

EFCC recovers additional \$40m in ongoing Nestoil investigation, total recovery hits \$100m

ADVERTORIAL

THE Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), Lagos Zonal Directorate 2, has recorded another major breakthrough in its ongoing investigation involving Nestoil Limited, Neconde Energy Limited and a consortium of lenders, with the recovery of an additional US\$40 million in favour of the Banks.

The latest recovery, made on Monday, October 19, 2026, brings the total amount recovered in the course of the investigation and ongoing repayment process to US\$100 million. The development follows the earlier recovery of US\$60 million, which was reported on Monday, August 17, 2026.

Though the media department of the EFCC could not be reached to comment on this landmark recovery, the lenders opined that the additional US\$40 million represents a significant step forward in the recovery process.

The ongoing investigation centres on certain financial transactions involving Nestoil Limited, Neconde Energy Limited and a consortium of lenders. The EFCC's intervention has, among other objectives, focused on facilitating the recovery of outstanding obligations owed to the lenders while simultaneously safeguarding the interests of depositors in the various banks. Following a meeting chaired by the Executive Chairman of the

EFCC, Mr. Olanipekun Olukoyede, a structured repayment arrangement was reached between Nestoil and the consortium of lenders. The agreement provided a framework for the orderly repayment of the outstanding indebtedness, subject to the terms agreed by the parties and the applicable laws.

The first tranche of US\$60 million was subsequently paid to the lenders, while the latest payment of US\$40 million brings the cumulative recovery under the arrangement to US\$100 million.

The consortium of lenders is happy and has welcomed the

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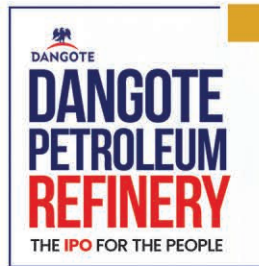


Dangote Refinery IPO hits \$1.6b, attracts investors from 120 countries

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Pioneer Authority Chief Executive (ACE), Nigerian Midstream and Downstream Petroleum Regulatory Authority (NMDPRA), Engineer Farouk Ahmed (left), who bagged the 'OTL Special Award' at the ongoing 20th OTL Africa Downstream Energy Conference and Exhibition in Lagos; founder and Vice Chairman of OTL Africa Downstream, Emeka Akabogu, SAN; former Executive Secretary, Petroleum Products Pricing Regulatory Agency (PPPRA), Mr. Reginald Stanley and Chief Executive of Rain Oil and Gas, Chief Gabriel Ogbachie OON at the 20th OTL Africa Downstream Energy Week holding in Lagos.



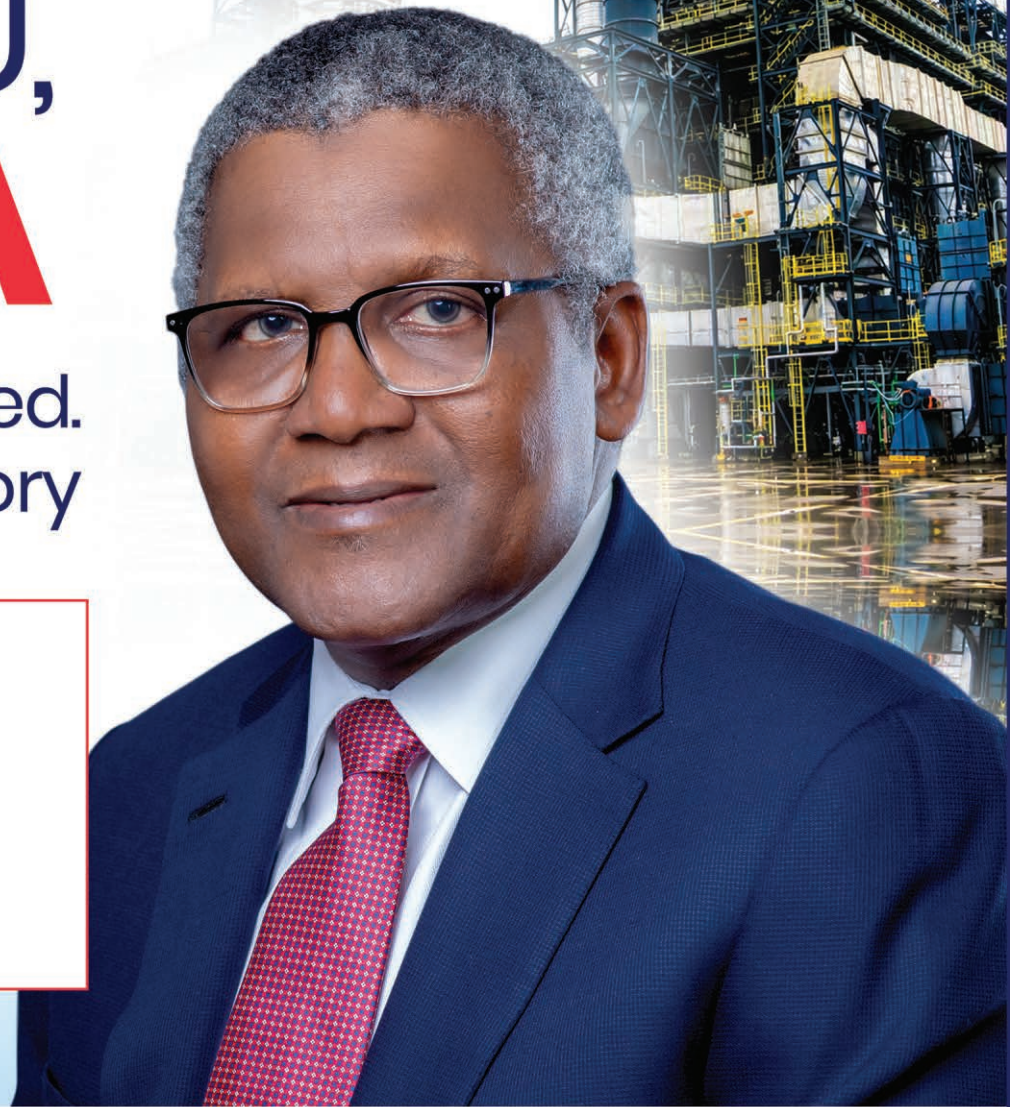
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CSOs doubt INEC, police neutrality, launch data monitoring platform

From Kehinde Olatunji (Lagos), John Akubo, Joke Falaju and Sodiq Omolayo (Abuja)

As the 2027 general elections inch closer, Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) are putting together measures to ensure a credible election that will be acceptable to the majority of voters.

But they are not confident that officials of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) and the police will remain unbiased as they are meant to be.

Raising concerns over alleged

- Seek two-hour deadline for IReV uploads
- Utomi, others raise concern over suspected AI-generated images in voter register

political partisanship within the electoral system and the security agencies, Concerned Citizens for Nigerian Democracy (CCND) warned that declining public confidence in the 2027 elections could threaten Nigeria's stability.

To address the issue, the CSOs launched the Nigeria Election Data Observatory (NEDO) consortium to strengthen independent election observation, data sharing and electoral transparency.

They also urged INEC to upload

polling-unit results to its Result Viewing Portal, IReV, within two hours of counting during the elections.

Also, political economist, Prof. Pat Utomi, raised concerns over the credibility of the country's electoral process following the discovery of photographs suspected to have been generated by Artificial Intelligence (AI) in INEC's online voter register.

CCND called on INEC to investigate allegations of political affiliations among some

electoral personnel and demanded that security agencies guarantee all candidates equal access to campaign venues.

At a briefing in Abuja yesterday, CCND co-convenor, Kingdom Okere, accused the political establishment of failing Nigerians and warned that the country could face another political crisis if the credibility of the electoral process was compromised.

He said the All Progressives Congress (APC), which came to

power on a promise of change, had left many Nigerians questioning the direction of the country.

"Thirteen years ago, the APC deceived Nigerians with the promise of change. What Nigerians are experiencing today is something difficult to describe," he said, adding that the situation had become an "abracadabra" for many citizens.

But the group's central warning was directed at the institutions responsible for delivering

and securing the 2027 elections.

Okere alleged that concerns had emerged over the political affiliations of some INEC personnel, particularly those serving in sensitive information technology and election-monitoring departments.

He also questioned whether some recently recruited ad hoc electoral workers had political affiliations that could compromise their neutrality.

Read the remaining story on www.guardian.ng

Adesina, Tompolo hail Tinubu's reforms, back re-election

By Seye Oluvide

FORMER President of the African Development Bank (AfDB), Dr Akinwumi Adesina, has commended President Bola Tinubu's economic reforms, declaring that the administration's difficult policy decisions are beginning to yield positive results, particularly in foreign exchange availability, investment inflows and declining inflation.

In the same vein, Government Ekpemupolo, popularly known as Tompolo, mobilised support for Tinubu's re-election in Imo State, declaring that the President means well for Nigeria and deserves another four years to consolidate his administration's reforms.

Tompolo made the declaration on Tuesday at the inauguration of the PBAT Door-to-Door Movement in Imo, where he donated 30 vehicles to facilitate grassroots mobilisation for Tinubu's re-election.

Adesina, after meeting Tinubu at the State House, Abuja, yesterday, told journalists that the removal of the petrol subsidy and the harmonisation of foreign exchange windows were necessary reforms that had begun to restore international confidence in Nigeria's economy.

The former AfDB chief, who recently completed his 10-year tenure at the continental financial institution, also said he was ready to support the President's economic transformation agenda in any capacity, stressing that he was not seeking political appointment.

Commending the administration's economic policies, Adesina said, "I used the opportunity to also commend him on the reforms that he's been doing, both in terms of the macroeconomic reforms with the fuel subsidy and also the harmonisation of the exchange rate windows. These are very important, difficult reforms, but they are beginning to bear some fruit, quite some fruit."



President Bola Tinubu (right) with the former President of African Development Bank Group, Akinwumi Adesina, at the Presidential Villa, Abuja, yesterday

Reasons Wike shunned APC, by ally

From Leo Sobechi, Abuja

Says unless we win, party may implode

THE fighting within the Nigeria Governors' Forum (NGF) and calculations towards the 2031 election cycle have been advanced as chief reasons the Minister of Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Nyesom Wike, refused to join the ruling All Progressives Congress (APC). Wike has been working for the reelection of APC's presidential candidate, President Bola Tinubu.

A close ally of the FCT Minister and governor of a Northern state told *The Guardian* that last Saturday's flag-off of the APC Presidential Campaign Council (PCC) in Kaduna State proved that "all was not well with us."

Speaking on condition of strictest confidence, he recalled that the off-cycle Osun State governorship election exposed how far the disunity among the Progressives Governors' Forum (PGF) has gone, regretting that the same division played out both in the outing and choice of Kaduna as venue for the presidential campaign.

Contrasting the Kaduna cam-

paign flag-off and the inauguration of the expanded PCC at the Presidential Villa, the governor said it has become obvious that cohorts in the Rainbow Coalition were the ones providing excitement for President Tinubu's re-election campaigns.

Vice President Kashim Shettima had pleaded with APC governors to avoid working at cross-purposes with other stakeholders, saying the party must fight as a united family to repeat the 2023 electoral triumph in the presidential ballot.

But the governor explained that the cleavages among the state governors followed speculations that the Vice President may be dropped from the APC presidential ticket, adding that some governors loyal to the VP banded together with the Chairman of PGF, Governor Hope Uzodinma of Imo State, to stonewall any attempt to drop the former Borno State governor.

On the issue of Rainbow Coalition, the governor disclosed that attempts to bring Wike

into the party failed because the FCT Minister did not want to have close political association with some of the APC governors, adding that the crises between the Rivers State governor and the House of Assembly made matters worse.

He stated: "Some of us close to Wike actually tried to bring him into APC, but he gave his reasons. As a politician, he is entitled to his own calculations. However, the alliances and realignments for the 2027 election caused three distinct groups among the governors. "You have the Shettima group led by Uzodinma, the Lagos caucus headed by Dapo Abiodun. Here in the North, those from the North-West, who think they are entitled to the Presidency, also formed their own bloc. Of course, the nomination of Senator Yari to head the PCC was an attempt to assuage the feelings of alienation by the North-East group."

Read the remaining story on www.guardian.ng

FG to begin minimum wage talks with NLC, approves N70,000 transport allowance

Tinubu urged to settle unpaid subsidy-removal relief for pensioners

From Gloria Nwafor (Lagos), Collins Olayinka and Sodiq Omolayo (Abuja)

THE Federal Government and the Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC) have agreed to immediately constitute a Minimum Wage Negotiation Committee, while approving a N70,000 monthly transport intervention for workers for six months beginning November 2026.

However, both parties have yet to resolve their disagreement over the effective date for implementing a new national minimum wage, following a conciliation meeting convened by the Federal Ministry of Labour and Employment in Abuja yesterday.

This was as the Federal Parastatals and Private Sector Pensioners Association of Nigeria (FEPPPAN) urged President Bola Tinubu to direct the payment of three months' N25,000 subsidy-removal palliatives for vulnerable citizens.

The resolutions, reached at the meeting between the Federal Government and NLC leadership, also provided for the payment of outstanding peculiar allowances to eligible public servants in three monthly instalments beginning in November, as well as the settlement of 19 months' arrears of allowances owed to health workers within three months from December 2026.

This comes amid mounting pressure from organised labour for urgent measures to address the rising cost of living and improve workers' purchasing power.

According to the resolutions

signed by representatives of both parties, the Minimum Wage Negotiation Committee is to be constituted and commence meetings immediately, although the disagreement over the effective date of implementation remains unresolved.

The development leaves the commencement of negotiations as the immediate step towards addressing workers' demands, while the implementation timeline remains a contentious issue between government and labour.

The conciliation meeting followed an earlier meeting last Thursday after the NLC expressed concerns over the Federal Government's handling of demands relating to workers' welfare.

The issues considered included the commencement of minimum wage discussions, reduction in petrol pump prices, palliatives to cushion the impact of economic challenges on workers, public service welfare, the adjustment of the Consolidated Health Salary Structure (CONHESS), tax relief and hazard allowances for agricultural workers.

On the transport intervention, the government agreed that N70,000 would be paid monthly across all levels for six months, commencing in November 2026.

The resolution did not specify the detailed payment mechanism or whether the intervention would be extended beyond the six months.

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News Analysis

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How one-chance robbers turn Abuja roads into dangerous zones

Leaving home in Abuja to earn a living has become a gamble for many residents. A journey on what appears to be an ordinary commercial vehicle could end in robbery, abduction, serious injury or even death. In this report, AZIMAZI MOMOH JIMOH and TINA ABEKU examine how the growing menace is eroding public confidence despite renewed security measures.

GRACE Godwin, a 23-year-old petrol station attendant, left home for work in July 2025 like thousands of young Abuja residents seeking an honest living. She never returned.

Her body was later discovered along the Jabi axis, with relatives alleging she was murdered by suspected “one chance” robbers, who disguise as commercial transport operators to rob unsuspecting passengers.

Weeks later, another tragedy unfolded. Freda Arnong, a Ghanaian national, died at the National Hospital, Abuja, after she was allegedly assaulted and pushed from a moving vehicle by suspected “one chance” operators.

Witnesses said she boarded what appeared to be a legitimate commercial vehicle, unaware she had entered a deadly trap.

According to a police record released by the FCT Police Command’s spokesperson, Josephine Adeh, on January 5, 2026, at about 5:50 p.m., a legal practitioner, Mediatrix Chigbo, was killed after she “unknowingly boarded a black Volkswagen Golf 3 vehicle along the Kubwa Expressway, unaware that the occupants were criminals”.

Although Police had tracked the victim’s mobile phone and conducted follow-up operations at Dei-Dei, Dakwa, and Dan-Tata communities within Kubwa Area of the FCT while arresting three suspects, it was only medicine after death for the family of Chigbo.

For survivors, however, the statistics represent deeply personal experiences, as Umar Musa, who lives in Mararaba, Nasarawa State, recalled how he was attacked after boarding what appeared to be an ordinary commercial vehicle while travelling from the Zuba area of the capital city.

He said: “There was a driver, one passenger in front with bags and another sitting beside me at the back. Nothing looked suspicious until the vehicle started moving.”

Moments later, he realised his mobile phone had disappeared.

“The man a



beside me suddenly attacked me. They slapped and beat me before pointing a gun at my head,” Musa said.

The attackers restrained him and forced him to transfer N500,000 from his bank account before using his ATM card to withdraw additional funds.

“They dumped me by the roadside and threatened to kill me if I looked back,” he recalled.

The experience changed his perception of safety, stressing, “I never believed this could happen until it happened to me. They looked completely normal.”

Three days later, Musa said his brother was robbed by another criminal gang posing as security personnel along the Gwarinpa-Zuba Road.

“They wore camouflage uniforms and carried identification cards. They stole phones, a laptop and about N3.5 million that had just been withdrawn from the bank.”

Security experts attribute the persistence of “one chance” crime to a combination of factors, including weak regulation of commercial transport, rapid urban expansion, unemployment, and inadequate surveillance of informal transport routes.

Designed as a planned city with wide roads, organised districts and modern infrastructure, Abuja was expected to offer residents a sense of safety befitting Nigeria’s capital. Instead, fear shadows routine journeys, and residents are not returning to their loved ones.

From Jabi to Kubwa, Lugbe to Wuye, commuters don’t know whether the vehicle they board will return them home or end their lives. They are vulnerable and traumatised by stories of passengers drugged, assaulted, robbed, or abandoned by the roadside, especially as what used to be an occasional incident becomes normalised.

In 2024, the Federal Capital Territory Police Command said that it arrested 71 suspects in connection with “one-chance” robbery.

In 2025, the command did not give a single, specific number of “one-chance” robbers arrested, but it typically parades suspects in batches after specific raids. The command in May 2025 intercepted a major syndicate planning an operation around the Maitama area, resulting in eight suspects being arrested and one neutralised during a gun duel.

In October 2025, police operatives from the Life Camp Division launched a tactical operation in Dape

Village, resulting in the arrest of four “one-chance” robbers and the rescue of two victims who were being held for a N1,000,000 ransom.

This year, the FCT Police Command has arrested dozens of individuals suspected of “one-chance” robbery in separate operations across its jurisdiction, even though a cumulative annual total has not been officially released.

From the specific announcements made so far this year, over 20 suspects have been arrested by the police. The command has equally recorded a high number of kidnapping cases, while fraud remained the most frequently reported offence.

All these incidents hint at entrenched crime on the nation’s roads and how unregulated public transportation has left Abuja residents, especially vulnerable children, exposed.

Security experts at Human Rights Writers Association of Nigeria (HURIWA) believe the true scale may be considerably higher because many victims never report their experiences.

“If the police recorded 268 cases in 2024, the actual figure is likely much higher,” an Abuja-based security analyst, who pleaded anonymity, said.

“One-chance syndicates have become more organised and increasingly violent, targeting everyone from students and young professionals to lawyers and civil servants,” he added.

For many commuters, like Aisha Mohammed, a civil servant living in Kubwa, the fear has become part of everyday life.

“Once it gets late and buses become scarce, you begin calculating your risks. You know you shouldn’t enter just any vehicle, but

when you’ve been stranded for hours and need to get home, desperation can make you vulnerable. That is when they strike,” she said.

As police investigate one incident, another will happen, and the last will be overtaken.

The spokesperson for the FCT Police Command, Josephine Adeh, confirmed that investigations into the deaths of a school nurse, Patricia Chinyere Anaele and lawyer Princess Mediatrix Nwamaka Chigbo were ongoing, showing the complexity of the investigations, which may never bring good news to the victims and their loved ones.

According to Abuja-based security consultant, Patrick Agbambu, the growing menace exposes significant weaknesses in the capital’s internal security architecture.

“Abuja should be among the safest cities in Nigeria, yet this problem has persisted for years.

“More recently, reports of bandits operating around satellite communities have compound-



ed existing security concerns. Now, one-chance operators appear to be becoming even more active,” he said.

Agbambu argued that intelligence-led policing, undercover operations and a stronger presence of plain-clothes officers along identified flashpoints would be more effective than reactive policing alone.

“Closing the gaps within the transport system will significantly improve security across the FCT.”

HURIWA, led by Emmanuel Onwubiko, said when citizens cannot commute safely, confidence in government inevitably suffers.

Onwubiko said: “Insecurity affects livelihoods, increases anxiety and compounds the economic difficulties many families are already facing.”

The body proposed several measures to curb the growing menace, including stronger regulation of commercial transport and the digital profiling of drivers, adding that it endorsed the FCT Administration’s vehicle profiling initiative, describing it as an important step towards identifying criminals who operate under the guise of commercial drivers.

According to the organisation, the profiling exercise should also cover taxi and bus operators entering Abuja from neighbouring states to close existing security gaps.

It argued that combining vehicle profiling, digital monitoring, inter-agency collaboration, and a comprehensive driver database could significantly reduce “one chance” operations while restoring public confidence in the capital’s transport system.

The Federal Capital Territory Administration (FCTA) insists it is responding with a comprehensive strategy that extends beyond conventional policing. Under the leadership of the FCT Minister, Nyesom Wike, the administration has introduced reforms aimed at sanitising the transport system and closing the loopholes exploited by criminal gangs.

Wike has repeatedly argued that an unregulated transport sector provides cover for criminals masquerading as commercial drivers.

To address this, the FCTA has commenced reforms requiring commercial taxis and buses to operate in approved colours and undergo proper registration to improve identification and traceability. Ride-hailing operators have also been directed to ensure their drivers are duly registered with the relevant authorities.

As part of the reforms, illegal motor parks identified as hotspots for criminal activity are being dismantled, while shanties and abandoned structures believed to harbour criminal gangs have been demolished.

The administration has also established joint security task forces comprising the police, military, Department of State Services (DSS), Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC), Federal Road Safety Corps (FRSC), Nigeria Immigration Service and Nigerian Correctional Service to combat “one-chance” operations and other violent crimes, particularly in boundary communities such as Karu, Mararaba and Karshi.

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



FG targets generating 70,000MW by 2030 despite supply shortfall

By Waliat Musa

THE Federal Government has set a target of generating 70,000 megawatts of electricity by 2030, despite Nigeria's struggle to generate less than 5,000MW from an installed capacity of over 13,000MW.

The Minister of Power, Joseph Tegbe, disclosed this yesterday at the ongoing 13th Nigeria Energy Exhibition and Conference Leadership Summit in Lagos, saying the country must expand its power infrastructure to meet rising demand from industrialisation, technology and

• Begins nationwide technical audit, identifies 21 dams for hydropower projects

data centres.

Tegbe acknowledged the gap between current electricity supply and the ambitious target but maintained that Nigeria's future energy needs must guide its expansion plans.

He said the government's strategy would combine grid stabilisation, transmission expansion, hydropower development and improved commercial performance across the electricity value chain.

As part of efforts to strengthen transmission infrastruc-

ture, the minister identified the proposed East-West Grid programme as a major component of the plan to improve electricity supply along key economic corridors.

He also disclosed that 21 dams had been identified along the Sokoto-Badagry Expressway for possible hydropower development.

Tegbe added that the government would pursue the Mambilla hydropower project alongside smaller schemes to support agricultural corridors, processing

clusters and communities.

However, he identified grid stability, liquidity constraints and the effective use of existing assets as immediate priorities, stressing that the government must address weaknesses in the sector before committing resources to further expansion.

He disclosed that technical audits of power infrastructure nationwide had commenced to determine where urgent interventions and investments were needed.

According to him, the exercise would establish whether

generation, transmission or distribution infrastructure required priority attention, while helping the government direct resources to facilities with the greatest need.

The minister said the Federal Government would also work with state governments, regulators and private operators to coordinate electricity projects and improve supply across the three corridors.

On metering, Tegbe reiterated plans to deploy seven million electricity meters nationwide over the next three years, describing effective metering as essential to rev-

enue collection and the financial sustainability of the power sector.

Addressing the sector's financial challenges, he said the Federal Government had paid N1.23 trillion out of the N3.3 trillion legacy debt owed to power generation companies.

He added that the government was considering structured settlements, payment assurance mechanisms and legally permissible net-off arrangements to address outstanding obligations and prevent further debt accumulation.

Makinde, ADC-PCC ask Tinubu to address alleged payment for appointments

From Azimazi Momoh Jimoh and Andrew Oota, Abuja

MAKINDE-DAURA Presidential Campaign Organisation (MDPCO), on the platform of the Allied Peoples Movement (APM), and African Democratic Congress Presidential Campaign Council (ADC-PCC) have criticised President Bola Tinubu's silence over allegations that serving ministers paid billions of naira to secure their appointments.

Makinde's group called on the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) to investigate the matter.

The organisation said the alleged payments, reportedly disclosed by a spokesperson for the Tinubu Presidential Campaign Council, Alwan Hassan, raised questions about transparency, accountability and the integrity of ministerial appointments under the current administration.

UNAIDS board rejects plan to phase out HIV programme

By Ijeoma Nwanosike

UNITED Nations Joint Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) will not be phased out, following a decision by its Programme Coordinating Board (PCB) to transform and strengthen the organisation rather than discontinue its operations.

The board reaffirmed its support for a continued, streamlined and efficient UNAIDS Joint Programme, stressing that the transition must protect people and communities living with, at risk of and affected by HIV, while ensuring that governments and communities sustain and strengthen gains made in the AIDS response.

In a statement issued after a special session in Geneva yesterday, UNAIDS said board members unanimously supported the continuation of the programme and approved the overall strategic direction for its transition.

The decisions are aligned with the United Nations secretary-general's UN80 reform initiative, which seeks to improve the effectiveness of the organisation.



Research Professor, Nigerian Institute of International Affairs (NIIA), Femi Otubanjo (left); Professor of Political Science, Adele Jinadu; Founder and Principal Partner, Balliol Myers LP, Femi Ojumu; Director General of NIIA, Prof. Eghosa Osaghae; Publisher of *The Guardian*, Lady Maiden Alex-Ibru; Head Library and Documentation Services, NIIA, Dr Beauty Dirisu and others at the NIIA foreign policy lecture series in Lagos yesterday.

Ojumu calls for global consensus on AI regulation

By Ngozi Egenuka

FOUNDER and Principal Partner, Balliol Myers LP, Femi Ojumu, has called for a global framework on Artificial Intelligence (AI) regulation to address significant gaps in existing frameworks and ensure effective, adaptive monitoring of the rapidly evolving technology.

This was at the Foreign Policy Lecture Series organised by the Nigerian Institute of International Affairs (NIIA), themed "Artificial Intelligence, Global Schisms and Limitations of the Rule of Law," held in Lagos. The lecture was also attended by

the publisher of The Guardian Newspaper, Lady Maiden Alex-Ibru.

