will be appointed for the continuation.

It said that it would confirm the exact date, venue and kick-off time to the clubs shortly.

The decision follows the annulment of Edo Queens' 4-1 penalty shootout victory after Ampem Darkoa successfully protested, with the winner of the extra-time replay set to represent WAFU B at the CAF Women's

Champions League Egypt 2026.

The winner of the game will play in Group B of the CAF Women's Champions League alongside Moroccan giants AS FAR, USFAS Bamako from Mali and Kawempe Muslim Ladies from Uganda.

The tournament is scheduled to be played in Egypt from November 1 to November 15, 2026.

FIBA Zone Three African Women's Basketball League Qualifying Tourney

MFM, First Bank battle four others for tickets in Monrovia

By Christian Okpara

NIGERIA'S representatives, MFM Basketball Club and First Bank BC, have been pitted against four other West African teams in the race for the two African Women's Basketball League (AWBL) tickets available in the qualifying tournament billed to hold in Monrovia, Liberia, from November 2 to 9.

The FIBA Africa Zone Three qualifiers will hold at the Samuel Kanyon Doe (SKD) Indoor Gymnasium in

Paynesville, where the participating teams will face a demanding week in which every result could prove decisive in their quest to reach the continental finals in Cairo, Egypt, scheduled for December 11 to 19.

Like Nigeria, the host country, Liberia, will have two representatives in the contest, including the domestic league's second-placed team, Flames Basketball Club, and reigning national champions, D'Rockers Basketball Club.

Other teams in the contest are FIBA Zone Three defending champion, Côte d'Ivoire's Friends of Basketball Association (FBA), and Benin Republic's Energie Basketball Club of Cotonou.



MFM and First Bank will fly Nigeria's flag at the FIBA Zone Three African Women's Basketball League Qualifying Tourney in Liberia next month.

Taekwondo: Korean Ambassador's Cup begins today in Abuja

From Ernest Nzor, Abuja

SOME of the best athletes in taekwondo will converge in Abuja to vie for honours in the two-day Korean Ambassador's Cup, which starts today at the MKO Abiola National Stadium.

Under the leadership of Ambassador Yo-an Jeong, the Korean Ambassador's Cup, the 14th in the series, will be a big global event that will be conducted in accor-

dance with world best practices in Taekwondo.

According to the president of the Taekwondo Federation of Nigeria, Tayo Popoola, the event will start at the sports hall of the MKO Abiola National Stadium, Abuja and end at the MO ARENA also in Abuja.

The event will begin today with the classification of para-athletes (special athletes) billed to attend the World Para Championship. This will be supervised by officials of World Taekwondo.

CAF names MEL, MBS broadcast rights holder for 2027 AFCON

By Gowon Akpodonor

THE Confederation of African Football (CAF) has named Media Experts Limited (MEL) and Media Business Solutions UK Ltd (MBS) as the exclusive Free-to-air broadcast rights holders for the 2027 Africa Cup of Nations and other CAF events up to 2027, starting with ongoing qualification matches across Sub-Saharan Africa.

The international partnership brings Africa's biggest football tournament to 500 million homes on a free-to-access basis in at least 40 countries, including South Africa, Nigeria, Ghana, Tanzania, Kenya, Congo DRC, Senegal, Angola, and Ethiopia.

The 2027 AFCON will be co-hosted by Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania.

The appointment follows a competitive invitation to tender launched by CAF in August 2026 for free-to-air and Pay-TV rights across the region. It completes the broadcast picture for the tournament in sub-Saharan Africa alongside the Pay-TV agreement announced earlier this month.

Friends honour Bode Augusto with golf tourney

By Eniola Daniel

FRIENDS and associates of the late renowned financial expert, Bode Augusto, will gather at the golf section of Ikoyi Club 1938, today, for a memorial charity golf tournament organised under the auspices of The Friends of Bode Augusto Foundation (FOBA).

The event is designed to celebrate Augusto's life, professional accomplishments and enduring commitment to causes that positively impact society.

Chairman of the Organising Committee and former Captain of the Golf Section of Ikoyi Club 1938, Tony Onwu, said the response from the golfing community reflects the high regard in which Augusto was held.

"We are delighted that so many of Bode's friends within and outside the golfing community have embraced the opportunity to celebrate his legacy. Beyond his outstanding professional accomplishments, he built relationships and touched lives, and this tournament allows us to remember him through a game and community he cherished," Onwu said.

Nigeria joins others at pre-Olympic Games meeting in Los Angeles

By Gowon Akpodonor

NIGERIA has joined representatives of Nations and Olympic stakeholders in Los Angeles, United States, for the pre-Games meeting ahead of the 2028 Olympic Games, marking a significant step in preparations for the next edition of the world's biggest sporting event.

Nigeria was represented at the meeting by the Director General of the National Sports Commission (NSC), Bukola Olopade, and the President of the Nigeria Olympic Committee (NOC), Habu Gumel.

The meeting provides an important platform for participating nations and Olympic stakeholders to engage with organisers, exchange information and begin aligning their preparations for Los Angeles 2028.

Solution

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