Ojumu noted that Nigeria had made enormous strides in its artificial intelligence and digitisation strategy over the years, such as the enactment of the Nigeria Data Protection Act 2023, which establishes a statutory framework for data protection and includes safeguards concerning automated decision-making, among others.

He, however, stated that the practical implementation, enforcement, management and intentional sovereign control of these policies would prove vital for

geostrategic and geopolitical reasons.

He added that significant policy and regulatory drawbacks such as funding opacity and unclear timelines needed to be addressed head-on and quickly.

According to him, outsourcing artificial intelligence, digital control and regulation to foreign entities by its very definition defies artificial intelligence and digital sovereignty.

Ojumu recommended that, given the serious and continuing geopolitical, strategic and existential risks which AI posed to humanity and development when used for

nefarious objectives, the United Nations, alongside other leading bodies and technology firms, should formulate a global mechanism to regulate artificial intelligence.

For Nigeria, he recommended that the deployment of AI applications in kinetic operations and on the battlefield should always be authorised by a natural and rational human being, adding that Nigeria must endeavour to eliminate terrorism in all formats for lasting socio-economic development and a catalyst for inward investment and genuine economic renaissance.

Tinubu seeks Senate's approval to bring Nigerians jailed abroad home

From John Akubo, Abuja

• Senate targets travel agencies, short-let apartments over human trafficking

PRESIDENT Bola Tinubu has transmitted a bill to the Senate seeking to empower the Federal Government to enter into agreements with foreign countries for the transfer of convicted Nigerians to serve their sentences at home.

The proposed legislation seeks to amend the Transfer of Convicted Offenders Enactment and Enforcement Act, 2004, to establish a legal framework for transferring convicted offenders between Nigeria and other countries under mutual agreements.

The bill was conveyed to the Senate in a letter read by Senate President Godswill Akpabio during plenary yesterday.

In the letter, Tinubu said the proposed amendment would empower Nigeria to negotiate agreements with foreign governments for the transfer of convicted offenders to Nigeria.

He added that the country would also be able to honour similar requests from other governments, subject to the terms of the relevant agreements.

MEANWHILE, the Senate has called for investigations into travel agencies suspected of involvement in human trafficking and tougher regulation of tenants and short-let apartments as part of efforts to dismantle trafficking networks and protect Nigerians from exploita-

tion abroad.

The resolutions followed consideration of a joint report by Senate committees on Diaspora and NGOs, Judiciary, Human Rights and Legal Matters, Foreign Affairs, and Special Duties on the trafficking and abuse of Nigerians overseas, particularly in Libya.

Presenting the report, the Vice Chairman of the Diaspora Committee, Senator Anthony Yaro, said the committees had consulted relevant stakeholders and examined an earlier motion on the trafficking of Nigerians in Libya.

The Senate urged the National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP), the police,

the Nigeria Immigration Service, the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission and other agencies to investigate suspected trafficking rings and travel agencies allegedly involved in recruiting and exploiting Nigerians abroad.

The investigations, it said, should examine recruitment channels, financial transactions and travel arrangements to identify suspects and build evidence for prosecution.

The lawmakers also called for stricter enforcement of the Trafficking in Persons (Prohibition) Enforcement and Administration Act, 2015, and the Child Rights Act, 2003.

Nigeria, Japan deepen ties as latter expands local business footprint

By Ngozi Egenuka

NIGERIA and Japan have reaffirmed their bilateral relations, with the two countries exploring areas of cooperation in investment, infrastructure, healthcare, agriculture and human capital development.

The Minister of Foreign Affairs, Bianca Odumegwu-Ojukwu, disclosed this after receiving Japan's Ambassador to Nigeria, H.E. Suzuki Hideo, who paid her a courtesy visit with a delegation from the Japanese Embassy.

She said this year marked the 66th anniversary of diplomatic relations between Nigeria and Japan, while the successful conclusion of the 10th Nigeria-Japan Special Partnership Forum in Abuja further strengthened bilateral cooperation.

Odumegwu-Ojukwu noted that 57 Japanese companies were operating in Nigeria, adding that discussions with the ambassador focused extensively on programmes being implemented by the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) in the country.

FG's \$21.7 billion loan request sparks borrowing, debt servicing concerns

From Collins Olayinka and Azimazi Momoh Jimoh (Abuja) and Isaac Chibuike (Lagos)

NIGERIA'S mounting debt burden has come under heightened scrutiny as President Bola Tinubu seeks legislative approval for fresh external loans of \$21.7 billion (\$20.52 billion and €1.045 billion), amid rising debt refinancing and little to no savings to liquidate maturing obligations.

The latest request has revived concerns about the sustainability of the country's borrowing strategy, including whether successive loans are financing productive investments capable of generating the revenue required to repay outstanding obligations or simply postponing the doomsday.

The Federal Government only remitted N374.63 billion, or 28.4 per cent of the N1.32 trillion budgeted for the Sinking Fund to Retire Maturing Loans between 2021 and 2025, Budget Implementation Reports (BIRs) data have shown.

The provisions were N200 billion in 2021, N270.71 billion in 2022, N247.73 billion in 2023, N223.66 billion in 2024 and N377.30 billion in 2025.

Only N600 million was released in 2021 and nothing in 2022 and 2023. In 2024, N265.86 billion was released, all in the fourth quarter. By September 2025, N108.17 billion had been released. The comprehensive report for last year is yet to be published.

In the past 10 years (2016 to 2025), the government budgeted N2.18 trillion for debt sinking fund financing. But as the gap between expenditure and revenue widened, the government diverted funds ear-

- Only N374.6b saved for maturing debt liquidation in five years
- Public debt rose by N79.4tr between June 2023 and June 2026
- Atiku urges N'Assembly to suspend approval pending full project disclosures
- Power, transport, security, healthcare top proposed loan-tied projects

marked for mature debt retirement to other line items, exposing it to excessive refinancing.

The resultant vicious cycle, where the central government borrows to meet immediate financing needs, struggles to service or retire existing obligations and returns to the debt market to finance new deficits, is raising tension about the country's future fiscal stability.

In principle, refinancing helps to manage cash flow, manage repayment schedules and replace expensive debt with cheaper facilities. But excessive reliance on new loans could potentially expose public finances to high-

er interest costs, external shocks, future repayment pressure and other refinancing risks.

In Nigeria, the government is not transparent about the proportion of mature debts that are refinanced. A large portion of monthly sovereign debt instrument issuances, whose purposes merely refer to budget support, is used to refinance existing loans, many believe.

In recent years, actual debt service spending outweighs budgeted sums, suggesting funds are moved from other uses to make up for the shortfall.

Nigeria's public debt rose from N87.38 trillion in June 2023 to N166.79 trillion in June

2026, an increase of N79.41 trillion. The increase, however, may not be interpreted as the amount borrowed in cash by the Tinubu administration, as the recent sharp depreciation of the naira increased the nominal value of the external component of the debt.

The President argued that external financing is necessary to address the country's infrastructure deficit and fund critical development projects.

In a letter read by Senate President Godswill Akpabio during plenary yesterday, Tinubu sought the "consideration and early approval" of the National Assembly for the proposed facilities under the Federal Government's 2026-2027 Sup-

plementary External Borrowing Plan.

The proposed borrowing comprises \$20,517,755,901 and €1,045,083,643. The funds are earmarked for projects covering power, transportation, healthcare, education, agriculture, water supply, security, employment generation and financial management reforms.

Tinubu said the projects had undergone technical and economic evaluations and were expected to support job creation, skills acquisition, entrepreneurship, poverty reduction and food security. Most, he added, would be implemented across the 36 states and the Federal Capital Territory.

"In light of the need for significant infrastructure investment in the country and the vast financial resources needed to address this gap, it

has become essential to pursue prudent external borrowings to close the financing shortfall," the President stated.

The Senate referred the request to its Committee on Local and Foreign Debts for scrutiny, with possible input from the Committees on Appropriations and Finance. The proposal had not received final Senate approval as of yesterday.

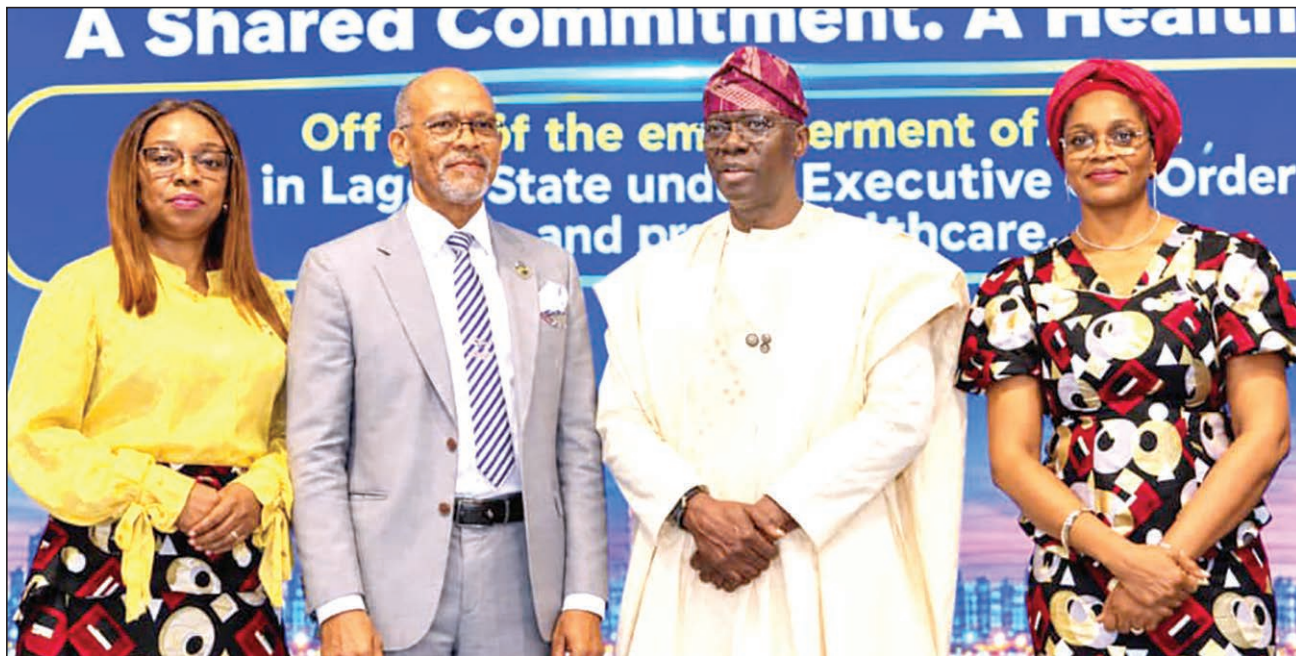
THE immediate question is whether the proposed facilities will create sufficient economic and fiscal returns to justify their cost, and whether the government can meet the associated repayment obligations without further constraining public expenditure.

The government has been stretched to make up for the rising deficits, partly caused by the continued reliance on revenue from crude and inability to broaden the tax base. The 2024 fiscal deficit stood at N13.51 trillion, according to the figures cited in the borrowing debate. The gap between government revenue and expenditure continues to place pressure on public finances, while debt-service obligations compete with allocations for infrastructure and essential services.

The challenge, therefore, extends beyond the size of the proposed loans. It concerns the terms of the facilities, the projects they will finance, the pace at which they will be disbursed, the returns expected from them and the revenue available to repay them.

Earlier approvals raise questions about cumulative exposure. The latest request has also raised questions about its relationship with borrowing plans previously approved

CONTINUED ON PAGE 25



Permanent Secretary, Lagos State Ministry of Health, Dr Dayo Lajide (left); Commissioner for Health, Prof. Akin Abayomi; Governor Babajide Sanwo-Olu, and his Special Adviser on Health, Dr. Kemi Ogunyemi, at the launch of the Lagos Private Health Plan Partnership and flag-off of Mandatory Health Insurance Enforcement in Lagos, yesterday.

Presidency tasks private sector on funding as 30 states endorse state police

From Terhemba Daka (Abuja), Murtala Adewale (Kano) and Shakirah Adunola (Lagos)

WITH 30 states endorsing the proposed constitutional amendment for state police, the Presidency has called on business leaders to help design a sustainable funding model for the reform, stressing that the success of decentralised policing will depend on states' ability to pay salaries, provide training and meet operational costs.

The Presidency challenged Nigeria's organised private sector to develop a financing and implementation blueprint for the proposed state police system, saying sustainable security is critical to protecting investments, creating jobs and driving economic growth.

The Presidency also stressed that states seeking to establish their own police services must demonstrate financial capacity beyond the initial procurement of vehicles, uniforms and equipment.

According to the Presidency, inadequate funding could ex-

- Presidency seeks sustainable funding plan, warns against private interests
- Five more states endorse constitutional amendment for state police
- Lagos lawmakers demand clear division of federal, state police powers
- Kogi, Ebonyi, Jigawa, Kano back decentralised policing
- Presidency submits National Policing Bill, 29 amendment bills for review

pose police institutions to private interests and unlawful demands. It assured Nigerians that federal policing would continue in states not yet financially or institutionally ready to establish their own services.

Chief of Staff to the President and Chairman of the Presidential Working Group on the National Policing Bill, Femi Gbajabiamila, urged the Nigerian Economic Summit Group (NESG), chambers of commerce and business associations to propose practical funding arrangements, institutional management structures and accountable partnerships for the reform.

Speaking at a plenary session on Security, Stability and Economic Resilience at the 32nd Nigerian Economic Summit in Abuja on Monday, he said insecurity was imposing high costs on businesses through

disrupted supply chains, delayed investments and lost commercial opportunities.

He urged business leaders to engage state governments and legislators as the proposed reform progresses, arguing that the private sector's experience in financial management, risk assessment and institutional governance could help shape an effective policing system.

"I therefore ask the Nigerian Economic Summit Group to carry this engagement beyond our meeting. Bring forward a considered private sector contribution on financing and implementing state police, with practical proposals for accountable partnerships," he said.

Gbajabiamila, however, warned that private sector participation must not compromise police independence, insisting that contributions

should be transparently accounted for and subject to independent scrutiny.

"Public funding must remain dependable, and a donation must never purchase influence over an investigation or preferential treatment," he said.

Five more states endorse constitutional amendment

THE Lagos, Kano, Jigawa, Ebonyi and Kogi state Houses of Assembly yesterday endorsed the proposed constitutional amendment to establish state police, joining efforts to decentralise Nigeria's security architecture and strengthen responses to growing insecurity.

States that have passed the amendment include Adamawa, Kwara, Nasarawa, Ogun, Osun, Enugu, Anambra, Imo, Ekiti, Kebbi, Oyo, Plateau, Taraba, Zamfara,

Bayelsa, Benue, Abia, Yobe and Kaduna.

A two-thirds majority of the country's 36 states is required to pass a Constitutional Amendment Bill.

The approvals followed the transmission of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999 (Sixth Alteration) Act, 2026, by the National Assembly to state legislatures for concurrence.

In Lagos, lawmakers reconvened yesterday, cutting short their recess to consider the proposed amendment and unanimously voted in favour of the bill.

Presiding over plenary, the Speaker, Mudashiru Obasa, described the development as a significant milestone in a campaign that has spanned several legislative sessions.

He said the establishment of state police had remained a recurring issue from the fifth to the 10th Assembly, with successive legislatures seeking ways to strengthen security and protect lives and property.

However, Obasa said the proposed amendment fell

short of granting federating units full operational autonomy, warning that the functions and responsibilities of federal and state police should be clearly defined to prevent structural imbalances.

He also called for an explicit constitutional provision for a dedicated parliamentary police force to protect legislative institutions from executive interference, citing instances in which state assembly complexes were allegedly locked up or demolished on the orders of governors.

According to him, a parliamentary police force would strengthen state legislatures and safeguard democracy.

The Speaker commended President Bola Tinubu, the leadership of the National Assembly and state legislatures for their roles in advancing the constitutional review process. He expressed confidence that outstanding concerns would be addressed as the ratification process progressed.

In Kano, the State House of

CONTINUED ON PAGE 28

FG targets 2030 to eliminate lead-based paints in Nigeria

From Ernest Nzor (Abuja) and Segun Ayinde (Abeokuta)

THE Federal Government, yesterday, reaffirmed its commitment to eliminating lead exposure and phasing

NCGC says credit scheme unlocked N64.13b loans, supported 914,791 jobs

- '22,616 Nigerians access bank loans, women account for 42.7% of beneficiaries'
- Worst is behind us, gains of Tinubu's reforms ahead, says minister

From Terhemba Daka and Sodiq Omolayo, Abuja

THE National Credit Guarantee Company (NCGC), yesterday, said it had facilitated N64.13 billion in loans to Nigerian businesses and individuals, supporting an estimated 914,791 direct and indirect jobs within its first 14 months of operation.

The company also disclosed that 22,616 Nigerians had accessed formal bank loans for the first time, while women accounted for 42.7 per cent of beneficiaries.

Its Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer, Dr Bonaventure Okhaimo, disclosed this during a media briefing in Abuja.

RELATEDLY, Minister of Women Affairs and Social Development, Imaan Sulaiman-Ibrahim, has said that the worst phase of Tinubu's economic reforms is behind Nigeria, expressing optimism that the country will begin to reap greater benefits from the policies.

Fasoranti: Afenifere constitutes burial c'ttee, dismisses succession talks as premature

- Says debate over next leader contrary to Yoruba culture
- Affirms commitment to values as family appeals for unity

From Adewale Momoh, Akure

THE pan-Yoruba socio-cultural organisation, Afenifere, has constituted a burial planning committee for its late leader, Pa Reuben Fasoranti, who died a few days ago at 100.

The decision was reached yesterday at a meeting held at the Akure residence of the deceased in Ondo State, where a condolence message was delivered to the family of the deceased, with a reaffirmed commitment to uphold the values that defined Fasoranti's life.

The family of the late Afenifere leader and elder statesman had earlier announced December 17, 2026, for his funeral service and interment.

National Executive Committee of Afenifere, under the chairmanship of Oba Olu Falae, disclosed that the planning committee, which will work in collaboration with the family and the government committees, is tasked with organising a befitting burial for the late Fasoranti.

out lead-based paints in Nigeria by 2030.

The government said environmental regulation, public health surveillance, laboratory testing, healthcare services, community awareness and enforcement must work together to prevent lead poisoning.

Permanent Secretary of the Federal Ministry of the Environment, Dr Salihu Usman, disclosed this in Abuja during the commemoration of the 2026 International Lead Poisoning Prevention Week.

The event, organised by the ministry in collaboration with stakeholders, had the theme, "From Detection to Protection."

The Federal Government

- Ogun intensifies lead poisoning prevention, tasks industries on safety
- Unveils assessment report, plans coordinated intervention

warned that failure to enforce safety standards could expose more Nigerians, particularly children, to preventable health risks.

Usman, who was represented by the Director of Pollution Control and Environmental Health, Mrs Adeola Omotunde, said Nigeria must move beyond issuing policies and standards to implementing practical measures that protect public health.

He said exposure to lead could damage the neurological, cardiovascular, renal, gastrointestinal and haematological systems.

Usman, therefore, called for greater awareness among

paint manufacturers, importers, retailers, painters, construction professionals and consumers, urging them to support the production and use of safer alternatives.

He said the government would continue to work with relevant institutions and partners to strengthen environmental standards, promote compliance and improve the management of hazardous chemicals and contaminated sites.

MEANWHILE, the Ogun State Government has released its lead poisoning assessment report to enhance environmental health safety, curb further exposure to toxic

metals and protect the health of residents.

The state's Commissioner for Health, Dr Tomi Coker, disclosed this at a media briefing to mark the 2026 International Lead Poisoning Prevention Week, themed, "From Detection to Prevention: Acting Together to End Lead Exposure in Nigeria."

In her remarks, the representative of the Alliance for Responsible Battery Recycling, Christiana Oloride, lauded the ministry and other stakeholders for their efforts to raise awareness and strengthen measures to prevent lead exposure.



All Progressives Congress (APC) Lagos State deputy governorship candidate, Damilola Sonayon-James (left); the governorship candidate and Deputy Governor of the state, Dr Obafemi Hamzat; his wife, Oluremi; Chief Host, Governor Babajide Sanwo-Olu; Chairman, Committee of Wives of Lagos State Officials (COWLSO), Dr Ibijoke Sanwo-Olu, wives of governors of Ogun and Osun states, Bamidele Abiodun and Titilola Adeleke, respectively, during the opening of the 26th yearly National Women's Conference, organised by COWLSO, themed "Anchored in Purpose: Be The Blueprint" in Lagos, yesterday.

FG commits to regional development to promote sustainable cities' growth

By Victor Gbonegun

THE Federal Government has re-emphasised its commitment to sustainable urban development, affordable housing and balanced regional growth through new policies, regional development and infrastructure initiatives that would improve Nigeria's cities.

Minister of Housing and Urban Development, Dr Muttaqha Rabe Darma, said this yesterday, during the opening of the 57th International Conference and yearly general meeting of the

NITP seeks decentralisation of port facilities, review of abandoned projects

Nigerian Institute of Town Planners (NITP) in Lagos.

The conference, themed "Shaping the future of urban development through physical planning," attracted the investiture of Lagos State Governor, Babajide Sanwo-Olu, as a Fellow of the NITP and the unveiling of four books on physical planning and urban development in Nigeria.

The minister, represented by the Director of Urban and Regional Planning at the ministry, Mrs Margaret

Ojewemimo Adejobi, commended the NITP for promoting professional dialogue and practical solutions to challenges confronting physical planning and urban development in the country.

He said the administration was implementing policies and programmes to strengthen physical planning, expand access to housing and promote sustainable development across the federation.

Darma said the government was embarking on the formulation of strategic regional

development plans for Nigeria's geopolitical zones to improve coordination of land use, infrastructure, economic activities and urban expansion.

MEANWHILE, the NITP has urged the Federal Government to decentralise port facilities from Lagos to other suitable locations across Nigeria, and to improve environmental safeguards for land reclamation and conduct a comprehensive review of abandoned federal projects.

2027: IPAC disowns members listed on Osun PCC

From Oluwale Ige, Osogbo

AS the recent inauguration of the Presidential Campaign Council (PCC) for the re-election of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu in Osun State by Governor Ademola Adeleke, who also doubles as the state coordinator, continues to generate ripples, the Inter-Party Advisory Council (IPAC) yesterday disowned its members listed in the body.

The Osun State chapter of IPAC contended that some individuals paraded as its representatives were on their own and were never authorised to represent it.

This was contained in a statement signed by leaders of some political parties, consti-

Oyetola remains APC leader in Osun, says party elder

tuting Osun IPAC, namely Action Alliance (AA), National Rescue Movement (NRM), Action Democratic Party (ADP), Nigeria Democratic Congress (NDC), Social Democratic Party (SDP) and National Democratic Party (NDP).

According to the statement sighted by *The Guardian*, the IPAC, while describing the inclusion of the individuals in the rainbow coalition for Tinubu's re-election campaign in Osun as misleading and capable of creating confusion, stated: "The persons whose names were paraded as our members in the said Council are not our representatives,

nor were they, at any point in time, nominated or authorised by the Council to represent it in any capacity.

It, therefore, urged Tinubu not to recognise those listed as its representatives in the Osun PCC, stressing that members with strong grassroots presence across all local councils remain the legitimate stakeholders of IPAC.

MEANWHILE, a member of the Elders Caucus (Igbimo Agba) of the All Progressives Congress (APC) in Osun State, Gbadebo Ajao, has declared that former Governor Gboyega Oyetola remains the leader of the

party in the state, saying that anyone claiming otherwise is fooling himself.

Ajao stated this yesterday while featuring on a political programme, Agogo Oselu, on Agogo FM in Osogbo, where he also faulted the party's founding father, Bisi Akande, over his comment during the inauguration of the Osun Campaign Council for Tinubu by Adeleke.

The APC chieftain described Akande's remark that APC in Osun 'ti lu daiko' (has lost its way) during the event as a slip of the tongue, suggesting that the elder statesman spoke out of frustration after looking back and finding no people behind him.

LASG gives residents, employers till Dec. 31 to comply with compulsory health insurance scheme

COWLSO confab: Let each generation leave something better for those coming, Sanwo-Olu tells women

By Gbenga Salau

Lagos State Government, yesterday, launched the Lagos Private Health Plan (LPHP) partnership and flagged off the enforcement of mandatory health insurance, with Governor Babajide Sanwo-Olu announcing a grace period until December 31, 2026, for employers, workers and residents to secure appropriate coverage before enforcement commences on January 1, 2027.

The launch, held at the Lagos Continental Hotel, Victoria Island, also featured the unveiling of 21 participating Health Maintenance Organisations (HMOs), marking a major step in the state's drive to expand health insurance coverage and protect residents from the financial burden of healthcare.

Sanwo-Olu said the initiative was designed to ensure that access to healthcare would no longer depend solely on an individual's ability to pay at the point of illness.

HOWEVER, Sanwo-Olu has said that each generation has a responsibility to leave something better for those coming after it, imploring older women to look beyond individual success and create successes in other younger ones.

The governor stated this yesterday during the 26th yearly national women's conference by the Committee of Wives of Lagos State Officials (COWLSO).

Ekiti community seeks national honour for longest-serving monarch

Launches N250 million devt fund

From Ayodele Afolabi, Ado-Ekiti

THE Igede-Ekiti community in Irepodun Ifelodun Local Council of Ekiti State has appealed to President Bola Ahmed Tinubu to confer a national honour on its 93-year-old monarch, Oba James Aladesuru, who has spent more than 66 years on the throne.

This was just as the community is launching a N250 million endorsement fund for the upgrade of the palace, infrastructure work on River Elemi as a tourism site, among.

Chairman of Ojude Àkè Festival's Planning Committee, Dr Oludotun Adetuberu, appealed yesterday, during a media briefing in Igede, to herald activities for the week-long celebration.

Adetuberu described the monarch as Africa's longest-reigning traditional ruler and said his remarkable length of service to humanity deserved national recognition.

He said that the palace expansion had become necessary to provide adequate space for social and community functions.

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Truck, two buses collide beneath Mile 2 bridge, disrupt traffic

By Bertram Nwannekanma

A COLLISION involving a flatbed truck and two commercial buses beneath the Second Rainbow Bridge along the Mile 2 corridor in Lagos disrupted traffic yesterday, although no casualties were recorded.

The Lagos State Traffic Management Authority (LASTMA) confirmed the incident in a statement by its Director of Public Affairs and Enlightenment Department, Adebayo Taofiq. According to Taofiq, the crash involved a flatbed Mack truck, a T4 commercial bus and a mini commercial bus popularly known as Korope. It occurred on the inward-bound section of the corridor.

He said the collision temporarily obstructed the main carriageway, causing a traffic backlog and slowing vehicular movement along the busy route.

"Fortunately, no casualties were recorded at the time of reporting," Taofiq said, adding that LASTMA operatives promptly moved to manage the situation, ease congestion and prevent

secondary collisions.

The agency also contacted the police and requested a tow truck to assist in assessing and removing the affected vehicles from the carriageway.

As recovery and traffic management operations continued, LASTMA personnel worked to restore normal traffic flow and ensure the safety of motorists and other road users.

The authority urged motorists approaching the Mile 2 corridor, particularly those travelling inward, to exercise patience, maintain lane discipline and avoid reckless manoeuvres. It advised drivers to comply with instructions from traffic management officials.

LASTMA reiterated its commitment to responding promptly to road crashes and other traffic incidents to protect lives and property and ensure safer movement across Lagos State.

It also urged motorists to report road crashes, vehicle breakdowns and other obstructions through its toll-free short code, 3367, accessible on MTN, Glo and T2 networks.



Scene of the accident yesterday

Two die in knife fight over money-sharing dispute

From Rotimi Agboluaje, Ibadan

TWO men have died following a violent altercation over the sharing of money in the Ogunpa area of Ibadan, Oyo State.

The incident occurred on Monday when the two, suspected to be area boys, reportedly disagreed over how to share money given to them.

The argument escalated into a knife fight, leaving both men with fatal injuries.

It was gathered that one of the men stabbed his opponent in the neck, killing him at the scene, while the other

sustained a stab wound to his right wrist.

The injured man was reportedly rushed to a nearby hospital but died from excessive blood loss before receiving adequate medical attention.

The state's police spokesperson, Olayinka Ayanlade, confirmed the incident in a statement yesterday.

"Yes, two persons stabbed themselves to death at Ogunpa over a mere argument, and an investigation has been launched into the mystery surrounding their death," Ayanlade said.

Gunmen kill seven in Plateau community attack

From Isa Abdulsalami Ahovi, Jos

SEVEN people have been killed after gunmen invaded Georo community in Jos South Local Council of Plateau State on Monday night.

The attackers reportedly stormed the community at about 10:20 p.m., shooting sporadically and killing some victims in their shops and others at a local restaurant.

The attack occurred amid heightened tension in parts of Mangu, Bokkos and Riyom local councils, where the state government recently im-

posed a dusk-to-dawn curfew following repeated attacks and killings.

A community member, Mr Bot Silas, who confirmed the incident, said the gunmen struck under the cover of darkness, forcing residents to flee for safety.

"The gunmen stormed the community at about 10:20 p.m. and started shooting sporadically, forcing residents to scamper for safety. Seven persons were killed in the attack, which caused serious panic among residents," he said.

Calabar residents lament soaring electricity bills, wrong tariff classification

From Tina Agosi Todo, Calabar

RESIDENTS of Calabar, Cross River State, have expressed frustration over rising electricity bills, with some alleging incorrect tariff classification and excessive estimated charges despite inadequate power supply.

They have called on the Port Harcourt Electricity Distribution Company (PHEDC) to review disputed bills, correct tariff classifications and ensure that customers are charged fairly for the electricity they receive.

One of the residents, identified simply as Kelvin, who

lives in Big Qua Town, alleged that his compound had been wrongly classified under Band A instead of Band D, resulting in a sharp reduction in the electricity units they receive for the same amount of money. According to him, a recharge of N10,000, which provided about 168 units between January and February, now yields between 30 and 44 units.

He said the compound, where three households share a pre-paid meter, now spends about N10,000 weekly on electricity, compared with the same amount lasting almost a month previously.

Radda vows thorough probe into killing of Islamic cleric

From Danjuma Michael, Katsina

KATSINA State Governor, Dikko Radda, has vowed a thorough investigation into the killing of renowned Islamic cleric, Sheikh Yahaya Masussuka, and his associate, Adamu Abubakar, by suspected gunmen in Dutsinma Local Government Area of the state. The victims were shot dead by two unidentified gunmen riding on a motorcycle in front of the cleric's residence at about 7:30 p.m. on Monday, October 26, 2026.

In a statement by his press secretary, Ibrahim Mohammed, Radda expressed shock over the killings and assured residents that security agencies would intensify efforts to identify and arrest those responsible.

"Those behind this heinous act must be brought to justice. I urge the relevant security

agencies to conduct a thorough investigation and ensure that the perpetrators face the full weight of the law," he said.

The governor appealed to residents to remain calm, cooperate with security agencies and provide credible information that could assist the investigation. He also cautioned against actions capable of



Sheikh Yahaya Masussuka

heightening tensions or threatening public peace.

Radda extended his condolences to the bereaved families, the Islamic community and others affected by the killings, describing Masussuka as a cleric known for his Qur'an-centred teachings, promotion of peaceful coexistence and interfaith understanding, and opposition to violent extremism and radicalisation.

He urged the family to remain steadfast in faith during the difficult period, praying that Almighty Allah would forgive the deceased, grant him Al-jannatul Firdaus and give his loved ones the strength to bear the loss.

The Katsina State Police Command also confirmed the killings, saying the victims were attacked by two armed men who opened fire on them in front of the cleric's residence.

Police arrest five suspected kidnappers, rescue woman in Rivers

• Commissioner pledges energy infrastructure protection in Ogun

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

THE police commands in Rivers and Ogun states have reaffirmed their commitment to tackling security threats, with the Rivers State Police Command arresting five suspected kidnappers and rescuing a 24-year-old woman, while its Ogun counterpart has pledged stronger protection for petroleum and energy infrastructure.

In Rivers State, the police arrested five suspects over the alleged abduction of a woman identified only as Chinyere along the Igwirit-

Etche Road.

The Rivers State Police Command said the victim travelled from Delta State to Port Harcourt on October 3, 2026, to visit a friend but was abducted along the road.

In a statement, the police spokesperson, ASP Blessing



ASP Blessing Asabe

Agabe Kaborlo, said the command received a report of the incident on October 4 and deployed operatives of its Violent Crime Response Unit (VCRU), Diobu, to investigate. The suspects were identified as Gift Okeregwu, 23; Okeregwu Onyekachi, 27; Bright Augustine, 27; Chijoke Nwalozie, 35; and Obinachi Rita, 26.

According to the police, operatives arrested Okeregwu at a hideout along the Omuoda Pipeline in Allu, Port Harcourt, while the other four suspects were also apprehended in connection with the alleged crime.

Mob attacks NDLEA officers during drug raid in Cross River, three arrested

From Solomon Azu, Calabar

A NATIONAL Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) team narrowly escaped being lynched by a mob during a drug raid in the Lemna area of Cross River State, after suspected drug dealers allegedly mobilised residents to attack the operatives and free suspects.

Three persons were subsequently arrested over the incident, while the agency recovered two grammes of methamphetamine, popularly known as Ice, and one gramme of synthetic cannabis, also known as Colorado.

The Assistant Commander of Narcotics, NDLEA Cross River State Command, Kabiru Abdullahi, disclosed this yesterday during an interactive session with journalists in Calabar.

Abdullahi said the incident occurred on Monday at about 2:00 p.m. while he was leading a team on a motorised patrol in Lemna, in the north-western part of the state.

According to him, the trouble started when operatives conducting a stop-and-search operation flagged down a motorcycle carrying three persons — a man and two women.

He said the officers identified themselves before a female operative requested to search the passengers' bags.

Market fires: Traders seek emergency fund, insurance, stronger safety measures

By Bertram Nwannekanma

RECURRING market fires that destroy traders' goods, savings and business capital have prompted the President of the Ndigboamaka Progressive Market Association, Chinedu Ukatu, to call for stronger fire prevention measures, emergency relief and accountability in Lagos State.

Speaking at the Burning Point Seminar organised by CBI News, Ukatu proposed

a five-point plan covering market infrastructure, emergency assistance, fire insurance, safety training and investigations into fire outbreaks.

He said market fires often leave traders struggling with debts, outstanding loans and household expenses, while employees lose their jobs and families face difficulties meeting basic needs.

Ukatu, whose association represents

58 markets across Lagos State, outlined the following measures:

He called for comprehensive fire-risk assessments, the replacement of faulty electrical installations, the provision of fire extinguishers and water points, accessible routes for emergency vehicles and regular safety inspections.

Ukatu proposed a Lagos State Market Fire Emergency Fund to provide financial assistance to verified victims.

Two years after Asaba demolition, displaced property owners seek govt's intervention

From Monday Osayande, Asaba

TWO years after losing their homes and investments to a demolition exercise in Asaba, Delta State, hundreds of property owners are appealing to Governor Sheriff Oborewori to help them secure justice, compensation or the return of their disputed land.

The affected residents, under the aegis of Parkview Estate, Anwai, said the demolition on May 14, 2024, destroyed buildings and investments worth millions of naira, leaving several families homeless and struggling to rebuild their lives.

They alleged that the Delta State Task Force on Recovery of Government Lands carried out the exercise despite their claims of having legally acquired the property and obtained relevant government approvals.

The property owners urged Oborewori to investigate the circumstances surrounding the demolition, establish ownership of the disputed land and

ensure that those affected were adequately compensated or allowed to reclaim their property.

Chairman of Parkview Estate, Chief Charles Ogbobe, while speaking with journalists yesterday, described the demolition as devastating, saying it wiped out years of hard work and subjected residents to severe emotional and financial hardship.



Affected property.

Ogbobe said the disputed land, located at Anwai and popularly known as Musa Camp, was later renamed Ugbomanta by the Asagba of Asaba.

He maintained that the land was legitimately acquired from the Isieke community, which he said, possessed documents supporting its claim of ownership. According to him, the dispute arose from competing ownership claims involving the com-

munity and Dennis Osadebay University, a state-owned institution.

He traced the history of the land to 1953, when it was allegedly leased to a colonial administrator, Revd Prior, for 50 years.

Ogbobe said the lease expired in 2003, raising questions, in his view, about the continued claims over the property.

He lamented that many of the affected residents had yet to recover from the losses, with some struggling to secure alternative accommodation and rebuild their livelihoods.



Displaced property owners

Ogbobe further alleged that the Delta State High Court had directed the parties to produce their survey plans to establish the boundaries of the disputed land.

The estate's Vice Chairman, Mr Samuel Onuwa David, also faulted the demolition, alleging that it was carried out before the expiration of a seven-day notice reportedly issued to occupants.

He said the residents had attempted to obtain a court injunction to stop the exercise but were unable to prevent the demolition.

David disclosed that he lost a

private school and a residential building, while four other buildings belonging to his in-laws were also demolished.

He said documents available to the affected property owners indicated that the lease to the university expired in 1991, a date that differs from Ogbobe's account.

"We are appealing to the governor, as a father, to come to our aid. Let him compensate us for the houses that were demolished or give us back our land," David pleaded.

For another affected property owner, Mr Christian Nwaolisa, the demolition meant losing the home he had hoped to enjoy after returning from Northern Nigeria to settle in his home state.

Nwaolisa expressed disappointment that his residence was demolished despite his claim that he had obtained a Certificate of Occupancy and building approval from the relevant authorities before construction.

Ijaw youths threaten protest over plight of over 100 NSDP cadets

By Ayonote Clement

THE Ijaw Youth Council (IYC) has announced plans to stage a protest today at the headquarters of the Nigerian Maritime Administration and Safety Agency (NIMASA) in Victoria Island, Lagos, over what it described as prolonged delays in the completion of training and certification requirements for more than 100 Nigerian Seafarers Development Programme (NSDP) cadets.

The IYC is demanding urgent intervention by NIMASA to resolve the outstanding issues affecting the cadets, some of

whom it says have been waiting for years to complete their professional requirements and qualify for careers at sea.

The IYC Chairman, Owen Napthali, while speaking during a visit to NIMASA's headquarters in Lagos, urged the agency's Director-General, Dr Dayo Mobereola, to personally intervene and ensure a lasting resolution.

Napthali said the planned protest was intended to draw attention to the cadets' situation and press the agency to address their concerns.

According to the IYC, more

than 100 beneficiaries of the NSDP have completed substantial portions of their academic training and sea-time requirements but are still awaiting deployment to the Philippines for outstanding Certificate of Competency (CoC) examinations and related requirements.

The Council alleged that the affected cadets had spent years preparing for careers in the maritime industry but remained unable to complete the final stages of their professional qualification.

Also speaking, National Co-

ordinator of the Niger Delta Civil Society Organisations, Okporu Augustine, said information available to the group indicated that the outstanding issues included examination arrangements, funding, visa processing, travel logistics and other administrative requirements.

The IYC also raised questions about previous engagements and verification exercises reportedly conducted in 2022 and 2025, saying the process had not resulted in a satisfactory resolution for the affected cadets.

Police begin crack down on misconduct, warn against extortion, arrest by proxy

By Bertram Nwannekanma

THE Nigeria Police Force (NPF) has stepped up efforts to curb misconduct, extortion and unlawful arrests, with senior officers in Lagos and Abia states warning personnel to respect citizens' rights and adhere to professional standards.

At separate meetings on Monday, October 26, 2026, the Assistant Inspector-General of Police in charge of the Force Criminal Investigation Department (FCID) Annex, Alagbon, Lagos, Simeon Akpanudom, and the Abia State Commissioner of Police, Wilfred Olutokunbo Afolabi, directed officers to strengthen accountability, improve supervision and adopt in-



IGP Tunji Disu

telligence-led policing.

The directives come amid renewed emphasis on public confidence in the police, with the officers warning that misconduct, including extortion, harassment and arrest by proxy, would not be tolerated.

Akpanudom, who spoke during a lecture for personnel of the FCID Annex in Lagos, expressed concern over complaints of unprofessional conduct, warning that the actions of individual officers could undermine public trust and damage the reputation of the police.

He stressed that investigations must be thorough, impartial and evidence-based, directing investigating police officers to understand the facts of each case, carefully examine petitions and supporting documents, and develop clear plans before taking action.

The AIG also directed that let-

ters should clearly state the purpose of invitation and, where applicable, the offence under investigation.

He emphasised that arrests must be based on lawful grounds and facts established during investigations.

Akpanudom specifically condemned arrest by proxy, warning that no one should be arrested merely because of their relationship with a suspect.

He also reiterated the prohibition of extortion, torture, harassment and other unlawful practices, insisting that everyone in police custody must be treated with dignity and have access to prompt medical attention when ill.

New \$60m recycling plant presents opportunities for plastic collectors

By Victoria Nwachukwu

FOR thousands of people who earn a living collecting discarded plastic bottles, the wastes scattered along roadsides, dumped in drainage channels or washed into waterways could become a more valuable source of income as Nigeria expands its recycling industry.

A new \$60 million food-grade recycled plastic plant in Mowe, Ogun State, is expected to strengthen demand for used plastic bottles, create jobs and provide more opportunities for people working across the

waste recovery chain.

Polysmart Packaging Limited will tomorrow, October 29, 2026, commission phase one of its expanded recycled Polyethylene Terephthalate (rPET) facility, which is designed to process up to 100,000 tonnes of used polyethylene terephthalate bottles yearly.

The company said the plant, which it describes as Africa's largest food-grade rPET facility, would produce 60,000 tonnes of food-grade recycled materials and 20,000 tonnes of other recycled plastics yearly at full capacity.

For waste collectors, trans-

porters and small businesses involved in gathering and supplying discarded bottles, the expansion could open up new opportunities as manufacturers seek more locally recovered materials for packaging.

Polysmart said the facility could generate about 1,000 direct jobs and more than 50,000 indirect jobs across the recycling value chain, including collection, sorting, transportation, aggregation and processing.

The company currently operates 25 aggregation centres across eight states. It plans to establish another 250 centres

across the 36 states within two years to increase the supply of used bottles and expand access to recycling opportunities.

Group Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of Polysmart Group, Wasiu Balogun, while speaking ahead of the commissioning, said the investment showed that Nigerian businesses could develop large-scale recycling infrastructure.

"When we started this journey in 2013, many people told us that world-class, food-grade recycling could not be built in Nigeria".

Ogun monarch partners NDLEA to intensify anti-drug campaign in schools

From Segun Ayinde, Abeokuta

THE Towulade of Owu-Akinale, Ewekoro, Ogun State, Oba Oluseyi Adediran, has pledged to intensify the campaign against drug abuse among young people through sustained advocacy and public enlightenment programmes in schools and communities. The monarch made the commitment during a visit to the Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA), Brig.-Gen. Mohammed Buba Marwa (rtd.), at the agency's headquarters in Abuja.

Oba Adediran said the visit was aimed at strengthening his partnership with the NDLEA in tackling drug abuse, particularly among secondary school students and other young people vulnerable to substance misuse.

He said the Towulade Foundation, through which he plans to drive the initiative, would organise sensitisation programmes to educate children, youths and members of

the public on the dangers of drug abuse and the importance of healthy lifestyles.

According to him, the campaign would extend to primary and secondary schools, tertiary institutions, clubs and other organisations, with emphasis on early education and preventive measures to discourage substance misuse before it becomes a problem.

The monarch stressed that young people need adequate information about the consequences of drug abuse, to make informed decisions and resist pressures that could expose them to harmful substances.

Oba Adediran also expressed appreciation to Marwa for chairing the celebration of his first anniversary on the throne, describing the visit as an opportunity to strengthen their relationship and advance their shared commitment to combating drug abuse.

"I came to appreciate the NDLEA chairman for honouring me by chairing my first anniversary celebration on the throne."

Pa Adesanya for burial on Friday in Abeokuta

THE death has occurred of Pa Matthew Adisa Adesanya at the age of 78. The deceased, until his demise on September 16, 2026, was an Akogun Imo Christian chief.

A Christian wake holds on Thursday, October 29, 2026 at his residence at Obasa Village, Km 9, Bisi Onabanjo Way, after Mile 8, Abeokuta, Ogun State.

Funeral service will hold at St. Paul's African Church Cathedral, Igbore, Abeokuta, on Friday, October 30, 2026, and to be followed by interment at his residence.

Guests will be entertained at Emefelix Event and Conference Centre, Abule Meko, beside Ogun State Television (OGTV), Olabisi Onabanjo

Road, Abeokuta.

He is survived by children and grandchildren, including Gbenga Adesanya, Oluwaseun Sunday Adesanya and wife, Deaconess Oluwatoyin Atinuke Adesanya, as well as Adewale Adesanya.



Pa Adesanya



**NOTICE OF CREDITORS' MEETING
OF
ODU'A TELECOMS LIMITED, RC: 455279**

Pursuant to Section 635 of the Companies and Allied Matters Act, 2020

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that a meeting of the Creditors of Odu'a Telecoms Limited ("the Company") will be held virtually via Zoom on Wednesday, 11th November 2026 at 1:00 p.m. (West Africa Time) following the meeting of the members of the Company scheduled for the same day, for the purposes of transacting the following business:

- To receive and consider a full statement of the Company's affairs, including particulars of its assets, debts and liabilities, together with a list of its creditors and the estimated amounts of their respective claims.
- To nominate a liquidator for the purpose of winding up the affairs of the Company and distributing its assets.
- To consider the appointment of a committee of inspection, if thought fit.
- To transact any other business properly arising in connection with the creditors' voluntary winding-up of the Company.

VIRTUAL MEETING DETAILS

Meeting Link: <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/82855851038?pwd=xEabywQ5jK7FhCrak9kIpljYabKfck.1>
Meeting ID: 828 5585 1038
Passcode: 734362

Creditors are requested to confirm their attendance in advance of the meeting. Creditors intending to participate through duly authorised representatives are required to submit evidence of such representatives' authority to attend and act on their behalf.

All confirmations of attendance and relevant authorisation documents should be forwarded to the email address provided below:

Email Address: corporateandcommercialgroup@tayooyetibolaw.com.

Dated this 27th day of October 2026.

BY ORDER OF THE BOARD

Tayo Oyetibo LP

**TAYO OYETIBO LP
COMPANY SECRETARY**



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**Cordially invites you to the
2nd EXAUGURAL
LECTURE**

Titled:

**"Silver Bullets For
Project Time Bandits"**

**By: Alaba Ezekiel
ADETOLA PhD**

NCE (Mech. Eng), BSc (Industrial Tech.),
PGD (Tech. Mgt.), MPM (Proj. Mgt.), PhD
(Cons. Proj. Mgt.), FHEA, MPMI,
ASCE, CIOB, SEDA



Venue: Yusuf Grillo Auditorium



Date: Thursday, 5th November, 2026 | **Time:** 2:00pm

Chairman of the Occasion

DR. ENGR. IBRAHEEM ADEDOTUN ABDUL
Rector, Yaba College of Technology

Signed: Badejo Henrietta (Mrs)
Registrar and Secretary to Council

Yaba the Great!

... the first | ... still the best



**1004 ESTATE REFURBISHMENT PROJECT
EXPRESSION OF INTEREST**

1004 Home Owners and Residents Association (HORA), is progressing the ongoing refurbishment of its facilities within 1004 Estate located at Samuel Manuwa Street, Victoria Island, Lagos.

To this end, 1004 HORA invites suitably qualified contractors to participate in the pre-qualification exercise towards pre-qualifying the contractors to be invited to participate in the tenders for the refurbishment works.

Interested contractors are hereby requested to submit their "Expression of interest" (EOI) to participate in the exercise. Please find below the details of the proposed refurbishment scope of work.

Background Information

1004 Estate has **1072** apartments comprising **33Nos** Low-rise blocks each about **12m** high and **6 Nos** High-rise blocks each about **42m** high spread across Clusters **A to D**, with common areas and utilities.

The next phase of the refurbishment project consists of the following facilities:-

- 3 Nos High Rise Blocks
- 12 Nos Low Rise Blocks
- 4 Nos Club Houses
- 7 Nos Gate Houses

The general scope of work is basically renovation/refurbishment of the external façade and common areas, and the specific work breakdown are detailed in the Bill of Quantities (BOQ) that will be shared with contractors who meet the pre-qualification criteria and are invited to tender.

Please provide information and documentation in response to the pre-qualification criteria outlined below:

1. Financial Evaluation

- Company audited financial account/ statement in the last

- 3years
- Reference from a reputable bank.
- Company turnover in the last five (5) years

2 Competence & Capability Evaluation

- Company profile indicating similar jobs executed and completion certificates.
- Proposed key technical & administrative personnel, their CVs and availability for the project
- Professional affiliations/ registration
- CAC Certificate and Status Report.

3 HSE & Quality Management System Evaluation

- Company Health, Safety and Environment Systems, plans & policy
- Safety management, i.e., past three (3) years records evaluation (fatalities, LTI, near miss incidents)
- Quality Management Systems Certification (ISO 9000) and procedures adopted by vendors e.g., Quality assurance systems.

4. Capabilities Evaluation

- Contractor's Equipment Capabilities
- Contractor's Facilities, e.g., workshops, warehouse etc.

Please forward your expression of interest to the following email:
admin@1004hora.org on or before Wednesday, November 11, 2026.

Please note that pre-qualification is no guaranty of award of contract. 1004 HORA will not be responsible for the cost of submissions made by interested contractors.

APPLICATION FOR 2026

NNPC-SNEPCo

NATIONAL UNIVERSITY SCHOLARSHIP AWARD

Shell Nigeria Exploration and Production Company Limited (SNEPCo), operator of the Oil Mining Lease 118 (OML 118) on behalf of itself and other Co-Venturers consisting of Esso Exploration and Production Nigeria and Nigerian Agip Exploration Company Limited under a Production Sharing Contract (PSC) with Nigerian National Petroleum Company Limited (NNPC) hereby invites applications from qualified Nigerian students for the 2026 NNPC-SNEPCo National University Scholarship. The scholarship aims to promote academic excellence and improve the skills of young Nigerians. It provides yearly grant to successful applicants from their second year to the completion of their undergraduate degree programme.

Eligible undergraduate students of courses accredited by the National Universities Commission (NUC) in Nigerian public institutions are invited to submit an electronic application at <https://candidate.scholastica.ng/schemes/NNPCLTDSNEPCo26>

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Applicant must:

- Be a Nigerian citizen;
- Currently in their second year of full-time study;
- Have a minimum CGPA of 3.5 in a 5-grade system or the equivalent in other grade systems; and
- Not be a beneficiary of any other scholarship from an entity in the Oil and Gas industry, National or International

*Female candidates are strongly encouraged to apply

SELECTION CRITERIA

1. Applications must be received not later than the specified deadline via the [scholarship portal](#) ONLY.
2. Only candidates that meet the eligibility criteria will be invited for the proctored computer-based test.
3. Only the top 10 candidates in each of the 36 states and the Federal Capital Territory will be shortlisted for academic verification prior to scholarship offer.
4. Candidates who present falsified documents will be disqualified.
5. Only candidates that have successfully satisfied the above criteria will be contacted for the scholarship award.
6. All scholars must maintain minimum of 3.5 CGPA per session, in a 5-grade system or the equivalent in other grade systems, to sustain the award.

DEADLINE:



Applications should be submitted on or before
November 30, 2026.
Examination details will be communicated to shortlisted candidates only.

NOTE:

- Application for NNPC LTD-SNEPCo scholarship is FREE.
- SCHOLASTICA is the official platform for the NNPC-SNEPCo National University Scholarship. Please visit <https://candidate.scholastica.ng/schemes/NNPCLTDSNEPCo26> for detailed information on how to apply online.
- Beware of fraudulent websites when applying for the NNPC-SNEPCo scholarship online. Such websites may ask you to make some payments in the course of the application.
- E-mail applications are NOT accepted.
- SNEPCo does NOT assign representatives/agents to assist applicants to apply.
- Any candidate found to have presented falsified documents will be disqualified or withdrawn at any level of the scholarship process.
- Only shortlisted candidates will be invited for the proctored computer-based test
- If awarded the scholarship, you cannot transfer the scholarship to another university or course of study.

HOW TO APPLY

1. Every applicant should have a valid personal email account and phone number.
2. Applications by eligible candidates should be submitted online at <https://candidate.scholastica.ng/schemes/NNPCLTDSNEPCo26>
3. Candidates should include personal and educational details in the application.
4. Applicants should upload scanned copies of the following as part of the application:
 - Recent passport-sized photograph of the applicant in JPEG format, not more than 200 kilobytes;
 - University or JAMB Admission Letter;
 - Unified Tertiary Matriculation Examinations (UTME) Result;
 - O' Level Result(s); and 'A' Level/ OND/ NCE Result(s) as applicable;
 - Letter of Identification from the state of origin, indicating applicant's local government of origin; and
 - Academic results (CGPA)for the first year (100 level) of study.

TO APPLY, VISIT:

<https://candidate.scholastica.ng/schemes/NNPCLTDSNEPCo26>

FOR ENQUIRIES:

scholastica@dragnet-solutions.com



DATA PROTECTION NOTICE

SNEPCo is committed to data privacy.
Processing of Personal Data Collected by NNPC-SNEPCo.

- Personal data collected by Shell Nigeria Exploration and Production Company Limited (SNEPCo) on behalf of itself, Nigeria National Petroleum Company Limited (NNPC)and its co-venture partners will be used exclusively for the purpose of selection of candidates for scholarship award. The information will not be used for an incompatible purpose.
- NNPC-SNEPCo 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 in order to comply with a legal obligation or is to be used for the purpose for which you have given your implied consent.
- SNEPCo 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 of Nigeria National Petroleum Company Limited (NNPC) and Shell Nigeria Exploration and Production Company Limited (SNEPCo), its co-venture partners 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 on data protection, please contact: SNEPCo-Social-Performance@shell.com

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Shell Nigeria Exploration and Production Company Limited



Co-venture partners

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

Editorial

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Ambassador Patrick Dele Cole (1940-2026)

THE passing of renowned politician, journalist, historian, diplomat and member of The Guardian Editorial Board, Ambassador Patrick Dele Cole, in London on October 17, 2026, at the age of 86, added to the list of patriotic Nigerians who have fought tirelessly for the country and left the unfinished work of nation-building to a generation still grappling with the same challenges the revered elders spent their lives helping the nation to overcome.

Given his decades-long advocacy that the country's future depended on leaders who understood public office as a responsibility rather than a personal entitlement, Cole's passing should elicit more than tributes from political leaders and professional colleagues. It invites a national reckoning. And it is time to turn admiration for the late elder statesman into a renewed commitment to the principles he represented.

Born in Abonnema, in the Kalabari Kingdom of present-day Rivers State, on August 4, 1940, Cole received an education that underscored the importance of knowledge in public leadership. From Nigerian schools, he proceeded to the University of Otago in New Zealand, where he earned a first-class honours degree, and to the University of Cambridge, where he earned a doctorate. He was a fellow of King's College, Cambridge, and a visiting professor at the University of Pennsylvania from 1969 to 1973, before returning to Nigeria and entering public service. From 1973 to 1976, Cole worked as an administrative officer in the Political Department of the Cabinet Office in Lagos. In 1976, he was appointed Managing Director of Daily Times. It is to his credit that he restored the newspaper's former influence, making it one of the largest in Africa at the time, and recruited influential journalists. In 1977, Cole served as a member of the Presidential Panel on the History of Nigeria since Independence. He also participated in the Nigeria-China Forum in 1979. Cole was appointed Nigerian ambassador to Brazil and served in that capacity from 1987 to 1990. He also served as ambassador to Argentina.

Ambassador Cole later became the People's Democratic Party (PDP) deputy national chairman for the South-South geo-political zone. He served as Special Adviser to the President on International Relations from 1999 to 2001. Ambassador Cole ably represented Nigeria at different international fora, including the United

Nations and the Organisation of African Unity (OAU).

The late Cole, author of *Modern Traditional Elites in the Politics of Lagos*, held the national honour of the Order of the Federal Republic (OFR).

While academic distinction, by itself, is no guarantee of wisdom or integrity, Cole combined intellectual preparation with practical engagement, demonstrating the power of knowledge whenever the occasion demanded that convention be questioned, historical mistakes be recognised, or the institutions entrusted to him be improved. Across journalism, diplomacy and government, he skilfully interpreted the country's political and institutional development and offered prescriptions.

The consummate newspaper man left a legacy of editorial independence rooted in his personal convictions and democratic principles. He believed a newspaper's editorial judgement should never extend the proprietor's preferences, a political patron's expectations, or a government's communication strategy. He believed that a free press must remain capable of challenging power precisely because the public needs an independent account of how authority is exercised.

As Managing Director of Daily Times, Cole introduced an editorial board modelled on the American system, separating the formulation of institutional opinion from the conventional arrangement in which editors and features writers worked together on editorials. His subsequent association with The Guardian, including his role as consultant and a member of its Editorial Board, reflected the same concern for editorial independence. He also encouraged the recruitment of Dr Stanley Macebuh, whose leadership helped in establishing the newspaper's intellectual tradition.

For Cole, truth-telling is a professional obligation rather than an act of disloyalty. That means an employee must be able to disagree with the employer whenever accountability beckons. This position exposes a fundamental weakness in Nigerian politics, where loyalty to individuals is often valued above fidelity to the public interest.

In a 2025 interview with The Guardian, Cole argued that journalists must confront leaders with the gap between promises and performance. He stressed that saying no to an employer who is wrong should not be conceived as a moral offence. Cole's death should indeed spur urgent conversations about preserving an institutional culture in which members can identify mistakes without being punished for doing so, and leaders can accept scrutiny without confusing it with betrayal and can correct their course.

During President Olusegun Obasanjo's administration, when Nigeria sought to rebuild its diplomatic relationships and re-

cover its international standing after years of isolation, Cole demonstrated what expertise can achieve when it is given precedence in the national interest, above electoral prominence and political patronage. His contribution to the economic diplomacy that culminated in Nigeria's Paris Club debt-relief agreement, which saw the cancellation of approximately \$18 billion, illustrates why the nation's leaders should prioritise the recruitment and empowerment of competent advisers.

Coming at a time when Nigeria is yet to achieve true federalism, Cole's departure should reinvigorate the debate on a federation that embraces negotiation and fairness, one in which national cohesion rests on a credible balance of interests rather than the persistent frustration of constituent communities.

Former Delta State governor James Ibori attested in his tribute that even while serving as a special adviser in Obasanjo's administration, Cole remained committed to the "legitimate aspirations" of his people, navigating the competing interests of his kinsfolk and the Federal Government. The late Cole should serve as a case study in how a diverse federation can strike a delicate balance in the distribution of political authority, economic resources and development responsibilities in ways that command public confidence across its constituent communities.

In another interview, Cole reminisced about a Nigeria where graduates obtained invitations for job interviews before completing national service and contrasted that experience with the frustrations of younger Nigerians, some of whom even lose their lives seeking employment. He re-

called benefiting from education across different regions and receiving opportunities that helped him progress. His recollections of a lost country wailing to be rediscovered raise questions about what must change urgently for talent and effort to translate, once again, into opportunity. Young Nigerians need quality education as well as accessible routes into employment without the so-called connections. There once was a Nigeria that worked. It worked for Cole. It should be made to work again.

Ironically, Cole did not despair. Until his final hours, he remained confident that Nigeria still had a bright future. Such optimism, in the face of so much political charade, deserves commendation and emulation.

The death of this patriot, who strode across scholarship, journalism, diplomacy and government, should not close the windows of hope. Rather, it should strengthen the conviction that national renewal remains possible when citizens refuse to accept poor leadership and insist that public authority must serve the common good.

Eminent Nigerians from across the country, including President Bola Tinubu and former President Obasanjo, have paid tributes to the late Cole, extolling his virtues. The way to also pay tribute to him will be to ensure that political office holders and colleagues allow the principles that Cole lived by to shape public decisions. That way, a Nigeria in which those principles become the ordinary expectations of public life can emerge. That is the unfinished work Patrick Dele Cole's passing leaves behind.

LETTER

Fun fact: My favourite Nigerian currency notes

SIR: Did you know or have you noticed, that the N200 note and the N50 note are the only Nigeria currency bills that carry artworks portraying agricultural products?

The agricultural products shown on the N200 note include: cows, yams, cocoa, oil palm nuts in a bunch, bags of cocoa forming a pyramid, flowering plants, perhaps cocoyams, as well as other harvested root-crop products. The N50 note portrays fishermen at work with their catch of fish, symbolising the country's agri-

cultural and economic activity.

The N200 note is the one that has a portrait of Alhaji Sir Ahmadu Bello (1909 - 1996) on the front side, and a variety of agricultural products on the back, while the N50 note does not feature a single historical leader or specific named individual. Instead, the front of the note displays four anonymous portraits representing the diverse people and unity of Nigeria:

- Three men representing Nigeria's three major ethnic

groups: Hausa, Igbo, and Yoruba (collectively symbolized by the "Wazobia" theme, where Wa, Zo, and Bia mean "come" in Yoruba, Hausa, and Igbo respectively).

- One woman representing the people of the Middle Belt region of Nigeria.

As a lover of Agriculture, the N200 note and the N50 note are my favourite Nigerian currency notes!

Daniel Ighakpe, a peasant farmer, school teacher and health worker, wrote from FESTAC Town, Lagos.



Opinion

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NAFDAC, regulatory inefficiency and poison in marketplace (1)

By Kalu Okoronkwo

THE National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control (NAFDAC) was established in 1993 in the aftermath of Nigeria's devastating 1990 paracetamol syrup poisoning disaster, which was associated with at least 109 child deaths linked to diethylene glycol contamination. Its creation represented a critical institutional intervention intended to strengthen public protection against unsafe medicines and other hazardous consumer products.

More than three decades after its establishment under Decree No. 15 of 1993 and subsequent amendments, the existence of NAFDAC has not eliminated the threat of substandard and falsified medicines, adulterated foods and potentially hazardous beverages.

This contradiction raises a fundamental question that goes beyond the existence of regulatory laws or the visibility of enforcement operations. How effectively has NAFDAC translated its statutory mandate into tangible protection for human life? The persistence of unsafe products in the marketplace demands an incisive examination of regulatory oversight, enforcement capacity, institutional accountability and the gap between the promise of public protection and the realities confronting Nigerian consumers.

NAFDAC's establishment was an important response to the need for effective regulation of medicines, foods, beverages and other products within its statutory mandate. But creating an agency, however necessary, is not the same as eliminating the problem it was designed to address. Legislation can confer authority, institutions can establish procedures, and regulators can recruit inspectors and acquire laboratory equipment. The ultimate test is whether these mechanisms consistently protect the public.

That distinction became painfully clear during the My Pikin teething medicine disaster of 2008-2009. A joint investigation involving Nigerian public-health authorities and international experts identified 57 poisoning cases, with 54 dead, among children aged between one to three years. Investigators detected diethylene glycol contamination in samples of the implicated medicine recovered from patients' homes and in batches associated with its

manufacturer. NAFDAC initiated a recall, and the manufacturing facility was shut down.

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) described the incident as Nigeria's second and largest diethylene glycol-associated poisoning outbreak since 1990. The tragedy remains especially disturbing because the victims were young children whose caregivers had reason to believe they were administering medicine to relieve discomfort. The product was not merely defective merchandise; it was a substance entrusted with a therapeutic purpose that instead became associated with fatal poisoning.

In recent years, concerns about falsified medicines, unwholesome foods and unsafe beverages have continued to expose weaknesses in Nigeria's product safety environment. Reports of enforcement operations and product seizures point to the scale of the challenge. But the discovery of unsafe products does not, by itself, establish how many people have been harmed or does it prove regulatory negligence in every case.

In Lagos, Onitsha, Port Harcourt, Aba, Kano and other commercial cities, the circulation of unwholesome products raises questions about the effectiveness of inspection, surveillance, distribution controls and the enforcement of existing standards. According to figures attributed to NAFDAC's enforcement operations, products valued at approximately N22.73 billion were destroyed between January and August 2026.

During the same eight-month period, the agency reportedly recorded 5,542 enforcement activities, conducted 213 raids, documented 821 product-seizure entries, closed or sealed 179 premises and made 52 arrests. It also handled 474 new cases, concluded 295 cases and carried out 22 destruction exercises. These figures suggest considerable enforcement activities, but their public health significance depends on what they reveal about the effectiveness of regulation.

How many dangerous products were intercepted before reaching the markets and to the consumers? How many investigations resulted in successful prosecutions? And how effectively were the supply chains behind the offences dismantled? Such questions are essential because the number of raids conducted or the value of goods destroyed

cannot, on their own, establish that the public is safer.

The My Pikin investigation offers a sobering illustration of the limits of reactive enforcement. The CDC report found that 28 per cent of the affected children had received the implicated medicine after the recall had been announced. This finding underscores the importance of rapid public communication, effective product tracing and the timely removal of dangerous products from circulation. A recall is indispensable, but its success depends on whether the warning reaches consumers and whether the affected product can be withdrawn before further exposure occurs.

When a product itself becomes the source of danger, consumers may have little means of protecting themselves. They depend on regulators, manufacturers, distributors and retailers to ensure that what reaches the market is safe.

Consider the case of a young man who reportedly developed complications and died after taking antimalarial medication purchased from a pharmaceutical outlet. Without verified details, the cause of his death cannot responsibly be attributed to a falsified or contaminated medicine. Nevertheless, such an account raises an important question: what safeguards can consumers rely on when a product purchased for treatment may itself pose a risk?

The same concern extends beyond medicines. Imagine a family buying palm oil to prepare a favourite meal, unaware that the product may have been adulterated. Consider parents purchasing fruit for their children without knowing whether it was handled or stored safely before reaching the market. For millions of Nigerians, these concerns reflect a wider anxiety about the safety and authenticity of products consumed daily in homes, workplaces, markets and healthcare facilities.

Recent enforcement operations have brought these risks into sharper focus, including investigations into suspected illegal production and repackaging of alcoholic and energy drinks using materials bearing the names of established brands.

At Zamfara Plaza, within the BBA Trade Fair Complex along the Badagry Expressway in Ojo, Lagos State, NAFDAC operatives reportedly uncovered a suspected illicit production or repackaging facility housed in a two-storey

building. The operation followed intelligence gathering and surveillance concerning suspected counterfeiters operating within the Trade Fair International Market.

Two suspects, identified in reports as Chibuzor Okafor and William John, were arrested. Officials reportedly recovered drums, filters, packaging materials, a heating device and other equipment suspected to have been used in the operation. According to NAFDAC, some of the suspects were caught in the act.

Speaking during the raid, the Assistant Director of the agency's Investigation and Enforcement Directorate, Mr Kunle Ojo, expressed concern about the scale of the discovery. "What we have discovered today is a lot, and it's mind-boggling. We are here to protect the lives of many Nigerians," he said. One of the most troubling aspects of the operation emerged from an explanation reportedly offered by one of the suspects. Okafor, who identified himself as a drinks dealer, told journalists that he changed the bottles in which drinks were contained. "I deal on drinks. I change the bottle of the drink. It's not that the bottle is not good. It's the drink in there, because the other one is already damaged. So that's why we are putting it to the next bottle," he said.

The account raises a fundamental question for consumers: what exactly was inside those bottles, and could buyers establish whether the contents were genuine, properly manufactured and safe to consume? The answer depends on evidence from the investigation and, where necessary, laboratory analysis. The broader concern, however, is clear: packaging can create an impression of authenticity that the contents may not justify.

In Ondo State, many families are still grieving following the loss of loved ones after drinking contaminated local brew. No fewer than 49 people died with 182 hospitalised, after consuming Monkey Tail, a very popular local brew suspected to have been caused by methanol poisoning. The incident highlights the dangers posed by unregulated alcoholic drinks in the market.

To be continued.

Okoronkwo is a communications strategist, a leadership and good governance advocate dedicated to impactful societal development and can be reached via: kalu.okoronkwo@gmail.com.

Wokeism and global migration

By Victor C. Ariole

EXTREME Right Parties in Europe and MAGA group in USA are making migration sound like crime. Even when no group—among the expected segregated ones like they say in USA, people of colors or minority groups; in France, Français de papier or sans papier (French by paperwork and French undocumented)—is spared from the wokeism mentality; that is, awareness of being threatened. It behoves the ruling class to restore some sanity, otherwise the entire humanity could be threatened by worse war than the Second World War.

The intelligence given to human beings should make them think and see the planet earth the way astronomers see the presence of stars in the "heavens" and how they behave in their over 40 billion population compared to mere eight billion human beings on earth. The Sun is a star serving multiple planets, including planet earth but does not go into confrontation with the moon and other known or unknown constellations.

Planet earth is demarcated by rivers, seas, oceans, deserts, mountains and valleys. Claim to discoveries and search by Europeans for the enhancement of their lives and in extension upgrading human civilisation have led to blurring and collapsing such demarcation; and for over 2000 years it has created both benevolence and malevolence outcomes.

However, for better humanity, more focus should be on the benevolence to obviate wokeism.

United Nations Refugee and High Commission have proven how humans could balance migration surge to counter its malevolence drive by allocating 500 million human population to Europe in any case of threat to humans from other continents. They must have reasoned it out very well in their New York Treaty, knowing very well that Europe is the arrowhead of migration and exploration; for, in the first place, its own survival, and, in the aftermath, the survival of the entire humanity.

Like Queen Elisabeth once asserted in USA, humanity has been made better by three civilisations—the White, the Black and the Native Americans.

In deed these three civilisations must acknowledge their complementarity and avoid subjecting any of them for further disavowal, and dehumanisation. Note: in France, Marion Marechal, a plausible presidential hopeful come 2027 is crying out loud that French Whites are under siege by their Maghreb migrants. France and United Kingdom seem perturbed by the migration phenomenon and worthily so, because of their colonial past and expansionism drive in the past. It is estimated that there are over 8 million migrants in France and over 14 million in United Kingdom.

Compared to over 500 million whites in USA, Australia, EURASIA, Africa and other Americas, UNHCR seems on a reasonably tally. To UNHCR, Europe should be mindful of not creating human disaster, hence more strategic in averting migrant surge.

Alice Weidell the extreme Right leader in Germany does not seem to know that after the Second World War over 1 million Germans had to emigrate on benevolence drive to Australia and elsewhere to avoid further human loss out of depression. Kemi Badenock in UK and Marine le Pen in France are primarily worried about housing and lack of facilities to contain migrants. Their peers in other parties that are more labour-inclined feel that their economy cannot survive without migrants, hence the European nightmare. Ageing population and bulging youth population are not beyond human intelligence management.

So, like abundant raw materials and minerals in Africa like abundant raw labour force in Africa, no continent on earth could thrive without what comes from Africa. Seeing a documentary cast by Diana Daisy, who went into the jungles of Thailand to discover that Black owners of Thailand are separated from the Thais and are kept in a bush like it is somehow done to the Native Americans, one quickly needs to align with Queen

Elisabeth's assertion—White, Black and Red Indians have moved humanity forward with great sacrifices on their parts. Europeans enjoyed and continue to enjoy civilisational and benevolent immigration and emigration.

Hence observing the BRICS—Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa—with great marginalisation of White, Black and Red Indians and their ultra conservatism that make migration into their space quite unacceptable—a new world order can only emerge in benevolence as the White, Black and Red Indians form their own united coalition. It could be seen as another wokeism but it remains wokeism in benevolence. Listen to BRICS' Communiqué after their three-day meeting in Delhi, no consensus on what is happening in Ukraine and Iran.

Paradoxically, South Africa in BRICS can never be Black representative as it is far from seeing things the Black worldviews, holistic approach—the ageing population provides wisdom and it guides the bulging youth population to exert their raw force to keep the assets of humanity at work and sustainable for future generation as advocated by UN Sustainable Development Goals. Sixty million South Africans, mixed, café-au-lait, cannot represent the Blacks.

Migration must not be seen as crime as long as it works for the sustainability of collective human heritage, and Voltaire summarised it as human garden; and after travelling worldwide, crossing seas and deserts, in search of gold and greener pasture, with his team,—every member as an escapist or survivor of fellow human horrors, just like South Africans inflicted on other Africans—a benevolent stance emerged: Let's team up and cultivate our garden, the earthly heritage. The earth is so big that it can contain more people. Let Eagle perch, let crow Hawk perch, and if any says the other should not perch, let malevolence follow it.

Ariole is a Professor of French and Francophone Studies, University of Lagos.

Opinion

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Assessing the cost of nocebo rhetoric in Nigerian politics

By **Elvis Eromosele**

THERE is a curious dynamic in Nigeria. Often, before the government fully implements a new policy, citizens are already suffering its psychological and economic consequences. Before a new tax takes effect, families calculate how much poorer they will become. Before an electricity tariff hike is finalised, households brace for darkness. Before an economic reform lands, traders hike prices, transport operators raise fares, and families cut back on meals.

The policy may be fresh, and promised benefits may still lie on the horizon, yet the pain has already arrived. Welcome to nocebo politics.

In medicine, the nocebo effect occurs when negative expectations cause real physical symptoms or worsen an illness. This is the opposite of the placebo effect. Transferred to politics, the concept describes what happens when years of broken promises, policy reversals, and poor communication condition citizens to expect the absolute worst from their government.

This is not to suggest Nigeria's economic hardships are imaginary. Inflation, insecurity, unemployment, and declining purchasing power are brutally real. However, negative political expectations amplify these difficulties, reshaping behaviours and eroding faith in the future.

Consider a typical Nigerian household. A wage earner's salary barely covers rent, food, transport, and school fees, while a spouse's small business is squeezed by rising energy costs.

Then comes another government an-

nouncement, perhaps regarding taxation, fuel pricing, or foreign exchange reform. Officials frame the measure as essential for long-term prosperity. The household hears something very different: another reason to panic.

Parents anticipate higher expenses. Suppliers raise prices expecting steeper transport costs. Landlords consider rent hikes. Business owners freeze hiring. Long before every anticipated cost materialises, negative expectations drive decision-making.

When government officials insist the economy is turning a corner, citizens hear an advertisement for a product they have bought before and found broken. Trust, once depleted, becomes an expensive commodity.

Nigeria's political system suffers from a severe credibility deficit. Successive administrations have promised economic transformation, steady power, affordable food, and quality healthcare. While genuine policy interventions exist, the gulf between official pledges and daily reality remains vast.

Consequently, new announcements are never received in a vacuum; they are filtered through accumulated national trauma. A pledge of lower prices is judged against the cost of the next market trip. A promise of job creation is measured against unemployed graduates on the street.

Sceptical public reactions may seem cynical, but they are rational. Citizens learn from experience. When public institutions repeatedly disappoint, scepticism becomes self-protection.

The danger is that entrenched scepticism renders even well-meaning reforms DOA.

Good news is dismissed as propaganda, while every setback is taken as confirmation that nothing will ever improve.

Economic hardship is not just measured in macroeconomic statistics; it is experienced as anxiety and the inability to plan. A business owner unable to predict energy or forex costs delays expansion. An investor doubting policy consistency holds back capital. A family uncertain about future income cuts back on non-essential spending. Individually, these choices are logical. Collectively, they suppress consumption, reduce investment, and deepen the economic slowdown.

Nigeria's leaders must realise that public confidence is not a luxury; it is a core economic engine. Yet confidence cannot be manufactured through political slogans. Telling Nigerians the economy is improving while their purchasing power shrinks will not restore trust.

People can endure temporary sacrifice if they understand its purpose, see the burden shared fairly, and witness tangible progress. They resist sacrifice when it appears permanent, and the benefits remain abstract.

The truth is that words matter. Nocebo politics also breeds political resignation. When citizens conclude that their votes do not matter or that government programmes exist primarily for elite advantage, civic participation gives way to apathy. Some withdraw from public affairs entirely, while others become susceptible to populist political manipulation.

Rebuilding public faith requires a shift from political communication to measurable performance.

One is clear communication. Officials must explain policies in simple language, outlining immediate costs, long-term targets, relief measures, and timetables.

Secondly, there must be verifiable milestones. So, promises must be tied to clear indicators. If a reform fails to meet its goals, leaders should explain why and adjust course transparently.

In addition, there must be shared sacrifice. This means that leaders must demonstrate austerity in government. Citizens will not accept calls for patience while witnessing political waste and extravagance.

Nigeria does not need leaders who promise that everything will be fine. It needs leaders who acknowledge hardship, demonstrate empathy, and show verifiable evidence that their decisions are yielding results.

Citizens, too, must maintain healthy vigilance without slipping into total cynicism, which can become its own trap.

A government, in truth, cannot control every global shock or market disruption. It can, however, control its transparency, policy consistency, and accountability. Ultimately, Nigeria's task is not to persuade people to believe in a better future, but to create conditions where believing in that future is rational.

The lesson for leaders is straightforward: stop asking citizens to trust promises. Give them reasons to trust performance.

Eromosele, a corporate communications expert, sustainability advocate, and Lead Coordinator for the Africa Sustainability Forum 2026, wrote via: elviseroms@gmail.com.

Afe Babalola: Lone centennial star from the East of Yoruba nation

By **Abiodun Fanoro**

EKITI could most appropriately be called the Eastern State when referring exclusively to the Yoruba nation or "country." And like the Biblical brightest and shiniest star in search of by the famous Three Wise Men from the East, which turned out to be Jesus Christ, the lone Centennial Star from the East of the Yoruba "country" is Aare Afe Babalola, an enigma of sort and a testament of the incomprehensible and uncommon wonder of the creator of mankind!

It is an incontrovertible fact attested to globally that some enigma are born into the world and their generation only once in a century. And from all indices Aare Afe Babalola is one of such special people in his generation and in a century.

From birth till part of his early days, the likelihood of surviving infancy was almost nil due to the penury into which he was born. That, age-wise, he is now three years away from a century with a record of innumerable, amazing and multidimensional achievements as well as an empire in nature confirms the more that he is more than a human being. This is what has made Aare Afe Babalola a multi-disciplinary field of study.

In the Yoruba land, Babalola has become an uncommon person like some late Yoruba leaders, including Chief Obafemi Awolowo and Chief Gani Fawhinmi as well as the living literary legend, Prof Wole Soyinka.

Call Babalola the moral compass of the Nigerian nation you are on course, call him educational pathfinder of the country, you will not be faulted, call him the legal luminary, the iconic lawyer, "akorin niwaju adajo or the

human law school", you are coasting home, call him the philanthropist, you are calling Afe, the benefactor to thousands of people.

In the realm of philanthropy, Afe is the proverbial "Igi Aba" in the village square that offers multi services to different people. Some people use it as protective shade against the biting sun, to some it is a relaxation centre to play "Ayo" game, ludo or draught. Some visit it for the ever present and nourishing fruit. In the afternoon, it is home for joyous and singing birds while in the night, home-bred animals (goat, sheep, hens) take their turn to use it as a dwelling home.

In the contemporary history of Ekiti people, it is not an overstatement that there is hardly any individual that has never held any political office who has surpassed the record of Babalola's contributions to the development of the state. He concentrates on direct and indirect emancipation of Ekiti people at home from all fronts and across age grades and genders.

In the area of employment, it is the same unbeatable record where no individual or group has provided as many employment opportunities for Ekiti people and non-Ekiti as done in Babalola's university, his mechanised farm as well as his furniture manufacturing company.

Afe is the "alternative" government in Ekiti! in terms of employment and welfare of the people.

The Aare Bamofin of Yoruba land is a self-made colossus exemplified by his unique history of obtaining his degrees externally from the University of London through sheer grit, illustrating a baseline determination that later shaped his multi-dimensional legacy achievements.

A mentor to the Bar, whose law firm, Afe Babalola & Co. (Emmanuel Chambers) founded in 1965, has for decades grown into an institutional nursery that has trained over 1,000 lawyers, dozens of Senior Advocates of Nigeria (SANs), judges, and attorneys-general. His patriotism and faith in Nigeria is unequalled, belonging to the corps of a few Nigerian elite who choose to aggressively invest in the country their personal wealth rather than retaining foreign assets as done by many other wealthy Nigerians.

One thing that is still intriguing about the legal giant is how he turned 360 degree to engineering the establishment of the prestigious Afe Babalola University, Ado Ekiti tailored after Havard University. ABUAD as it is called which also sounds like Havard, is unconsciously styled after missionary schools, a home for students where discipline and moral education are immeasurably dished to them.

His administrative and managerial ingenuity came to the fore when he became the Pro-Chancellor and Chairman of the Governing Council of the famous University of Lagos where he engineered massive turn-around of the institution. He was repeatedly voted the best Pro-Chancellor in Nigeria, attracting multi-million naira corporate interventions without drawing a personal emolument.

Babalola's educational ventures are a natural expansion of his legal mind—using structured institutional frameworks to cure societal deficiencies and build a new generation of self-sufficient African leaders.

Fanoro, a media practitioner in Nigeria is the National President, Good Governance For National Unity.

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Conflict of interest in Soludo's Anambra over Tinubu's re-election

When Professor Chukwuma Soludo, alongside other members of the Rainbow Coalition, was inaugurated as Anambra State coordinator of the campaign for President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's re-election, the move triggered internal dissent within the All Progressives Grand Alliance (APGA). The disagreement has opened a new front in the state's political contest, with implications for Soludo's efforts to challenge the influence of Peter Obi in 2027, LAWRENCE NJOKU reports.

THE choice of Governor Chukwuma Soludo as the Anambra State Coordinator of President Bola Tinubu's re-election campaign is turning out to be a real test of his popularity as the state's chief executive.

Recall that Soludo had previously championed the cause of Progressives Working Together, only to redirect the campaign towards Tinubu's re-election. He argues that the President remains the best option for the country, notwithstanding the fact that his long-time predecessor, Mr Peter Obi, is the candidate of the Nigerian Democratic Congress (NDC) for the same office.

To Soludo, Obi's ambition is misplaced and in bad taste. With this mindset, he has used every available opportunity to downplay Obi's aspiration, despite the NDC standard-bearer's continued mass following and acceptance across various states and regions of the country.

In the penultimate week, however, Tinubu formally inducted the governor into his Presidential Campaign Council. The appointment places considerable responsibility on Soludo to deliver Anambra State's votes to Tinubu. A victory would not only send a strong signal about the governor's political influence but also address claims about Obi's popularity in the state.

Obi, who hails from Agulu in Anaocha Local Government Area, served as governor of Anambra State for eight years, while Soludo, from Isuofia in Aguata Local Government Area, began his second term as governor this year.

Stakeholders said the two men may not have a personal quarrel, but they disagree publicly on political grounds. Soludo, for instance, believes Obi should not be anywhere near the corridors of power, let alone hold political office.

Fermented feud

THE talk in Anambra is that the political rivalry between the two leaders stems from past electoral contests that favoured Obi.

The founding National Chairman of the All Progressives Grand Alliance (APGA), Chekwas Okorie, has shed light on what he described as an unresolved political supremacy battle between Soludo and Obi. Okorie described Soludo's attacks on Obi as a "personal vendetta", arguing that the incumbent had been using his professed support for President Tinubu as a cover to vent an old animosity against his predecessor.

Okorie, who left APGA to found the United Progressives Party (UPP) at the height of the party's leadership crisis, traced the political differences between Soludo and Obi to 2009, when Soludo emerged as the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) candidate in the governorship election while Obi sought a second term.

"Obi's trouncing of Soludo in the election, in which the current incumbent ended up in a distant third position, became Obi's first perceived crime against Soludo," Okorie stated.

He added that Soludo made another attempt to realise his governorship ambition in 2013 by joining APGA.

"In August of that year, Victor Umeh's leadership of APGA disqualified Prof. Soludo from participating in the party's primary election. However, Soludo believes that Peter Obi was privy to the conspiracy to give him the greatest humiliation of his life. Soludo reckons that as Obi's second offence.

"Prof. Soludo won the November 2021 governorship election in Anambra State and was sworn into office on March 17, 2022. In the build-up to the 2023 general elections, Soludo had his chance to serve Victor Umeh the same bitter pill he was served in August 2013. He conspired

with Chief Victor Oye, the National Chairman of APGA who succeeded Victor Umeh, to secure Umeh's defeat in the party's senatorial primary for Anambra Central.

"Victor Umeh promptly switched to the Labour Party (LP), where he rode on the back of Peter Obi, the party's presidential candidate, to win the Anambra Central senatorial election. This, to Prof. Soludo, is Peter Obi's third offence. These offences are the real reasons Soludo swore to bring down Obi by any means possible," Okorie stated.

In the build-up to the 2023 general elections, Soludo had begun campaigning against Obi, who was the Labour Party's presidential candidate. On November 14, 2022, he published an article titled "History Beckons and I Will Not Remain Silent."

The article, which generated widespread debate across Nigeria, was seen as Soludo's first attempt to settle what he perceived as past political scores with Obi.

He questioned the value and impact of investments made by Obi as governor of Anambra State, arguing that Obi's presidential ambition on the Labour Party platform lacked the political structure and broad national and geopolitical alliances required to secure victory.

Soludo concluded that Obi had no realistic chance of winning the 2023 presidential election.

Distancing himself from Obi's campaign, Soludo divided his support between former Vice-President Atiku Abubakar and Tinubu, whom he described as his "personal friend". After Tinubu assumed office, Soludo began promoting the mantra of Progressives Working Together.

While his supporters argued that his position was essentially a defence of his administration's policies, they maintained that cooperation with the Federal Government would enhance Anambra State's development.

Those rooting for Obi, however, viewed the situation differently. They argued that Soludo's

opposition to Obi was driven by longstanding political rivalry and strategic positioning for a future political office.

Nonetheless, despite Soludo's opposition, he was unable to diminish Obi's electoral appeal in the state in the 2023 presidential election. Obi secured 584,621 votes, while Tinubu garnered only 5,111.

Ahead of the 2027 elections, Soludo has again mounted a campaign against Obi, dismissing his ambition and addressing various gatherings to explain why the NDC presidential contender should abandon his aspiration and support the incumbent President.

Hired campaign salesman

WITH his appointment to lead Tinubu's campaign in Anambra State, Soludo has gained fresh impetus to pursue his political differences with Obi and attempt to prevent his predecessor from becoming Nigeria's President.

It remains to be seen what strategies Soludo will deploy to convince Ndi Anambra that Tinubu is the better option in a state where the APC has struggled to establish a strong electoral foothold since 2015.

Soludo faces two major hurdles in his role as Tinubu's campaign coordinator. First, APGA candidates contesting various electoral positions may feel threatened by the governor's dual political alignment. Second, APC

leaders may be concerned about the implications of allowing Soludo to oversee the President's re-election campaign in a state where the party also has candidates contesting National and State Assembly seats.

Soludo may not have fully considered these concerns when he accepted the assignment, which effectively makes him a campaign salesman for the APC. However, the role also offers him an opportunity to leverage cooperation between APGA and the APC against Obi's electoral dominance ahead of next year's elections.

Since the APC took over the Presidency in 2015, the party has struggled to win over voters in Anambra State. In the 2023 elections, it failed to win any National or State Assembly seat in the state.

The Labour Party, which Obi led into the 2023 elections, won two senatorial seats in Anambra Central and Anambra North. It also won six of the state's 11 House of Representatives seats.

APGA, led by Soludo, did not win any senatorial seat in 2023. It subsequently won a by-election for the Anambra South senatorial seat last year. The party also won four of the 11 House of Representatives seats, while the Young Progressives Party (YPP) won one.

The late Ifeanyi Ubah, who won the Anambra South senatorial seat in 2023 on the YPP platform, later defected to the APC. However, following his death, which created a vacancy in the Senate, the APC failed to retain the seat in the

subsequent by-election.

In 2025, the APC's attempt to win the governorship election also failed, as its candidate, Nicholas Ukachukwu, and running mate, Uche Ekwunife, could not secure victory for the party.

It remains unclear how this marriage of convenience will work out between Soludo and APC members, many of whom continue to regard him as part of their political challenges in the state. Some party members have complained of marginalisation, alleging that federal appointments meant for Anambra State have been given to APGA members.

On the other hand, some APGA members appear uncomfortable with the role Soludo has accepted in Tinubu's re-election campaign. They fear it could undermine the electoral prospects of APGA candidates, particularly if the APC's reported unpopularity in the state persists.

Soon after Soludo was inducted into the campaign council, some APGA stakeholders opposed the arrangement.

The stakeholders distanced themselves from the campaign plan, insisting that they were not working for the APC and would not be compelled to embrace an arrangement they believed would not serve their interests.

One of the party chieftains at the meeting, Geoffery Onuora, said that although politics was a game of interests, "you will require the major players to navigate towards your interests".

He questioned how Soludo could agree to lead another political party's campaign in a state where the APC faced a strong political opponent. "Let us stop deceiving ourselves. The opposition that APGA will find difficult to dismantle in this state in this election is being led by Peter Obi. It is not about his political party but his person.

"Now, instead of sitting down here to plan and campaign with us, the governor has decided otherwise. APC has never worked. I don't know how it will work now. Those who are not comfortable with this arrangement are simply saying that it is just about the governor's interest and not any other," he said.

A former APGA leader in Idemili Local Government Area, Justus Oraedu, said campaigning for the principal candidate of a rival party could make it difficult to persuade voters to support both Tinubu and APGA candidates. He added that it would be difficult for the APC to abandon its ambition to win all available positions in the elections.

"APGA is an independent political party. It is not an offshoot of the APC. The way we are going could compromise the independence of this party, knowing that we don't have the level of spread that is available to the ruling party," he said.

APGA's National Publicity Secretary, Ejimofor Opara, however, welcomed Soludo's appointment, describing it as a reflection of the governor's advocacy for strategic cooperation between APGA and the Federal Government for the benefit of Anambra State and the South-East.

He maintained that APGA would retain its political identity and contest legislative elections in Anambra State.

Looking beyond these limitations, Soludo insists that he and APGA remain partners of the Tinubu administration in both the campaign and broader governance. He has described President Tinubu's economic reforms as difficult and demanding courage, but necessary for long-term stability and national growth.

"APGA stands on core principles of unity, security and shared prosperity," he stated, adding that the party supports Tinubu to advance these goals and pursue a shared vision of national transformation that, according to him, transcends political party affiliations.

Will Anambra voters trust Soludo and the APGA-APC alliance enough to choose Tinubu over Obi in 2027? This is the big question that the January 16, 2027 presidential election will answer.

Now, instead of sitting down here to plan and campaign with us, the governor has decided otherwise. APC has never worked. I don't know how it will work now. Those who are not comfortable with this arrangement are simply saying that it is just about the governor's interest and not any other.



President Bola Tinubu

Soludo

CRUDE OIL PRICE UPDATE

Brent crude: \$108.6 WTI crude: \$105.9

FOREX MARKET UPDATE

I&E Window: NI,332.69

Business groups push for unified solution to port gridlock, rising OpEx

By Adaku Onyenuchey

THE Nigerian Ports Economic Regulatory Agency (NPRA) and the Lagos Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI) have advocated a coordinated mechanism of several interconnected systems to address port inefficiency, traffic congestion, prolonged cargo clearance, vessel delays, high demurrage and storage charges, and unpredictable logistics schedules that increase the cost of moving goods.

Both agencies agreed that these costs ultimately contribute to higher prices, weaken purchasing power, reduce the competitiveness of Nigerian enterprises and products and affect the attractiveness of the economy to investors.

These were stated yesterday at the LCCI Freight Forwarders Trade Group Strategic Stakeholders' Engagement held in Lagos under the theme: "Optimising Port Traffic and Terminal Efficiency: Public-Private Solutions for Apapa and Tincan Island Ports."

The Director-General, NPRA, Dr Pius Akutah, said the ports are critical economic infrastructure supporting international trade, industrial production, employment generation, government revenue and Nigeria's competitiveness in regional and global markets.

He said when the nation's ports operate efficiently, businesses become more competitive, goods reach their destinations faster, logistics costs decline and the national economy benefits.

Akutah said, conversely, when congestion, unnecessary delays, unpredictable charges and inefficient cargo handling processes persist, the consequences are felt across the entire economy.

He said improving port efficiency is not simply a maritime sector concern, but depends on coordinated performance of several interconnected systems which include terminal operations, shipping services, truck movements, cargo examination, customs clearance, documentation, port access roads, holding bays, warehousing and the evacuation of cargo through road, rail and inland waterways.

AVCA urges investment in African infrastructure, local manufacturing

By Benjamin Alade

THE African Private Capital Association (AVCA) has called for increased private investment in infrastructure, local manufacturing and domestic supply chains to strengthen Africa's economic resilience and improve the continent's competitiveness in global markets.

The association made the call at its Sustainable Investing in Africa Summit in London, UK, where investors, development finance institutions and industry leaders examined how private capital could support economic transformation amid geopolitical tensions, market

volatility and changing global supply chains.

Participants stressed the need to move African economies away from dependence on raw material exports towards local processing and industrial production, arguing that retaining more value within the continent would create jobs, strengthen domestic businesses and expand government revenue.

Chief Executive Officer of AVCA, Abi Mustapha-Maduakor, said sustainable investment remained critical to Africa's long-term economic prospects, despite changing global attitudes towards sustainability.

\$1b partnership to strengthen African banks' trade finance capacity

By Tobii Awodipe

AFRICA Finance Corporation (AFC) and Munich Re have signed a \$1 billion risk-sharing programme to expand trade finance for African banks, aiming to ease liquidity constraints and support intra-African and international trade.

The Unfunded Managed Debt Mobilisation Programme (UMDMP) provides committed risk-sharing support for AFC's trade finance lending to financial institutions across the continent, enabling banks to access increased financing capacity and faster transaction approvals.

The programme's first phase covers 38 financial institutions across 11 African countries, focusing on commercial letters of credit, trade loans and trade guarantees used by banks to finance clients' imports and exports.

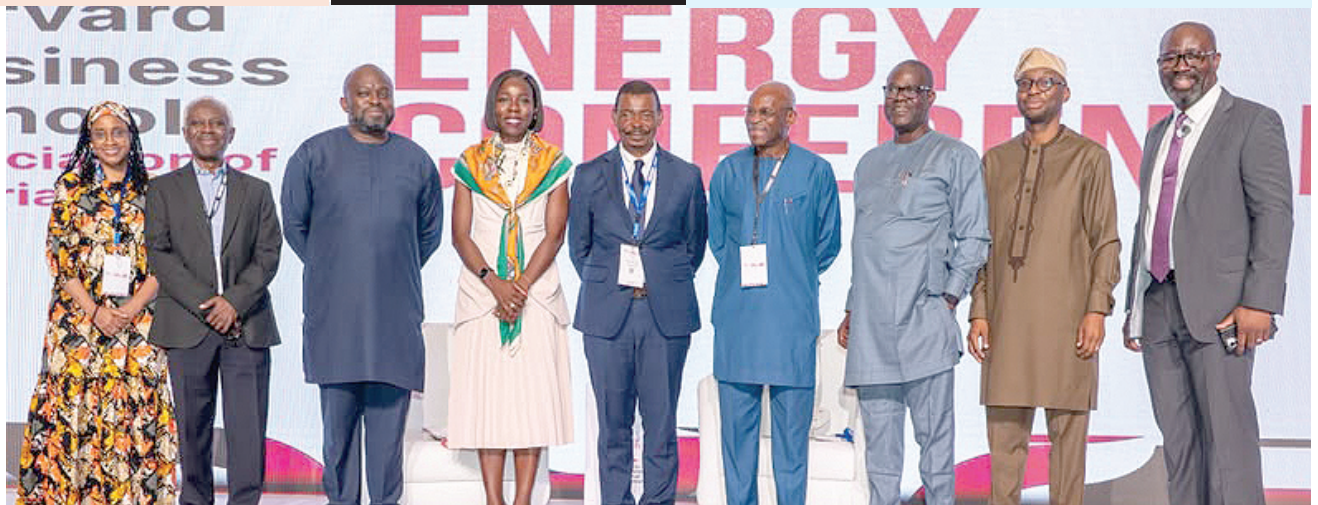
Under the arrangement, Munich Re will automatically assume an agreed share of eligible transactions within pre-

established risk parameters, while AFC retains part of the risk to align both institutions' interests. As short-term transactions mature, the programme's capacity will be recycled to support new deals.

Executive Board Member and Head of Financial Services at AFC, Banji Fehintola, said the initiative reflects a growing shift among development finance institutions towards mobilising private capital to meet Africa's financing needs.

He said traditional balance-sheet lending alone is insufficient to address the continent's funding requirements, making risk-sharing and institutional investment increasingly important to expanding development finance.

According to him, the programme would enable AFC to leverage its origination capabilities, structuring expertise and risk management frameworks to increase financing capacity while deploying its capital more efficiently.



Membership Secretary, HBSan, Mrs Rabi Isma (left); Chairman of HBSan, Adedotun Sulaiman; Vice President, HBSan, Omoniye Omojola; Partner at McKinsey & Company, Ms. Mayowa Kuyoro; President, HBSan, Collins Onuegbu; Chairman of Renaissance Energy, Dr. Layi Fatona; General Secretary, HBSan, Dr. Mayowa Afe; Program Secretary, HBSan, Dr. Blessing Ayemhere and Financial Secretary, HBSan, Patrick Iyamabo during its recent energy conference held in Lagos.

Nigeria eyes \$500b blue bond financing to aid \$1tr economy target

From Joseph Chibueze, Abuja

NIGERIA is exploring the potential to mobilise over \$500 billion through blue bonds to finance eligible maritime, inland waterways and other blue economy projects, as the Federal Government stepped up efforts to attract private capital and international development financing towards its target of building a \$1 trillion economy by 2030.

The financing prospect emerged at an Investment Partnership Lab convened by the Federal Ministry of Budget and Economic Planning, in collaboration with the European Union Delegation to Nigeria and ECOWAS, on the sidelines of the 32nd Nigerian Economic Summit in Abuja.

The disclosure comes as the government seeks alternatives to limited budgetary resources, with 17 indicative investment programmes presented to connect productive sectors with transport infrastructure and financing opportunities. The proposed blue bond financing, however, remains a potential

...Unveils 17 investment programmes to fast-track devt

funding opportunity, not money already raised or secured by Nigeria.

The initiative comes as the Federal Government acknowledges that limited budgetary resources cannot independently finance the infrastructure and productive-sector investments required to achieve its economic growth ambitions.

Minister of Budget and Economic Planning, Senator Abubakar Atiku Bagudu, said Nigeria must mobilise additional capital through grants, technical assistance, development cooperation and private investment to complement public expenditure.

Speaking at the Lab, organised by the Ministry in collaboration with the European Union Delegation to Nigeria and ECOWAS, Bagudu said achieving the \$1 trillion economic target would require coordinated investments capable of expanding productive capacity, generating employment and improving living standards.

He stressed that the focus must extend beyond identifying projects to establishing viable investment opportunities that can attract financing and deliver measurable economic and social benefits.

The Lab, facilitated by Particip GmbH, brought together government institutions, development finance institutions, state governments, private-sector operators and development partners to explore innovative financing for integrated transport and trade infrastructure.

It showcased 17 indicative integrated investment programmes designed to connect productive-sector opportunities with transport infrastructure and financing arrangements.

A central feature was the proposed Sealink Project, which seeks to integrate inland waterways, coastal shipping, river ports, roads, railways and logistics facilities into a more connected transport network.

Participants identified inland

waterways as a potentially cost-efficient alternative for transporting bulk cargo, reducing pressure on highways and extending the useful lifespan of road and rail infrastructure.

However, they stressed that investments in the sector would require hydrographic surveys, navigability assessments, maritime security, reliable cargo demand and commercially viable operating arrangements.

The discussions also highlighted the need for stronger coordination between federal and state governments to prevent project duplication, improve resource allocation and ensure that infrastructure investments complement productive activities across state boundaries.

Bagudu said Nigeria could not rely on yearly budgetary allocations alone to finance its development priorities, identifying the European Union's Global Gateway Investment Strategy as an important platform for attracting European technology, expertise and capital.

Rising dissatisfaction with public services may undermine Nigeria's new tax regime

By Isaac Chibuike

POOR public services could undermine tax compliance under Nigeria's new tax regime, with only 22 per cent of households expressing satisfaction with public services, according to a survey by the Nigerian Economic Summit Group (NESG).

The 2026 Tax Perception Survey Report found that only 24.3 per cent of households had seen or heard of a tax-funded project in their communities, while 29.2 per cent said such services were unavailable in their areas.

Firms also rated all nine public services covered by the survey below the midpoint of the assessment scale, with water supply and sanitation receiving the lowest ratings.

The findings highlighted the challenge facing the government's tax reform efforts, following the implementation of the Nigeria Tax Act 2025 on January 1, 2026, as taxpayers question the

benefits of paying taxes amid poor service delivery.

While 74.4 per cent of households agreed that the government had the right to collect taxes, only 27 to 30 per cent expressed some or a high level of trust in federal, state and local tax authorities. Local government tax offices recorded the lowest trust levels. Trust was higher among businesses, with 48.7 to 52.2 per cent of firms reporting moderate or higher confidence in tax authorities.

Despite concerns about public services and tax administration, 95.8 per cent of firms asked to file returns or provide records in the previous year said they complied, although the figures were self-reported.

The survey also found that 67.2 per cent of households reported paying informal levies outside the state system at least once, while 13.9 per cent of firms said they had been asked to pay fees they considered illegal.

Businesses linked their willingness to pay taxes to improvements in public services. While 48.2 per cent said they would definitely pay more if service delivery improved, 43.1 per cent agreed that firms should refuse to pay taxes until services got better.

Among firms that did not comply with tax requirements, 61.6 per cent cited high tax burdens, 41.8 per cent pointed to cash-flow constraints, and 34.9 per cent blamed multiple taxes and levies.

Awareness of the new tax law also remains limited. About 60 per cent of households said they were not at all or only slightly familiar with the Nigeria Tax Act 2025, while just 15 per cent had sought official information about it.

Although 68.8 per cent of households had internet access, only 19.2 per cent had used a digital tax system, indicating limited adoption of online tax services.

To improve compliance and confidence in the tax system, NESG recommended that every tax payment carry a verifiable receipt and be routed through a traceable government account. It also called for sanctions where unauthorised collections are confirmed and regular disclosure of projects funded with tax revenue.

The group further proposed that the Joint Revenue Board coordinate federal, state and local tax authorities to improve consistency in tax administration.

The survey covered 18,000 working adults, with one respondent per household, and 9,097 firms across the 36 states and the Federal Capital Territory between July and September 2026. Focus group discussions and interviews with tax officials were also conducted in six states that received additional sampling.

Dangote Refinery IPO hits \$1.6b, attracts investors from 120 countries

By Helen Oji
DOMESTIC and retail investors have committed up to \$1.6 billion to Dangote Refinery's initial public offering (IPO), meeting its fundraising target as applications from investors in 120 countries raise the prospect of intense competition for available shares.

The strong demand is expected to push the total amount raised beyond the original target, with the refinery potentially attracting as much as \$2.1 billion if it exercises its 30 per cent over-allotment option, according to a Bloomberg report published yesterday.

The report, which cited people familiar with the transaction, said domestic and retail

investor commitments had reached between \$1.5 billion and \$1.6 billion, while international demand could exceed the shares available for allocation.

The development highlighted the capacity of domestic investors to mobilise substantial funds for a major industrial project while attracting interest from international markets.

The offer, which closed yesterday, October 27, following a two-week extension, involved the sale of 4.1 billion ordinary shares at N525 each, representing a fundraising target of approximately N2.15 trillion.

The extension was intended to give more investors, particularly those outside Nigeria, addi-

tional time to participate in the offer.

Bloomberg reported that investors from 120 countries had applied to participate, including investors from all 54 African countries. The figures underline the geographical reach of the offer, although the final number

of successful investors and the allocation of shares will depend on the allotment process.

The transaction is also testing the ability of African capital markets to channel savings into major businesses across national borders. Arrangements involving depositary receipts and other

approved investment channels have been used to facilitate participation by eligible investors outside Nigeria.

Africa's richest man, Aliko Dangote, has positioned the IPO as an opportunity to widen public ownership of the refinery and bring millions of individual

investors into the capital market.

The minimum subscription is 10 shares at N525 each, requiring an investment of N5,250. The entry threshold is intended to make participation accessible to ordinary Nigerians and other eligible African investors.

Golden Terra Oil wins most trusted cooking oil

FOR many mothers, preparing a meal is one of the ways they express love and care for their families. From the aroma of freshly prepared stew to the taste of their favourite jollof rice, food brings comfort, creates memories and brings loved ones together. The ingredients used in these meals matter, not only for the flavour they deliver but also for the nutritional needs of the people around the table. Through its Pour Pure Love platform, Golden Terra Oil celebrates the love and care mothers pour into preparing meals that nourish their families.

Reflecting the confidence consumers place in the brand for their everyday cooking needs, Golden Terra Oil has emerged as the Most Trusted Cooking Oil Brand at the 2026 Consumer Value Awards.

Organized by BrandXchange, the Consumer Value Awards provides a platform for consumers to recognize brands they trust and value. Through a 30-day public voting process, consumers nominated and voted for brands they believed deserve recognition across dif-

ferent categories. Golden Terra Oil's win reflects the confidence consumers place in the brand.

Cooking oil plays an important role in the preparation of many Nigerian meals, contributing to the taste, flavour, texture and overall enjoyment of dishes. The type and brand of oil used also matters to families seeking to make mindful choices about what they serve at home. As part of its commitment to consumers, Golden Terra Oil focuses on delivering quality cooking oil for everyday meal preparation, helping moms create the dishes their families love while considering their household cooking needs.

Speaking on the recognition, Probal Bhattacharya, Chief Marketing Officer, TGI Group, said, "We appreciate BrandXchange for providing a platform that gives consumers a voice in recognizing brands they trust and value. We are grateful to our consumers for their continued confidence in Golden Terra Oil. Through our Pour Pure Love message, we celebrate the mothers who express their love and care through the meals they prepare for their families.

Man no be machine: Alieve relieves everyday pain

IN Nigeria, the day often begins before the sun is fully up. From the early morning rush to beat traffic to the race to meet deadlines, serve customers, close deals and keep businesses running, Nigerians have mastered the art of pushing through. For many, one job is not enough, and the pursuit of progress means juggling multiple responsibilities, side hustles and income streams. The hustle rarely stops, and neither do the demands of everyday life. Somewhere along the way, it becomes easy to forget that the human body has its limits.

That reality is at the heart of CHI Pharmaceuticals' latest campaign for Alieve, its pain relief brand, built around a simple but powerful truth "Man No Be Machine." The campaign captures a familiar Nigerian experience: people often push themselves as though they can run endlessly, until headache, body ache or fever reminds them that they are human. When pain strikes,

even the busiest person may have to slow down. And when there is still so much to do, getting back to speed becomes the priority.

Rather than presenting people as invincible, the creative acknowledges the determination that drives them while recognizing that even the hardest workers need relief when pain gets in the way. Its message is clear - while the hustle must go on, nobody is a machine. When pain strikes, you need Alieve to help you get back to the moments and activities that matter. Central to the campaign is Alieve's promise, "Rise Above Pain," which connects the functional benefit of pain relief with the desire to keep moving through everyday life.

Powered by ibuprofen, Alieve is registered with the National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control (NAFDAC) and is available in three formulations: 100 mg/5 mL oral suspension for children, and 200 mg and 400 mg tablets for adults.

Boeing, Cranfield join W'African regulators to boost aviation safety

By Olusegun Koiki

BOEING and Cranfield University have partnered with aviation regulatory bodies in West Africa to strengthen safety oversight, improve regulatory capacity and prepare the region's aviation

industry for projected fleet expansion.

The partnership, which also involves the Banjul Accord Group Aviation Safety and Security Oversight Organisation (BAGASOO) and the Civil Aviation Agency of

Cabo Verde (AAC), is expected to promote knowledge sharing, harmonise regulatory practices and improve the capacity of aviation authorities to address emerging safety challenges.

The collaboration is being

implemented through a five-day regulatory excellence workshop in Praia, Cabo Verde, which began this week, with 24 professionals from civil aviation authorities and airlines across West Africa participating.



Senior VP, Communications, Tope Oshunkeye (left); Executive Head, Corporate Affairs, Caroline Oghuma; Chief Executive Officer, Kemi Omotosho and Executive Head, Customer Value Management, Onyinye Ezenwa all of MultiChoice Nigeria, a CANAL+ company, at the press briefing announcing the launch of new DStv and GOtv packages at the MultiChoice HQ in Lagos, yesterday.

FirstBank partners Google Pay to expand cardholder payment options

FIRSTBANK has announced the integration of Google Pay for eligible cardholders, enabling access to the global digital wallet platform. This milestone reinforces the Bank's commitment to delivering secure, convenient, and innovative payment solutions that meet the evolving needs of today's digitally connected customers.

The integration allows eligi-

ble FirstBank cardholders to add their cards to Google Pay and make seamless, contactless payments using compatible devices at supported payment terminals worldwide. Customers can also enjoy the convenience of faster checkout experiences while benefiting from the robust security features built into Google Pay.

As consumer adoption of digital payment technologies continues to grow, FirstBank

remains at the forefront of innovation by providing solutions that simplify everyday banking and empower customers with greater flexibility in how they transact locally and internationally.

Speaking on the development, Group Head, e-Business and Retail Products, FirstBank, Abednego Ugwueke, said: "At FirstBank, we are constantly evolving our digital capabili-

ties to deliver banking experiences that are simple, secure and aligned with the lifestyle of our customers. The integration of Google Pay is another significant step in our digital transformation journey, providing eligible cardholders with a seamless and globally accepted payment solution that enables them to make purchases with confidence wherever Google Pay is accepted.

663 Lagos retirees secure N1.04 billion in retirement bonds

By Bankole Orimisan

NO fewer than 663 retirees in the Lagos State public service have benefited from N1.04 billion in retirement bonds, as the state continues efforts to meet its pension obligations and improve former workers' financial security.

The Director-General of the

Lagos State Pension Commission (LASPEC), Babalola Obilana, disclosed this at the 117th Retirement Bond Presentation Ceremony in Lagos, where he said the government is facilitating the payment of N1, 036,355,006.43 to the beneficiaries.

The payment amounts to an average of about N1.56 million per retiree, although individual

benefits vary based on their pension entitlements.

He said the payment was important to retirees as they adjusted to life after active service, when regular salaries gave way to pension income and other sources of financial support.

Obilana said the presentation reflected the Lagos State Government's commitment

to recognising retired public servants' contributions and improving their welfare after years of service.

He added that LASPEC would continue to strengthen pension administration through improved record management, technology adoption and collaboration with Pension Fund Administrators and Annuity Service Providers.

Women tasked on digital devt as IXPN cuts \$40m yearly capital flight

By Adeyemi Adepetun

WOMEN have been urged to take up greater roles in building and managing Nigeria's digital infrastructure as industry leaders called for increased investment in connectivity, technical skills and inclusive leadership to prepare the country for the artificial intelligence (AI) era.

The call was made at the Women in Internet Infrastructure Forum organised by the Internet Exchange Point of Nigeria (IXPN) as part of activities marking its 20th anniversary.

The forum, themed "Breaking the Barriers, Building the Future," brought together students,

National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) members, young professionals and industry leaders to discuss barriers to women's participation in technology and ways to expand opportunities in the sector.

Welcoming participants, IXPN Board Member, Mrs Zubaida Rasheed, said the forum demonstrated the organisation's commitment to developing the next generation of professionals, particularly women who will build and manage the infrastructure powering Nigeria's digital economy.

She noted that innovations in software, fintech and AI depend on reliable connectivity, data cen-

tres, cloud infrastructure and skilled professionals, urging more women to pursue careers in network engineering, internet peering, data centre operations, cloud computing and cybersecurity.

Established in 2006, IXPN has helped keep Internet traffic within Nigeria, reducing international transit costs, improving network performance and strengthening resilience.

Acting Company Secretary, IXPN, Barr. Ezinne Ekeghe, highlighted the organisation's contribution to Nigeria's Internet ecosystem. Citing a 2020 Internet Society report, she said IXPN's peak traffic had grown from 300 Mbps to 125 Gbps, generating estimated year-

ly cost savings of about \$40 million.

She stressed that the country's digital future would depend on resilient networks, advanced technical skills and wider opportunities for women and young people. "The next chapter will be shaped not only by the networks we build, but by who gets the opportunity to build them," she said.

In her keynote address, Women Building the Digital Infrastructure of the Future, Funke Opeke, founder and former chief executive officer of MainOne, called for sustained investment and stronger local interconnection to maximise the economic benefits of AI.

How Nigeria can leverage hydropower assets for reliable electricity

From rehabilitating troubled hydropower assets to building a culture of technical competence, the outgoing Mainstream Energy Solutions chief offers lessons for a sector still struggling to turn installed capacity into reliable electricity.
KINGSLEY JEREMIAH reports.

LAST week in Abuja, industry leaders, engineers, regulators, colleagues and friends gathered to celebrate the retirement of Lamu Audu, the pioneer Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of Mainstream Energy Solutions Limited (MESL). Their tributes celebrated a career spanning decades in Nigeria's electricity industry, including 13 years leading a company that has become one of the country's most significant hydropower operators.

Beyond the ceremonies and emotional farewells, however, Audu's departure raises a question Nigeria's electricity sector can no longer afford to ignore. What would change if the competence, technical discipline and institutional continuity associated with his leadership became the standard for managing the country's entire power industry?

Since the 2013 privatisation of the power sector, Nigerians have waited for the promise of improved electricity supply to become a daily reality. Although installed generation capacity has increased, households and businesses remain exposed to unreliable supply, forcing many to invest in generators, inverters and solar systems.

The problem is not simply that Nigeria lacks generating assets. It is that the country continues to struggle to make its existing infrastructure work efficiently, deliver electricity to consumers and recover enough revenue to sustain investment.

The Nigerian Electricity Regulatory Commission's operational performance fact sheet for August 2026 provided a revealing illustration. Against installed capacity of about 13,625 megawatts, average available capacity stood at 4,758MW, while average generation was approximately 4,102MW. In other words, barely a third of installed capacity was available for dispatch.

That gap is central to understanding why electricity supply remains inadequate despite years of reform.

From troubled assets to improved performance

WHEN Mainstream took over the Kainji and Jebba hydropower plants in November 2013, the assets faced serious operational challenges.

According to Audu's farewell address, Kainji had an installed capacity of 760 MW, but no generating unit was operational at the time, while Jebba's 578.4MW capacity was constrained by equipment and operational problems.

The company inherited ageing equipment, obsolete control systems and low staff morale. Rather than treating these difficulties as permanent limitations, its leadership approached them as engineering and management problems requiring sustained investment, rehabilitation and workforce development.

Under Audu, Mainstream expanded

the combined capacity of Kainji and Jebba from 460MW to 922MW, according to the International Hydropower Association's profile of the engineer. The company subsequently expanded its portfolio to include other hydropower assets, including Zungeru and Kashimbila.

The significance of this achievement lies not merely in the numbers but in the approach behind them.

In his farewell address, Audu recalled how the company restored generating units, introduced modern supervisory control and data acquisition systems, invested in personnel and strengthened operational safety. He credited the board, shareholders, management and staff with making the transformation possible.

His account presents a model of leadership that recognises an important distinction. Acquiring infrastructure is not the same as making it productive.

Nigeria's wider electricity industry has struggled with precisely that distinction. Privatisation transferred assets and operational responsibilities to private companies, but it did not automatically resolve the financial, technical and institutional problems inherited from the former public-sector system.

Mainstream's experience suggested that reform must be measured by functioning equipment, dependable output, competent personnel and sustainable operations, rather than ownership changes or announced capacity alone.

Why the wider sector remains trapped

THE first bottleneck is the persistent gap between installed and available generation capacity. On Monday, Nigeria's grid failed again. That has

happened over 140 times since privatisation. Plants cannot produce at their rated capacity when equipment is defective, maintenance is inadequate, gas supplies are constrained, or operators lack sufficient working capital.

For gas-fired plants, unreliable fuel supply and outstanding payments across the electricity value chain have repeatedly undermined production.

Hydropower operators face different challenges, including equipment maintenance, hydrology and the need for continuous investment in ageing infrastructure.

The second problem is transmission and distribution. Electricity generated at a power station must still pass through transmission infrastructure and distribution networks before reaching consumers. Congestion, technical losses, inadequate infrastructure and commercial weaknesses can prevent additional generation from translating into improved supply.

NERC's second-quarter 2025 report, for instance, recorded an average transmission loss factor of 8.58 per cent. This illustrated how part of the electricity injected into the grid can be lost before reaching distribution companies.

The financial structure of the market compounded these difficulties. When distribution companies cannot collect sufficient revenue, or when payments do not flow reliably to market participants, generators and other operators face constraints on maintenance and investment. Consumers, meanwhile, contend with poor supply, estimated billing concerns and rising energy costs.

These problems cannot be resolved by appointing a competent managing director to one company. They require coordinated action across generation, transmission, distribution, regulation and market finance.

The leadership question Nigeria must confront

ed beyond an individual executive's performance. It involved building and leading a team capable of rehabilitating critical infrastructure and sustaining operations.

But the more important question for Nigeria is why such capacity is not consistently reflected across the sector.

Too often, leadership appointments in strategic public institutions become exercises in political accommodation rather than transparent assessments of technical knowledge, managerial experience and demonstrated results. Where appointments prioritise political loyalty over competence, institutions risk losing continuity, weakening accountability and repeating costly mistakes.

The answer is not to exclude political oversight from a sector of national importance. It is to ensure that political leaders establish clear objectives and appoint qualified professionals to deliver them, with performance measured against published targets.

Making competence institutional

AUDU himself acknowledged that Mainstream's achievements were not the work of one person. In his farewell address, he thanked the company's chairman, board, shareholders, management and staff, while describing the organisation as a family.

That observation matters because Nigeria cannot build a reliable electricity industry around a succession of exceptional individuals. It must create institutions in which competent leadership is supported by professional staff, predictable regulation, adequate financing and measurable accountability.

First, government and private operators should prioritise rehabilitation and maintenance of existing assets before celebrating new capacity. Every major plant should have transparent performance targets covering availability, generation, maintenance and safety.

Second, appointments to critical technical and regulatory positions should be based on demonstrable qualifications, relevant experience and measurable performance. Boards should publish clear expectations for managing directors and assess their performance against them.

Third, investment must follow operational priorities. Generators need predictable market payments, while transmission and distribution companies require investment plans tied to verifiable improvements in service delivery. Regulatory authorities must enforce obligations consistently rather than allow persistent underperformance to become normal.

Fourth, the industry must strengthen succession planning. Mainstream's transition to Siraj Abdullahi is an opportunity to demonstrate that institutional knowledge can survive a change in leadership. Mainstream has confirmed Abdullahi's appointment as Audu's successor.

Finally, consumers must become central to measuring success. Installed capacity, financial returns and corporate growth are important, but they cannot substitute for dependable electricity in homes, hospitals, schools and factories.

A legacy that should challenge the system

AUDU's 13-year tenure does not offer a complete solution to Nigeria's electricity crisis. Mainstream operates a particular portfolio of hydropower assets, and its experience cannot simply be replicated across every segment of the power industry.

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



Immediate past Managing Director of Mainstream Energy Solutions Limited, Lamu Audu (left) and Chairman of the organisation, Sani Bello at a farewell ceremony organised in honour of Audu in Abuja.

Africa targets local jobs, industries in renewable energy transition

From Kingsley Jeremiah, Abuja

AFRICAN governments and international development institutions will explore ways to turn the continent's renewable energy transition into a driver of local industrialisation, job creation and economic growth at a policy conference co-organised by Warwick Business School.

The Pan-African Policy Virtual Conference, Turning the Lights On: Unlocking Circular Value Chains for Africa's Renewable Energy Transition, will bring together senior representatives of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), African Development Bank Group, International Renewable

Energy Agency (IRENA), World Resources Institute and Development Bank of Southern Africa, alongside government officials from Rwanda, South Africa and Namibia.

The conference, convened with the African Circular Economy Alliance, will examine how African countries can capture more economic value from renewable energy investments by developing local industries around the reuse, repair and repurposing of technologies and components.

Professor of the Economics of Innovation and Deputy Director of the Circular Economy Powered Renewable Energy Centre (CEPREC), who is co-organising the event, Giuliana

Battisti, said Africa's energy transition presented an opportunity to address electricity deficits while building domestic industrial capacity.

Battisti said about 600 million Africans, representing slightly less than 50 per cent of the continent's population, currently lacked access to electricity, limiting opportunities to improve living conditions, support industrialisation and create jobs.

While renewable energy offers a pathway to expanding electricity access, she warned that the transition also raises questions about the sourcing of materials and the management of obsolete technologies, including solar panels and batteries.

She said circular economy principles could help African countries reduce waste, reuse valuable components and develop local businesses and skills instead of relying solely on imported technologies.

"Africa's renewable energy transition represents one of the most significant economic and sustainability opportunities of our time for the African people and for the planet," Battisti said.

The conference will feature a keynote address by Riad Meddeb, Head of Decarbonisation and Sustainable Energy at UNDP, titled Powering Africa's Energy Future: Energy Access, Sustainable Infrastructure and the Role of Circular Value Chains.

LCCI decries multiple taxes 10 months after consolidation

Stories by Tobi Awodipe

Renewed port corridor congestion costs operators N100b

PRESIDENT, Lagos Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI), Leye Kupoluyi, has said that businesses are still burdened and overwhelmed by numerous taxes and levies, about 10 months after the new tax laws were supposedly meant to consolidate over 100 sub-national taxes.

The consolidation bid aimed to compress multiple taxes and levies into nine revenue heads, abolish revenue road-blocks, and ban cash collection, with penalties of up to N5 million or three years' imprisonment for offenders.

However, instead of a decrease in multiple taxation, Kupoluyi lamented that new levies, especially from non-state actors, have risen.

Speaking with journalists about the state of the economy and business environment, he drew on the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN)'s September 2026 Business Expectations Survey, in which firms ranked high and multiple taxation as

their most pressing constraint, ahead of insecurity and interest rates.

He regretted that, despite promises made to businesses and manufacturers regarding the consolidation of taxes and levies, as well as improved ease of doing business, the promises are yet to see the light of day, as taxation has increased while the business operating environment remains harsh and unfriendly.

He pointed out that manufacturers in Apapa have reported that their trucks are still stopped by several state agencies and non-state actors between the ports and their factories.

"Operators estimate that renewed congestion on the port corridor has cost them about 100 billion so far. This is unacceptable.

"We call on the Joint Revenue Board and state governments to publish a consolidated schedule of lawful levies for each state, to prosecute illegal collectors visibly under the new penalties, and to

establish a tax ombudsman. We also support a single consolidated bill for port-related charges and a no-tout zone across Lagos industrial and port areas," he said.

Also lamenting contractor arrears and delays in capital releases, he revealed that last year, only N1.21 trillion of the N13.89 trillion capital budget was released between January and September, an execution rate of 8.7 per cent.

"The 2025 capital component has since been extended for the third time, and the N68.32 trillion 2026 budget had not fully begun implementation as of July. Unpaid contractors are cutting jobs and defaulting on bank loans, and the effects are spreading to suppliers in construction, manufacturing, and services.

"We call on the Federal Ministry of Finance and the Office of the Accountant-General of the Federation to publish a verified schedule for clearing contractor arrears, to release 2026 capital funds on a predictable quarterly timetable, and to publish quarterly budget implementation reports with project-level key performance indicators (KPIs)," he said.

Regretting the rising insecurity in the country, which he said remained a significant threat to enterprise development, agricultural productivity and investment, he said businesses incurred additional costs through private security arrangements, disruptions to transportation, higher insurance expenses and the need to modify supply chains.

In agricultural areas, he said, insecurity can constrain cultivation, harvesting and the movement of produce to markets.

"We urge government to strengthen security across farming communities, industrial corridors, transportation routes and commercial centres. Security is not only a national priority; it is also a prerequisite for productive investment and economic competitiveness."

He stressed that the private sector needs a predictable policy environment in which businesses can make long-term investment decisions with reasonable confidence.

Frequent changes in rules, inconsistent implementation, overlapping mandates and inadequate consultation, he said, can discourage investment even where the underlying policy objective is legitimate.

He encouraged the government to deepen consultation with the organised private sector before introducing major policy changes that affect production, trade, taxation and investment.

Afreximbank mobilises \$2b for industrial zones, targets local value addition

THE African Export and Import Bank (Afreximbank) has mobilised over \$2 billion to support the development of industrial zones across Africa, as part of efforts to move the continent from exporting raw materials to producing higher-value manufactured goods.

The financing, secured in partnership with industrial zone developer Arise IIP, is supporting industrial infrastructure and businesses operating within special economic zones, with six industrial parks already operational and another 15 in the pipeline.

Speaking at the Forum on Investment in Special Economic Zones in Cotonou, Benin, the Executive Vice President in charge of Intra-African Trade and Export Development at Afreximbank, Kanayo Awani, said Africa needed coordinated investments across the production chain to convert its agricultural and mineral resources into finished products.

She said the bank's approach combines infrastructure financing, support for enterprises operating within industrial zones and mechanisms to connect locally manufactured products with domestic, regional and international markets.

Awani cited the Glo-Djigbé Industrial Zone (GDIZ) in Benin as an example of how industrialisation could increase local value addition and strengthen manufacturing capacity.

Before the establishment of the zone, Benin processed less than one per cent of its cotton locally. The facility now processes about 40,000 tonnes of cotton, supporting an integrated production chain that transforms the raw material into finished garments.

The development illustrated the potential of special economic zones to expand domestic processing, create manufacturing opportunities and retain a greater share of export earnings within African economies.

However, Awani said replicat-

ing the model across the continent would require reliable financing, sustained market demand and support for businesses at different stages of production.

She said the bank provides project preparation support, equipment financing, working capital, guarantees and equity investments through its Fund for Export Development in Africa (FEDA).

She said the bank also deployed its Africa Buyers Programme and the Africa Trade and Distribution Company to help manufacturers secure orders, establish distribution channels and reach buyers in target markets.

In 2025, buyers connected with the GDIZ signed contracts valued at \$6 million, highlighting the role of market access and trade facilitation in supporting industrial production.

Awani disclosed that the Bank was also in advanced negotiations to establish an office within the GDIZ to bring financing solutions and trade facilitation services closer to businesses operating in the industrial zone.

The proposed office is expected to strengthen the bank's engagement with manufacturers and improve access to services required to expand production and trade.

For African economies seeking to diversify exports and reduce dependence on unprocessed commodities, industrial zones offer a platform to link infrastructure development with manufacturing, employment generation, and regional trade.

Afreximbank's strategy is aimed at converting investor interest into productive enterprises capable of creating jobs, expanding intra-African trade and retaining more economic value on the continent.

The effort also aligns with the broader objectives of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), which seeks to deepen regional economic integration by expanding trade in goods and services and strengthening African production networks.



The Consul General of France in Lagos, Laurent Favier (left), and President, Franco-Nigerian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FNCCI), Guillaume Niarfeix, at the French Week press conference held in Lagos.

Nigeria-France trade hits \$4.7b as firms deepen investments

BILATERAL trade between Nigeria and France reached \$4.7 billion in 2025, as businesses from both countries deepen investments across energy, infrastructure, agriculture, logistics, finance and other sectors.

Speaking during the buildup of activities for this year's French Week, the Consul General of France in Lagos, Laurent Favier, said the growing commercial relationship reflected a shift from diplomatic intentions to concrete business transactions, supported by active engagement between the two governments and private-sector organisations.

Favier, who described Nigeria as France's leading trading partner in sub-Saharan Africa, cited recent agreements on the development of the Gateway Deep Sea Port and the adjoining Ogun State Blue Marine Special Economic Zone as examples

of expanding economic cooperation.

The agreements were advanced in Paris in September 2026 in the presence of President Tinubu, alongside broader efforts to attract investment and strengthen commercial links between the two countries.

According to Favier, over 100 French companies currently operate in Nigeria across pharmaceuticals, agriculture, insurance, logistics, transport, infrastructure and hospitality, generating roughly 14,000 direct local jobs.

He put France's foreign direct investment stock in Nigeria at €8.1 billion in 2025, describing the investments as evidence of a long-term commitment to economic partnership and sustainable growth.

He noted that French companies, including TotalEnergies, CMA CGM, SPIE, Schneider Electric and Danone,

are continuing to expand their Nigerian operations, while newer commercial developments are extending the relationship into retail, hospitality and entertainment.

Retail giant Carrefour and hospitality group Accor are among the French brands expanding their presence in Nigeria, while Canal+ has strengthened its position in the entertainment industry through its acquisition strategy involving MultiChoice.

Favier said the growing engagement reflected increasing opportunities for French businesses in Nigeria's large consumer market and for Nigerian companies seeking access to French investors and European markets.

President of the Franco-Nigerian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FNCCI), Guillaume Niarfeix, said this year's French Week would focus on

converting discussions between businesses into concrete partnerships and investment opportunities.

The week-long programme, described by the chamber as Nigeria's largest C-level business networking event, is scheduled to hold in Lagos from tomorrow, October 29 to November 6, 2026.

Niarfeix said French investments are visible across several strategic sectors, including energy, transport and logistics, with projects expected to support infrastructure development and economic activity.

In the energy sector, he cited TotalEnergies' 2024 final investment decision with the Nigerian National Petroleum Company (NNPC) on the Ubeta gas field, which is expected to supply gas to Nigeria LNG's Train 7 project. He also referenced the more recent IMA project as part of contin-

ued investment activity.

In Lagos, the Omi Eko project is expected to transform water transportation by introducing 75 electric ferries, 25 upgraded terminals, and 15 routes covering 140 kilometres of waterways. The project is receiving support from France, through the French Development Agency (AFD), alongside the European Union and the European Investment Bank.

Niarfeix also highlighted the Lekki Deep Sea Port, where CMA CGM has agreed to operate the container terminal. The port has a 14-metre draft and an annual handling capacity of 2.5 million twenty-foot equivalent units (TEUs), positioning it as a significant logistics asset for international trade.

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

How 5G spectrum deficit fuels growing regional digital divide

By Adeyemi Adepetun

DEEPER digital transformation in Nigeria and Africa as a whole is at risk of stalling due to a widening 5G spectrum deficit that threatens to deepen connectivity gaps, slow economic growth, and leave millions excluded from the digital economy.

This is according to GSMA's latest report on spectrum policy in Africa. It painted a stark picture. Despite significant investment by mobile operators, poor spectrum allocation and high costs are undermining progress.

The 56-page document, titled: 'Spectrum Policy in Africa: Enabling investment and empowering consumers through effective spectrum pricing', October 2026 edition, noted that between 2015 and 2025, mobile broadband coverage in Africa rose from 59 per cent to 92 per cent, while 4G coverage jumped from seven per cent to 83 per cent. It said even 5G has begun to take root, reaching 15 per cent of the population by the end of 2025. Yet adoption lags.

GSMA said only 28 per cent of Africans were using mobile Internet on their own devices in 2025, compared to 66 per cent globally. The usage gap, the share of people covered by mobile broadband but not using it, the document observed, stood at 64 per cent in Africa, double the global average. It stressed that the coverage gap, though smaller, remained significant at eight per cent, four times higher than the rest of the world.

The telecom advocacy body also noted that network quality is also behind. It said average download speeds in Africa were 27 Mbps in 2025, compared to 98 Mbps globally. Upload speeds averaged 9 Mbps, nearly half the global figure. Data consumption is equally telling: Africans use about 3 GB per month per connection, compared to 14 GB else-

Only 28% of Africans use mobile Internet in 2025, versus 66% worldwide

where.

GSMA observed a spectrum shortfall. It said spectrum, the invisible infrastructure powering mobile networks, is at the heart of Africa's connectivity challenge.

According to it, by 2025, African operators had access to just 570 MHz of spectrum below 7 GHz, compared to 750 MHz globally. This 30 per cent shortfall, GSMA said, is most severe in the upper mid-bands (3-7 GHz), which are critical for 5G.

"Only 24 out of 54 countries in Africa have assigned any spectrum in the 3.5 GHz range, the band most commonly used for 5G deployment worldwide," the GSMA report noted.

According to it, just five countries have allocated at least 300 MHz in this band, the minimum needed for robust 5G. It stressed that low-band spectrum, vital for rural coverage, is also underutilized. It pointed out that Africa should have 190 MHz available

across the 700, 800, and 900 MHz bands, but operators on average have access to just 125 MHz. More than 30 countries have yet to assign the 700 MHz band, while over 10 still lack both 700 and 800 MHz allocations.

In terms of regional breakdown, GSMA observed uneven progress across Africa. According to it, Northern Africa leads with 42 per cent mobile Internet adoption, reflecting stronger infrastructure and affordability. Its usage gap, however, remains high at 56 per cent, showing that many covered citizens are still not online.

Western Africa recorded 30 per cent adoption, with a usage gap of 63 per cent. Coverage gaps are relatively small, but affordability and device access remain barriers.

Southern Africa fares better with 28 per cent adoption and a 61 per cent usage gap. Despite higher penetration, the region still struggles with quality and affordability.

Eastern Africa faces the most acute chal-

lenge: a staggering 72 per cent usage gap. Only 22 per cent of the population are mobile internet subscribers, despite coverage expansion.

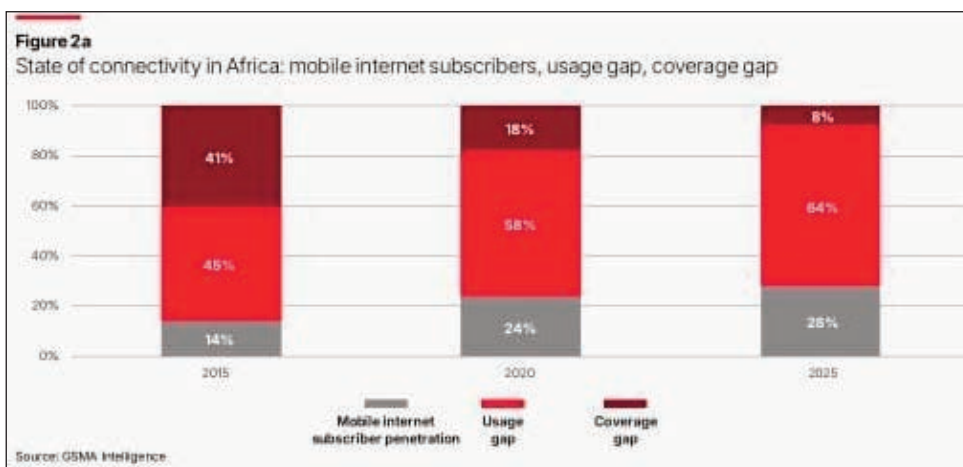
Central Africa is the most underserved, with just 15 per cent adoption and the largest coverage gap at 24 per cent. This region exemplifies how spectrum scarcity and weak policy frameworks exacerbate exclusion.

These disparities underline the need for tailored policy responses. While Northern Africa is closer to global averages, Central and Eastern Africa require urgent interventions to close both coverage and usage gaps.

Further, GSMA said operators in Africa not only face spectrum scarcity but also higher costs. Spectrum prices are 24 per cent higher per unit than the global average. Licence obligations, such as coverage and quality requirements, can cost three to 45 times more than the spectrum itself.

According to the report, this financial burden comes at a time when average revenues per user have collapsed, falling nearly 50 per cent in real terms over the past decade. Revenue per gigabyte has dropped by 92 per cent, making connectivity more affordable but squeezing operator margins. Despite investing around 20 per cent of revenues into networks, operators are constrained by shrinking returns, limiting their ability to expand coverage and improve quality.

GSMA said there are consequences of inaction. It warned that high spectrum costs directly reduce connectivity outcomes. It said a 10 percentage point increase in the spectrum cost-to-revenue ratio leads to four percentage points lower 4G coverage, six points lower 5G coverage, and eight per cent slower download speeds. Conversely, a 10 per cent increase in spectrum assigned boosts 4G/5G coverage by up to 2 points and raises speeds by three to four per cent.



Akwa Ibom tech week targets \$1b startup hub, launches N10m prize

From Ayoyinka Jegede, Uyo

AKWA Ibom's technology community said it is targeting the emergence of a billion-dollar startup headquartered in the state, as organisers of the fifth Akwa Ibom Tech Week raise the top prize for promising innovators to N5 million and commit N10 million to the competition.

The initiative is designed to move local technology entrepreneurs beyond showcasing their ideas to attracting investors, accessing international markets and building companies capable of generating jobs and economic opportunities, President of Ibom Innovation Network, Hanson Johnson, has said.

Johnson disclosed this during a media briefing ahead of the 2026 edition of Akwa Ibom Tech Week, scheduled for November 2 to 7, with activities planned across Uyo and Ikot Ekpene.

He said the competition would award N5 million to the first-place winner, N3 million to the second-place winner and N2 million to the third-place winner, marking an increase from the N1 million top prize offered in the previous edition.

"Our goal is that in five years from now, one of these companies should be able to be valued at \$1 billion, with the headquarters here, to create opportunities and bring opportunities to us as well," Johnson said.

He explained that the financial prizes were only one aspect of the initiative, as participation could expose entrepreneurs to investors, recruiters and accelerator programmes that could provide funding and business support beyond the competition.

He cited the experience of Rapid River Software, a United States-based company that participated in the 2023 edition, recruited local technology talent and returned in 2024 to establish an office in Uyo following its initial experience.

According to him, some previous participants have also secured places in accelerator programmes that positioned them to pursue funding of up to \$100,000.

UNDP, GSMA partner to scale African-led AI innovation

THE United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the GSMA have announced a strategic partnership to strengthen Africa's artificial intelligence ecosystem and accelerate the deployment of African-led AI solutions, including African language AI.

The partnership brings together the GSMA's mobile industry expertise and networks with UNDP's development programmes and innovation platforms to support African-led AI innovation. The collaboration will connect local talent with opportunities to develop and deploy solutions that address Africa's priorities, including AI in African languages, helping to ensure more people and businesses can benefit from the continent's digital transformation.

Through the UNDP timbuktoo initiative, which is empowering African innovators to scale development solutions, UNDP and GSMA will collaborate to improve access to compute infrastructure for priority AI pilots and connect African talent to real-world AI applications. The partnership will also support the deployment of locally developed AI solutions and identify pathways for long-term sustainability and scale.

The collaboration aligns with the GSMA's wider work on African-language AI through ATLAS Umoja AI, launched with government and industry partners in July 2026. The initiative brings together expertise and language data from across Africa to support AI services that reflect local needs, helping address language and content barriers to digital inclusion.

VC urges FG to enforce AI, digital literacy in curriculum

From Rotimi Agboluaje, Ibadan

THE Vice-Chancellor of Summit University, Offa, Kwara State, Professor Abiodun Musa Aibinu, has urged the Federal Government to make Artificial Intelligence (AI) and digital literacy compulsory in secondary and tertiary institutions to prepare Nigerian youths for the demands of the digital economy.

Aibinu said early exposure to digital skills would build young people's confidence, creativity and problem-solving abilities, enabling them to take advantage of emerging opportunities in technology.

He spoke at the launch and fundraising ceremony of the Icitify Digital Skills Empowerment Foundation (IDSEF), held at Trenchard Hall, University of Ibadan, Oyo State.

The event, themed: "Building Digital Futures: Investing in Our Youth, Transforming Our Future," attracted academics, political leaders, industry players, students and development partners.

The vice-chancellor noted that equipping young Nigerians with digital capabilities was fundamental to building the country's next-generation economy, adding that Artificial Intelligence, Data Analytics and Cybersecurity were already transforming workplaces and economic activities.

He urged youths to use technology creatively, understand its limitations, take advantage of available learning opportunities and seek mentorship to improve their skills.

"The future will not be built by technology alone; it will be built by people who have the skills, imagination and opportunity to use technology well.

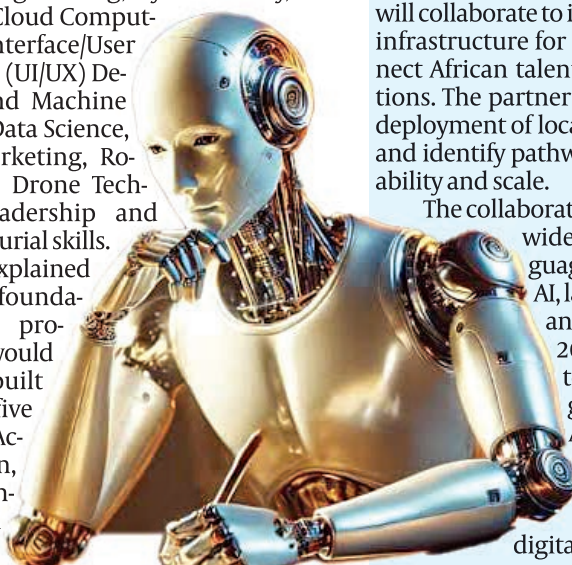
"Let us ensure our people are not merely spectators in the digital revolution but active participants in shaping it," he said.

The founder and Chief Executive Officer of IDSEF, AbdulAzeez Adelopo, said the foundation was established to expand young people's access to the skills and development opportunities required to participate effec-

tively in the changing global economy.

He listed the foundation's areas of focus as Software Engineering, Cybersecurity, Data Analytics, Cloud Computing, User Interface/User Experience (UI/UX) Design, AI and Machine Learning, Data Science, Digital Marketing, Robotics and Drone Technology, leadership and entrepreneurial skills.

Adelopo explained that the foundation's programmes would be built around five pillars: Access, Learn, Build, Connect and Progress.



NITDA, NACCIMA partner to drive startup investment, market access

By Adeyemi Adepetun

THE National Information Technology Development Agency (NITDA) and the Nigerian Association of Chambers of Commerce, Industry, Mines and Agriculture (NACCIMA) have formally announced a strategic public-private partnership to accelerate Nigeria’s digital economy growth.

Under this partnership, NACCIMA serves as an Official Private-Sector Investor Pipeline and Commercial Off-Taker Facilitator for NITDA-backed startups, technology ventures, and enterprise financing initiatives. The collaboration bridges the gap between government technology supply—innovators and regulatory frameworks – and real-sector demand across NACCIMA’s nationwide network of over 120 city, state, and bilateral chambers, as well as industrial conglomerates.

Following the execution of the bilateral Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) and the alignment of the NITDA-NACCIMA Joint Technical Working Group (TWG), co-chaired by the Director, Special Duties Directorate, NITDA, Dr Aristotle Onumo, and the National Digital Economy Coordinator, NACCIMA, Dr Segun Olugbile, both institutions are deploying three immediate priority

initiatives.

NACCIMA will lead private-sector mobilisation for DNICE 2026, scheduled to be held in Abuja from November 10 to 12, 2026. NACCIMA will curate B2B Deal Rooms, mobilise corporate investors and venture capital firms, participate in startup evaluation juries, and connect indigenous tech startups directly with corporate off-takers across manufacturing, agribusiness, logistics, and services. A national programme designed to equip 10,000 Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) with practical AI tools, digital skills, financial readiness structures, and market access pathways across all 36 states and the FCT.

A joint compliance effort through the launch of a digital trust mark platform designed to onboard verified businesses, ensuring adherence to data protection standards (NDPA 2023), cybersecurity readiness, and digital trust across regional trade corridors such as the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA).

Director-General/CEO, NITDA, Kashifu Inuwa Abdullahi, said: “Combining government policy leadership with the active commercial demand of the organised private sector creates an unprecedented growth engine for Nigeria’s digital ecosystem.

Through NACCIMA, we are ensuring that indigenous startups and tech innovators do not just build solutions, but gain direct access to corporate buyers, domestic capital, and sustainable commercial contracts.”

National President, NACCIMA, Dr Jani Ibrahim, said: “This strategic alliance positions Nigerian commerce and industry at the forefront of technology adoption. NACCIMA is committed to serving as the primary off-taker and investor pipeline for NITDA-supported startups. By connecting traditional industries, agriculture, manufacturing, trade, and mining, with innovative digital solutions and 3MTT technical talent, we are driving enterprise productivity and building a resilient, future-ready economy.”

To drive daily operational execution, a Joint Technical Working Group comprising senior leads from both NITDA and NACCIMA has been deployed. The team is currently finalising the enterprise pipeline, deal-room structures, and launch modalities ahead of the formal unveiling at DNICE 2026 in Abuja.



SBU Head, Maple Leaf, Sriram Rangaswamy (left); Managing Director, Deekay Group, VVs Prasad; Group Managing Director, Deekay Group, Kavine Vaswani; General Manager Sales and Operations, Gaurav Asija, and SBU head, Nexus Appliances, Sudhadhar Dwivedi, at the Edge award 2026 where Nexus emerged as outstanding Consumer Electronics Brand of the year held in Lagos.

PHOTO: SUNDAY AKINLOLU

IGNITE unveils wellness, digital life tools

IGNITE Social Enterprise has announced the expansion of its high-performance lifestyle, wellness, and digital learning portfolios alongside the official unveiling of its Global Advisory Board during an international launch event at the Atlantis Dubai.

As part of this milestone, leading African media entrepreneur and CEO of EIB Network Group, Nathan Kwabena Anokye Adisi (Bola Ray), has been appointed as IGNITE’s Strategic Partner for Sub-Saharan Africa as well as a prominent member of its Global Advisory Board. The announcement signals IGNITE’s strategic focus on unlocking digital-first business opportunities across key regional economic powerhouses, including Nigeria.

With Nigeria leading Africa’s digital transformation, social commerce surge, and creative enterprise, micro-entrepreneurs and young professionals are increasingly leveraging global digital platforms to achieve financial autonomy.

IGNITE’s hybrid ecosystem is structured to meet this demand by providing independent brand affiliates with verified consumer products, structured business-building assets, and specialised digital skills training.

As Strategic Partner for Sub-Saharan Africa, Bola Ray will advise on regional growth strategy, youth enterprise initiatives, and cross-border commercial engagement across West Africa and the wider continent.

Strategic Partner for Sub-Saharan Africa and Global Advisory Board Member at IGNITE, Bola Ray, said: “Across Sub-Saharan Africa, millions of ambitious individuals are looking for legitimate, forward-looking vehicles to monetize digital networks, build sustainable enterprises, and participate directly in the local and international economy.

“IGNITE is not entering the continent with an outdated trade model; it is introducing an integrated ecosystem combining AI learning platform with tangible, premium consumer products. Our goal is to equip African entrepreneurs with the global tools and governance required to build durable, borderless enterprises.”

MTN hinges improved digital services on data localisation

TELECOMMUNICATIONS firm, MTN has said that localising payment and other critical data could improve the speed of digital services by reducing the distance information travels between systems.

The position comes as banks, fintechs and other payment operators prepare to comply with the Central Bank of Nigeria’s requirement that payment transaction data generated in Nigeria be stored and managed locally by January 1, 2027. The policy has brought renewed attention to the quality of the infrastructure supporting Nigeria’s rapidly expanding digital economy, with operators now assessing how local hosting could affect performance and regulatory compliance.

The potential impact is significant given the volume of digital transactions moving through Nigeria’s financial system.

channels were valued at N1.053 quadrillion in the first quarter of 2026, up 2.85 per cent from N1.024 quadrillion in the same period of 2025. Nigeria’s National Payment Stack has also begun operating at scale, with the Nigeria Inter-Bank Settlement System, as the platform surpassed 100 million successful transactions in late September 2026, up from 26.55 million transactions worth N1.4 trillion across 48 participating institutions in August.

Chief Enterprise Business Officer, MTN Nigeria, Lynda Saint-Nwafor, said localising data could make a measurable difference to the speed at which applications respond.

“When you localise data, latency is reduced because you don’t have the data traversing continents,” she said.

Her point is particularly relevant to digital services that depend on rapid exchanges between applications and databases, where information hosted across international networks may have to travel farther before a request is processed.

The benefit, however, is not simply about moving servers closer to users. Saint-Nwafor said organisations need to understand their existing architecture before deciding how and where workloads should be migrated, including the applications, infrastructure and partners supporting their operations.

According to the Central Bank of Nigeria’s Q1 2026 data, electronic payment transactions across six



Component cost impacts global PC sales as shipments fall 21% in Q3

RESEARCH firm, Omdia has disclosed that worldwide shipments of desktops, notebooks, and workstations declined sharply in 3Q26, falling 21.2 per cent year-on-year to 58.1 million units.

Desktop shipments (including desktop workstations) fell 23.5 per cent to 11.7 million units, while notebook shipments (including mobile workstations) declined 20.6 per cent to 46.4 million units.

Research Director at Omdia, Ishan Dutt, said: “After sustained pull-forward activity buoyed the PC market in the first half of the year, this sharp drop in shipment volumes comes as no surprise.

“The scale of the decline is consistent with what the industry signalled throughout the last earnings cycle, with leading OEMs forecasting double-digit unit contractions in H2 and retailers reporting double-digit increases in average selling prices (ASPs) alongside falling sales.

“The impact of upstream component cost increases has now fully worked its way through to end-market pricing, with consumers and IT decision-makers responding accordingly. On the supply side, vendors and their ODM partners began scaling back production in 3Q, while channel partners continued working

through elevated inventory levels.”

Supply chain challenges have intensified in recent months. Alongside continued increases in memory and storage prices, shortages of processors, graphics cards, and numerous IC components have made supply chain and inventory management more difficult for



PC vendors.

According to Principal Analyst at Omdia, Ben Yeh, “The cost share of DRAM and SSDs in PCs has risen sharply from a typical level of around 15 per cent to nearly 40 per cent, with price increases more than fourfold.

“Although PC vendors have raised prices multiple times over the past few quarters, these increases have yet to fully offset the impact. These pressures are expected to persist, and the current decline may be just the beginning of a new downward cycle.”

Omdia forecasts the PC market to decline 24 per cent year-over-year in 4Q26 with a further 7 per cent decline expected for full-year 2027.

Despite most leading vendors experiencing double-digit declines in 3Q26, the rankings remained largely unchanged both sequentially and year-on-year. Lenovo remained in the top spot, shipping 14.9 million units and maintaining a 26 per cent market share. HP recorded the largest decline among the top vendors at 31 per cent, ranking second with shipments of 10.3 million units. Its market share fell to 18 per cent, nearly three percentage points lower than a year earlier.

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How local ports remain analogue in a digital world

As ports globally embrace digital systems and greener transport to boost trade efficiency, Nigerian docks remain behind. They are held up by multiple paperworks, fragmented processes, overlapping regulations, and poor coordination among agencies and operators. The result is costly delays in cargo clearance, longer dwell times for vessels and trucks, port congestion, rising logistics expenses, and worsening environmental pollution, ADAKU ONYENUCHEYA reports.

GLOBALLY, port systems are transitioning from traditional analogue operations to digital platforms, integrating modern technologies into their daily activities to improve efficiency and transform into smart ports.

Several maritime nations have deployed advanced digital tools such as Artificial Intelligence (AI), Internet of Things (IoT), big data, blockchain technology and automation, among others to drive port processes swiftly, accelerate cargo handling, reduce energy consumption, eliminate unnecessary physical examination processes, reduce dwell times, simplify trade procedures, and lower the cost of doing business at the ports.

Providing insights, the Managing Director of Kamany Marine Services Limited, Dr Charles Okorefe, explained that with Artificial Intelligence, algorithms determine the most suitable times for vessels to dock at ports, for cargo loading and unloading, and for containers to be moved around port terminals or facilities.

He said IoT involves installing sensors on cranes, trucks, Mafis, and other equipment to enable real-time operations in the port.

Automation, Okorefe explained, occurs when self-driven electric vehicles, such as trucks, and automated container-stacking cranes communicate instantly, with zero human interference, on the dock floors in the port.

Unfortunately, Nigerian ports have yet to achieve the level of automation and technological integration, as it still operates analogue systems; difficulties with data migration, ageing port infrastructure, poor integration of transport modes such as road, rail, inland waterways and pipelines, excessive human intervention, disruptions along port access roads and illegal extortion points continue to impede the efficient movement of cargo from the nation's ports.

For years, port users and other stakeholders have raised concerns about the multiple layers of documentation, fragmented processes, duplication of regulatory functions, delays in cargo clearance, congestion, high logistics costs, and insufficient coordination among agencies and private-sector operators.

These challenges have had a direct impact on the competitiveness of Nigerian products, government revenue, investment decisions, employment and, ultimately, the welfare of ordinary Nigerians.

Despite the introduction of the National Single Window (NSW), current practices at the nation's ports still subject approximately 95 per cent of cargo to intrusive physical examination

At the Primetime Reporters' fifth yearly lecture held in Lagos, the National Coordinator, NSW Secretariat, Tola Fakolade, who was represented by a Deputy Director, Jude Oboh, said the current practice was excessive, attributing the high rate of physical examination partly to the absence of a centralised risk management system and the overlapping responsibilities of regulatory agencies operating at the ports.

He said cargo clearance at the nation's ports currently takes about three weeks, noting that the Secretariat aims to reduce the clearance time to one day and the rate of physical examination to below 10 per cent, in line with international best practices.

Fakolade, however, noted that the Federal Government had also directed that cargo clearance costs should, at worst, be compara-



ble to those of other West African countries, where some Nigerian-bound cargo had been diverted in recent years.

Also, Nigeria's dependence on conventional energy sources in its port system and transport infrastructure has contributed to the terrible situation, with the transition to greener port logistics requiring deliberate investment, innovation and forward-looking policies.

Stakeholders said Nigeria should adopt cleaner energy sources in port operations by exploring opportunities to convert agricultural resources, including sugarcane, into biofuels for transportation and logistics.

The International Maritime Organisation's 2023 greenhouse gas strategy targets a reduction of at least 40 per cent in carbon intensity in the global maritime sector by 2030, compared with 2008 levels, alongside the ambition of achieving net zero greenhouse gas emissions by around 2050.

Director-General, Nigerian Ports Economic Regulatory Agency (NPERA), Dr Pius Akutah, who was represented by the Director, Regulatory Services, Adaora Nwonu, said a smarter port system must also be a greener one, noting that congestion, prolonged vessel waiting times, inefficient truck movements and excessive cargo handling consume energy, increase emissions and raise the cost of doing business.

He said green logistics should not be treated simply as an environmental obligation, but also an economic opportunity to reduce waste, improve productivity and strengthen Nigeria's position in international trade.

According to him, Nigeria must begin positioning its port system for this transition through improved cargo evacuation, energy-efficient port equipment, cleaner transport options, appropriate digital traffic management and investment in sustainable infrastructure.

Former Director-General, Nigerian Maritime Administration and Safety Agency (NIMASA), Temisan Omatseye, stressed that the development of smarter ports would

accommodate larger vessels, accelerating cargo operations and reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

He said modern ports should provide facilities that enable vessels to connect to cleaner shore-based power instead of relying continuously on onboard generators while berthed.

Omatseye also emphasised that the development of modern ports should involve comprehensive planning for cargo movement, cleaner energy, efficient vessel turnaround and environmental sustainability.

Omatseye, however, stressed that Nigeria's maritime industry was facing significant challenges that required sustained engagement among policymakers, regulators, industry operators and the media.

He called for stronger environmental protection, improved regulatory coordination and deliberate investment in smart port infrastructure.

The former NIMASA boss argued that government agencies needed to clearly understand the legal foundations of their respective mandates and engage one another before implementing policies that could create jurisdictional conflicts.

According to him, the existence of international maritime conventions ratified and domesticated by Nigeria makes it necessary for regulators to ensure that their actions are consistent with the country's legal obligations.

He said environmental protection and sustainable maritime development required a clear understanding of the laws governing the sector and the responsibilities assigned to different agencies.

Lessons from countries with smart ports

SEVERAL developed countries have moved from analogue systems to smart ports and also operate green logistics, making cargo clearance seamless and fast, reducing vessel waiting time and the cost of doing business at the ports.

Port of Rotterdam, one of the first-generation ports to attain the status of a Smart Port,

deploys a full digital twin virtual model of the port, using IoT sensors to track real-time weather, water data, ship movements, autonomous vehicles and remote-controlled cranes, which move cargo around the port both day and night.

The port opened the first-ever automated container terminal in 1993. Port of Singapore, a strategic hub port in South-East Asia, operates massive sections with driverless automated guided vehicles (AGVs), intelligent cranes and a central AI system running on 5G technology.

Similarly, the Yangshan Deep-Water Port in Shanghai, China, and the Port of Houston in Texas, United States, have deployed smart technologies to improve cargo delivery efficiency and reduce vessel turnaround times.

Okorefe stated that ports worldwide are striving to become fully smart-oriented, noting that Nigerian ports are no exception to this rule.

He said that although the Nigerian Ports Authority (NPA) reported increases in cargo throughput and container and vessel traffic in the second quarter of 2026, the data indicated improved berth utilisation and cargo handling, but not smart ports or lower trade costs.

Okorefe said the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) currently represents the largest market opportunity on the continent, noting that Nigeria must develop a smart and green logistics system capable of moving locally produced goods predictably and competitively to benefit fully from this pool.

He said it also requires that regulatory agencies resolve overlapping mandates, with data moving seamlessly across institutions and operational friction drastically reduced in ports.

Okorefe urged government agencies to harmonise their responsibilities and improve collaboration, stressing that the effectiveness of digital platforms would depend on institutions' willingness to work together.

Practical way forward

STAKEHOLDERS insist Nigeria must begin positioning its port system for this digital transition through improved cargo evacuation, energy-efficient port equipment, cleaner transport options, appropriate digital traffic management and investment in sustainable infrastructure.

According to them, green logistics should not be treated simply as an environmental obligation, but also as an economic opportunity to reduce waste, improve productivity and strengthen Nigeria's position in international trade.

Nigeria does not merely need busier ports. We need smarter, faster, more transparent and environmentally responsible gateways that serve the wider economy. The National Single Window can simplify trade, but modern port infrastructure can improve capacity, greener logistics can reduce waste and emissions, and effective economic regulation can ensure that the benefits of these improvements are fairly distributed and economically meaningful.

Operators lament as commuters ditch ‘unaffordable’ water transport

Stories by **Adaku Onyenucheya**

COMMUTERS are abandoning water transportation in favour of road and rail alternatives due to high passenger fares driven by rising fuel prices and operational costs.

Boat owners and operators in Lagos lamented that road and rail alternatives have become cheaper for passengers, leading to a decline in patronage on several waterways routes.

This, they noted, has left some boat services inactive,

threatening their survival as businesses and forcing operators to consider alternative livelihoods.

The National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) Transport Fare Watch had reported a 30.88 per cent year-on-year increase in waterway passen-

ger fares, with data showing that the average fare for waterway passenger transportation rose from N1,739.32 in May 2025 to N2,276.48 in May 2026,

Secretary of the Association of Tourist Boat Operators and Water Transporters of

Nigeria (ATBOWATON), Lagos Chapter, Ayomikun Aworetan, explained that commuting from CMS to the Badagry axis by other alternatives costs about N1,000 via train to Mile 2, with the connecting road journey from Mile 2 to Badagry costing approximately N2,000.

He said in comparison, a boat trip from CMS to Badagry cost about N7,000, making other transport alternatives economical.

Aworetan stated that water transport operators were struggling to compete with road and rail services due to fare disparities, putting them under increasing financial pressure.

Aworetan explained that some commuters had little choice but to use the waterways because of traffic congestion, noting that others were increasingly opting for road transportation where improved infrastructure offered cheaper and more convenient alternatives.

He identified the Ikorodu corridor as one of the routes where water transportation remained important because of limited road alternatives and persistent traffic congestion.

According to him, commuters travelling from Ikorodu to Victoria Island could arrive in about 30 minutes by boat, compared with the longer journey by road through Fadeyi, Costain and CMS.

He said the route continued to attract passengers because of the time saved,

particularly for workers and business owners.

Secretary of the Maritime Workers Union of Nigeria (MWUN), Liverpool Boat Unit, Stephen Ayodeji, said rising fuel prices have increased the cost of operating boats and pushed up fares, discouraging passengers from travelling by water as frequently as before.

Ayodeji noted that the Liverpool-Badagry and Liverpool-Agbara routes had become largely inactive following improvements to the roads serving the areas.

According to him, operators had not offered regular boat services from Liverpool to Badagry for about 10 months, as passengers increasingly preferred road transportation due to its lower cost.

Ayodeji added that private boat services from Liverpool to CMS were no longer operating regularly, while trips to Ikorodu had become infrequent.

The boat operators and owners called for subsidies to cushion the impact of rising fuel costs, make fares more affordable, and restore patronage, warning that the survival of water transport businesses depended in part on their ability to compete with alternative modes of transportation.

They argued that government subsidies would help reduce the cost of water transportation, attract more passengers and enable operators to remain in business.

NPA targets coordinated port operations, yard capacity to curb congestion

NIGERIAN Ports Authority (NPA) has identified opportunities to integrate truck appointments with yard capacity and vessel schedules, allowing port gates, storage yards and quays to operate as a coordinated system instead of functioning as separate points of congestion.

The Managing Director, NPA, Dr Abubakar Dantsoho, said the country was laying the foundations for more intelligent port operations through investments in digital coordination, infrastructure modernisation and improved traffic management.

He explained that the NPA oversees seven ports across the country, from Lagos to Calabar, each with different infrastructure, cargo profiles and levels of digital maturity.

According to him, these dif-

ferences make it necessary to develop solutions that reflect the operational realities of individual ports rather than impose a uniform approach without considering local requirements.

He recalled that cargo previously remained at Lagos ports for as long as three weeks, while the Apapa access road, designed to accommodate approximately 2,400 trucks daily, carried more than 7,000 trucks.

The resulting congestion undermined reliability, increased delays and diverted trade, highlighting the need for coordinated reforms across port infrastructure, transport corridors and digital systems.

Dantsoho said the NPA began by addressing fundamental operational chal-

lenges before moving towards more advanced technologies.

“The Eto electronic truck call-up system helped address corridor gridlock. This year, we went live with the National Single Window and a beta version of the Port Community System, advancing digital coordination among Customs, terminals, shipping lines and regulators,” he said.

He said the reforms were already producing encouraging results, pointing to Nigeria’s performance in the World Bank’s Container Port Performance Index 2025.

He added that Nigeria’s cargo throughput increased by 24.8 per cent to 129.3 million metric tonnes in 2025.

Although he acknowledged

that the country’s port transformation remained a work in progress, Dantsoho said the experience demonstrated the importance of establishing reliable digital foundations

He said the NPA is also implementing a \$1 billion modernisation programme for Apapa and Tin Can Island ports, which presented an opportunity to incorporate intelligent maintenance systems and secure digital infrastructure into the country’s port renewal efforts.

Dantsoho also stated the development of common data standards that would enable different port platforms to exchange essential information, even where the systems themselves are not identical.



International Transport Workers’ Federation (ITF) Inspector, Hamani Amadou (left); Director, Maritime Labour and Cabotage Services, Nigerian Maritime Administration and Safety Agency (NIMASA), Ibrahim Umar; President General, Maritime Workers Union of Nigeria (MWUN), Francis Bunu; Executive Director, Maritime Labour and Cabotage Services, NIMASA, Jibril Abba; ITF Africa Regional Secretary, Nairobi Kenya, Safiyanu Mohammed; National President, Nigerian Merchant Navy Officers and Water Transport Senior Staff Association, Bob Yousuo and Global Wellbeing Programme Coordinator, ITF, Dr Asif Altaf at the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to enhance seafarers’ and cadets welfare in Lagos.

IMION urges FG to translate maritime treaties, reforms into action

THE International Maritime Institute of Nigeria (IMION) has urged the Federal Government to move decisively beyond the mere ratification of maritime treaties to the rigorous operational execution of these treaties across the country’s ports, maritime domain, and inland waterways.

The Director-General of IMION, Rear Admiral Thaddeus Udofia (rtd), stressed that the absolute metric of Nigeria’s success does not rest on signed treaties but lives in the active security, digital optimisation, and regulatory discipline cultivated daily across its ports and logistics corridors.

“Transitioning from paper blueprints to practical execution is where maritime excellence is born,” he stated.

Udofia made the call while responding to the theme of the 2026 International Maritime Organisation (IMO) World Maritime Day, “From Policy to Practice: Powering Maritime Excellence.”

He emphasised that high-level regulatory frameworks could only deliver economic benefits when translated into specialised frontline human capacity.

He said IMION’s initiatives directly address the gap between domestic policy objectives and the practical skills required by frontline maritime workers.

Udofia disclosed that IMION had established strategic learning pathways and technical knowledge-sharing networks with international maritime institutes, academic partners and global strategic partners to institution-

alise global best practices.

The IMION boss said the institution has developed a stakeholder-backed five-year port transformation plan to revolutionise port logistics, optimise trade corridors, reduce transaction costs and eliminate supply chain bottlenecks.

Udofia noted that IMION had also advocated fisheries and scientific reforms, unveiling a data-driven, five-pillar plan to revive Nigeria’s fisheries sector.

He said the plan involved collaboration on scientific fish stock assessments, modern coastal lagoon cage culture, and satellite-based spatial planning to improve national food security.

On advanced intelligence training, Udofia said the institute is conducting specialised workshops focused on maritime security and

global trade by deploying practical solutions to counter risks and protect critical trade infrastructure across the Gulf of Guinea.

He added that the institute had aligned its professional courses with the latest revisions to the Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers (STCW) Convention to prepare the next generation of Nigerian seafarers for automation, green shipping technologies and a decarbonised maritime industry.

Udofia said IMION remained unyielding in its mission to fuel the empirical research, data stream and technical mastery required to convert executive mandates into triumphant maritime realities, while solidifying Nigeria’s status as the maritime hub of the Gulf of Guinea.

‘Sierra Leone’s shipping line puts pressure on Nigeria fleet devt’

SHIPPING operators have said the launch of the Sierra Leone Ocean Shipping Company (SLOSCo) offers lessons for Nigeria, which has yet to revive its national carrier despite repeated government commitments.

The operators said the launch demonstrated the country’s determination to stop depending predominantly on foreign-owned vessels to transport its imports and exports, reclaim a greater share of global shipping and retain freight earnings within its economy.

Speaking during a media interaction in Lagos, the Africa Shipowners Association (ASA), Nigeria, represented by the immediate past president, Captain Ladi Olubowale, said the Sierra Leone initiative demonstrated the importance of political commitment, effective legislation and strategic partnerships in establishing a sustainable national shipping line.

Olubowale said Sierra Leone’s initiative followed a structured process, beginning with the passage of the Sierra Leone National Shipping Agency Act in 2025, which transformed the former Sierra Leone National Shipping Company, established in 1972, into an agency authorised to serve as the country’s national carrier for international trade.

According to him, the agency assumed the assets and liabilities of the former company and the earlier

national carrier venture, noting that in August 2026, Parliament ratified a joint venture agreement between the agency and Chinese firm Zhejiang Xiehai Group, paving the way for SLOSCo’s establishment, which officially launched two months later.

Olubowale, who is the Group Managing Director of Seamate Maritime Services Limited, said the company’s long-term success would depend on its ability to attract cargo, operate efficiently and withstand commercial pressures, but described its establishment as a positive example for other African countries.

The shipping operator said Nigeria should learn from Sierra Leone’s approach as it seeks to revive its own national carrier, recalling that the Nigerian National Shipping Line (NNSL) once operated about 30 ocean-going vessels.

Olubowale said its collapse resulted in substantial lost freight earnings to foreign shipping companies, estimated by industry sources at between \$8 billion and \$9 billion yearly and reduced national shipping capacity.

The shipping operator cited the Federal Government’s efforts to revive a national carrier, announced in April 2026 by the Minister of Marine and Blue Economy, Adegboyega Oyetola, including interest from DP World and AD Ports Group.

Railway pensioners challenge management over monetisation reversal

Stories by Benjamin Alade

THE Association of Nigerian Railway Senior Citizens (ANRSC), has faulted claims by the management of the Nigerian Railway Corporation (NRC) that the Federal government has reversed its policy on the monetisation of railway staff quarters.

This is as the Nigerian Union of Railwaymen (NUR) said that efforts were ongoing to resolve the dispute, which is currently pending before the court.

The Chairman, ANRSC, Segun Esan, in an interview with *The Guardian*, said that the monetisation policy remained valid until formally reversed by the appropriate authority.

He explained that the monetisation policy was enacted by an Act of Parliament under former President Olusegun Obasanjo. He stressed that for the law to be changed or amended, it must also go through the same parlia-

ment.

He insisted that the management of NRC could not change the law by fiat, adding that the corporation could not be treated differently from other federal ministries, departments and agencies where the programme had been implemented.

Esan, who was also a one-time General Secretary, NUR, said the unions secured a favourable judgment at the National Industrial Court on January 6, 2016, but the NRC management, under its then Managing Director, Seyi Sijuade, appealed the ruling. He said the appeal had remained pending for a decade, despite several court sittings.

According to him, the latest proceedings took place on February 27 and May 5, 2026, when the management indicated its intention to withdraw the appeal.

He said the union's legal repre-

sentatives opposed the move, insisting that the case should proceed towards implementing the terms of an out-of-court settlement.

Esan declined to speculate on the reasons for the prolonged delay, noting that the matter remained before the court.

He, however, questioned the rationale behind suggestions that leasing the quarters could replace monetisation, arguing that the policy's objective was to enable eligible workers to own their homes rather than introduce a temporary arrangement.

He said: "The policy does not say substitute monetisation with lease. The policy clearly and unambiguously says go and monetise. It is a directive that nobody has the right to bend, embellish or replean."

"The NRC management had partially implemented the policy in the past, particularly through the monetisation of

certain benefits, including vehicles and components of workers' consolidated salaries."

He, however, wondered why the corporation had not fully implemented the accommodation component if the policy had been applied to other aspects of workers' benefits.

He also argued that the policy was intended to help address Nigeria's housing deficit by enabling public servants to acquire homes of their own, while reducing the financial burden associated with maintaining government-owned residential buildings.

The former union official further contended that developments in the railway sector had weakened the argument for treating the corporation as an exceptional case, pointing to the participation of state governments and private investors in railway operations.

Esan also raised concerns about

railway lands and residential properties allegedly leased to private individuals and organisations, as well as quarters that were demolished to make way for new developments.

He cited developments in Kano and Bauchi states as examples of locations where, according to him, railway land had been allocated for other uses, questioning why eligible railway workers and retirees should be denied the benefits of the monetisation policy.

On the displacement of workers arising from railway infrastructure projects, Esan said government authorities and the corporation should provide replacement accommodation where existing quarters were demolished.

He recalled disputes involving railway quarters in Osogbo, Osun and Lagos states, where he said union intervention led to agreements for replacement

housing.

In Osogbo, for instance, he said the union opposed the proposed demolition of staff quarters until alternative accommodation was provided, adding that replacement houses were subsequently built and affected workers relocated.

He also recalled negotiations involving the Lagos Metropolitan Area Transport Authority (LAMATA) and the Lagos State government over the redevelopment of railway quarters in Ikeja.

According to Esan, the agreement provided for temporary relocation to rented apartments while replacement accommodation was constructed within two years.

Esan explained that the workers received financial assistance to secure temporary housing, while replacement quarters were completed in Agege in less than two years.

Versat powers EXEED's Nigerian debut, fusing innovation, design

VERSAT Automobile Limited is stepping up preparations for the Nigerian debut of EXEED, the premium automotive brand of Chinese automaker Chery Automobile, with a focus on the technology, design philosophy and performance features, which are expected to distinguish the marque in the country's competitive premium vehicle market.

The company said it would provide prospective customers with a closer look at the brand's engineering, styling and vision for premium mobility ahead of its official Nigerian launch scheduled for December 2026.

The planned entry marks an expansion of Versat's presence in Nigeria's automotive industry, as it moves beyond commercial vehicles into the premium passenger-car segment.

EXEED, built around the philosophy Born for More, is positioned to appeal to motorists seeking a combination of intelligent technology, sophisticated design, driving comfort and performance.

According to Versat, the brand draws on Chery's automotive research and development capabilities to develop vehicles that combine contemporary styling with technology-driven motoring experiences.

The company's pre-launch programme is expected to highlight the engineering and design principles behind

EXEED, as it seeks to build awareness of the brand among Nigerian consumers before the official unveiling.

General Manager, Sales, Versat Automobile Limited, Christopher Irumudomon, described the planned introduction as a new chapter for premium mobility in Nigeria, expressing confidence that the brand would appeal to customers looking beyond conventional premium vehicle offerings.

EXEED's entry comes as competition in Nigeria's premium automotive market increasingly places emphasis on vehicle technology, interior refinement, safety, performance and ownership experience.

However, establishing a foothold in the segment would require more than distinctive styling and advanced features.

Pricing, availability of spare parts, warranty coverage, maintenance facilities and dependable after-sales service are likely to influence consumer acceptance, particularly as buyers weigh the cost of acquiring and maintaining premium vehicles.

For Versat, the introduction of EXEED represents an opportunity to broaden its product portfolio and reach a different customer segment.

The December launch is expected to provide further details on the models to be offered locally, including their specifications, performance capabilities, and pricing.



Showroom Manager, Mikano Motors, Grace Anasiudu (left); Head of Sales, Mikano Motors, Mbonu Chijioko; Team Lead, Integrations and Partnerships, Piggyvest, Ejimonye Ofodum; Chief Executive Officer, PocketApp, Ayo Akinola; Marketing Manager, Mikano Motors, Giselle Bejjani; Co-founder and Chief Marketing Officer, Piggyvest, Joshua Chibueze; National Operations Manager, Mikano Motors, Syam Abdulkadir, during a press briefing for the Piggyvest x Mikano Motors Partnership Announcement Introduction Piggyvest held in Lagos.

Hyundai unveils Mufasa, Grand Creta SUVs in Nigeria

HYUNDAI Motors Nigeria has expanded its Sports Utility Vehicle (SUV) range with the introduction of the all-new Mufasa and Grand Creta, targeting motorists seeking modern styling, improved comfort and versatile mobility options.

The two models were unveiled in Lagos earlier in the week as the company seeks to strengthen its presence in Nigeria's competitive SUV market, with the Mufasa positioned as a five-seater vehicle and the Grand Creta offering seating for up to seven occupants.

Speaking at the launch, General Manager, Sales and Marketing, Hyundai Motors Nigeria, Gaurav Vashisht, said

the new models were developed to meet the changing preferences of Nigerian motorists, particularly in the areas of comfort, safety, technology and versatility.

According to him, the introduction of the two SUVs indicated the company's commitment to offering vehicles suited to different lifestyles while maintaining its global standards of quality and innovation.

The Hyundai Mufasa is powered by a 2.0-litre Smartstream multi-point injection (MPI) petrol engine paired with a six-speed automatic transmission. Depending on market specification, the engine produces between 150 and 160

horsepower, with torque of 193Nm.

The front-wheel-drive SUV features a 54-litre fuel tank and measures approximately 4,475mm in length, 1,850mm in width and 1,685mm in height. Its 2,680mm wheelbase is designed to provide adequate cabin space for five occupants.

The model features a distinctive front grille, LED lighting and a contemporary dashboard layout. Available equipment, depending on the variant, includes a touchscreen infotainment system, smartphone connectivity, automatic climate control, wireless charging, and selectable driving modes.

Its safety and driver-assistance features include an anti-lock braking system, electronic stability control, airbags and parking assistance, depending on specification.

The Grand Creta, meanwhile, is designed for customers requiring additional passenger capacity and cabin flexibility. Its three-row configuration accommodates up to seven occupants, while a 2,760mm wheelbase provides room for passengers and luggage.

The SUV's available 2.0-litre Smartstream petrol engine produces approximately 159 horsepower and 191Nm of torque. Automatic variants are paired with a six-speed automatic transmission.

'Regional supply chain, affordability key to continental auto growth'

AFRICA's automotive industry must strengthen regional supply chains, improve access to affordable financing and harmonise trade policies to reduce dependence on imported vehicles and establish the continent as a competitive manufacturing hub, industry stakeholders have said.

The call was made at the two-day Africa Automotive Investment

Forum held in El Alamein, Egypt, where policymakers, vehicle manufacturers and component suppliers examined barriers to investment and strategies for developing an integrated African automotive market.

The forum was organised by the African Export-Import Bank (Afreximbank), the African Association of Automotive Manufacturers (AAAM), the

African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) Secretariat, Egypt's Ministry of Trade and Investment, and South Africa's Department of Trade and Industry.

The discussions focused on the need to move beyond vehicle assembly towards deeper local content, component manufacturing, technology transfer and cross-border production net-

works capable of supporting the continent's growing mobility needs.

The bank's Executive Vice President, Intra-African Trade and Export Development, Kanayo Awani, said the industry could play a significant role in Africa's industrialisation by building regional value chains, creating skilled jobs and reducing reliance on imported vehicles.

She said opportunities extended beyond vehicle assembly to the production of automotive components and the processing of minerals such as lithium, cobalt, manganese, nickel, copper, iron and steel, which are essential to conventional and electric vehicle manufacturing.

"Investing in the African automotive ecosystem is not merely a financing opportunity, but a

strategic imperative that accelerates economic diversification and establishes Africa as a competitive player in the global industrial economy," she said.

She added that Afreximbank was promoting a pan-African manufacturing ecosystem in which vehicle producers, component manufacturers and suppliers operate through interconnected regional supply chains.

Only N374.6b saved for maturing debt liquidation in five years

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

by the National Assembly. After reading the President's letter, Akpabio observed that elements of the proposal had featured in earlier government borrowing and budgetary arrangements, although he expressed uncertainty about the precise period covered by previous approvals.

"The borrowing plan is attached, but of course, this was even earlier approved in our budget, and also the external borrowing plan was approved as far back as 2025 to 2027, I think to 2028 or thereabouts," he said.

He said the Senate Committee on Local and Foreign Debts, chaired by Haruna Manu, would examine the request and consult other relevant committees where necessary. History of loan requests

THE 10th Senate has considered several substantial borrowing proposals, including an external borrowing plan of \$7.8 billion and €100 million for infrastructure and other development projects.

Other facilities and proposals included a \$5.8 billion loan request covering power, transportation, healthcare, education, agriculture and water supply; a \$1.5 billion World Bank facility for budget financing and economic reforms and a \$1.3 billion African Development Bank facility for agricultural development and food security.

The National Assembly also considered a \$2.2 billion external borrowing request to finance the 2024 budget deficit and other government projects, alongside a \$1.5 billion World Bank loan for econom-

ic stabilisation and development support. A separate N500 billion domestic borrowing plan was proposed to finance the 2023 supplementary budget and other obligations.

Tinubu had pursued borrowing proposals inherited from the previous administration, alongside new facilities under subsequent budgets.

On November 28, 2023, he asked the Senate to authorise external borrowing of \$8.699 billion and €100 million under a 2022-2024 borrowing plan approved by the Federal Executive Council under late President Muhammadu Buhari in May 2023.

The proposed funds were intended for infrastructure, agri-

culture, healthcare, water supply, roads, security and other projects.

On November 19, 2024, the House of Representatives received a request for a resolution authorising approximately \$2.209 billion, equivalent to N1.768 trillion at the budget exchange rate of N800 to the dollar. The request related to the external borrowing provision in the 2024 Appropriation Act, which provided for N7.829 trillion in new borrowing, comprising N6.061 trillion in domestic borrowing and N1.768 trillion in external borrowing.

In March 2026, the National Assembly considered two major financing facilities, including a \$5 billion structured total-return-swap programme with

First Abu Dhabi Bank, intended to support government financing, fiscal liquidity, infrastructure and the repayment of relatively expensive debt.

It also considered approximately \$1.001 billion in UK Export Finance-backed lending arranged by Citibank for the rehabilitation of Lagos Port Complex and Tin Can Island Port Complex. The House of Representatives' March 31, 2026 order paper outlined the amounts and proposed purposes of the facilities.

On April 23, 2026, Tinubu requested approval for an external loan of approximately \$516 million for the Sokoto-Badagry Superhighway.

These transactions and proposals, some suggested, un-

derline the need for a consolidated account of Nigeria's borrowing commitments, showing which facilities have been approved, which have been signed, how much has been disbursed, what has been repaid and what remains outstanding.

MEANWHILE, former Vice President Atiku Abubakar has urged the National Assembly to suspend consideration of Tinubu's request until the Federal Government publishes detailed information about the projects to be financed.

Atiku, the African Democratic Congress presidential candidate, argued that the proposal reinforced his earlier warning that the administration was preparing to obtain

loans of up to \$20 billion in connection with the Lagos-Calabar Coastal Highway project.

In a statement issued yesterday by Phrank Shaibu, Director of Strategic Communication of the ADC Presidential Campaign Council, the former vice president said lawmakers should demand full disclosure of the proposed projects, costs, locations, contractors, loan terms and repayment obligations before approving any loan.

"The National Assembly must not approve a single dollar until the President publishes every project, contract, cost, contractor, loan term and repayment obligation. No public money should be borrowed in the dark, and no lawmaker should sign a blank cheque against Nigeria's future," he said.

Previously, Atiku had raised concerns over reports that the President was preparing to borrow up to \$20 billion for the coastal highway. He said Tinubu had neither confirmed nor denied the allegation nor published the accounts he had requested.

According to him, the subsequent request for \$20.52 billion and €1.045 billion strengthened his concerns about the administration's borrowing plans.

"The president has listed broad sectors but has not provided a project-by-project account of what this enormous borrowing will fund. Nigerians have not been given clear project details, costs, locations or contractors to scrutinise," he said.



Executive Director and Chief Executive Officer, Wole Soyinka Centre for Investigative Journalism, Mrs Motunrayo Alaka (left); Curator, Mr Jahman Anikulapo; founder, Foundation for Investigative Journalism, Fisayo Soyombo; Lagos State governorship candidate for the Nigeria Democratic Congress, Funso Doherty; Tolani Animashaun; and Kate Henshaw, during Fisayo Soyombo and the Foundation for Investigative Journalism's Desserts from the Desert: A photography exhibition in Lagos, on Monday.

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From: **KADBLEX ENTERPRISES**
To: **KADBLEX LIMITED**

The names of the Directors are:

1. Akinde Blessing Keji
2. Akinde Adeshina Omorinde

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES:

1. Production of bar soap
2. Production of liquid soap
3. Production of antiseptic soap

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.

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Victor Danilola Esq.

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Despite diligent search, all efforts to locate the document have proved unsuccessful. Any person who finds the said document or who has useful information about its whereabouts should kindly return it to or contact the owner at 36AA Mobolaji Johnson Way, Oregun, Ikeja, Lagos State.

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In Hako's Allegory, Hankson challenges illusion, reality

By Tobi Awodipe

CAMEROONIAN artist, *Hako Hankson*, is presenting a new body of work at Windsor Gallery in Lagos, using painting and plexiglass to examine the boundaries between appearance and reality, and the role of perception in shaping human experience.

Titled *Hako's Allegory*, the show begins October 31, 2026 at the gallery's grounds in Victoria Island, following a six-week residency in which Hankson engaged the Lagos art scene and explored its cultural landscape. The programme is part of Windsor's efforts to promote artistic exchange across Africa and connect artists with new audiences and cultural environments.

Drawing on Plato's *Allegory of the Cave*, the works combine reflections, transparency and imagery rooted in African cultural and spiritual traditions to question what viewers see and what they understand.

Born Gaston Hako in 1968 in Bafang, Cameroon, Hankson grew up surrounded by the traditions, rituals and spiritual practices of West Cameroon. His father, a sculptor and musician associated with the royal palace, exposed him to masks, statuettes, totems and ceremonial objects that have continued to influence his artistic practice.

Although he trained as a motor mechanic, Hankson pursued art independently, developing a multidisciplinary practice spanning painting, drawing, sculpture and mixed media. His works combine human and animal figures, masks, symbols and expressive gestures to explore spirituality, identity, memory, migration and contemporary African life.

Speaking with *The Guardian* ahead of the exhibition, Hankson said his father played a

significant role in shaping his artistic journey, particularly through his understanding of masks and their cultural significance.

He described African culture as distinctive in its ability to communicate spirituality, adding that his early exposure to traditional objects helped him develop a visual language rooted in cultural heritage.

According to him, the exhibition's use of plexiglass offers an opportunity to experiment with how artworks are perceived, with the material introducing reflections and transparency that make the final image difficult to predict fully during the creative process. The concept behind *Hako's Allegory* draws from Plato's account of prisoners confined to a cave who mistake shadows projected on a wall for reality because they have never experienced the world beyond their immediate surroundings.

When one prisoner escapes, the encounter with a wider reality challenges everything previously understood.

Hankson translates this philosophical premise into works that exist between image and reflection, visibility and obscurity, and surface and depth. Plexiglass allows viewers to see an

image while also revealing the space behind it, with light and reflections changing according to their positions.

The works therefore challenge the assumption that what is visible necessarily represents the whole truth. Rather than presenting a fixed interpretation, they invite viewers to reconsider how perspective, experience and personal limitations shape their understanding of the world.

Through this approach, the audience becomes part of the viewing experience, moving around the works, looking through the material and encountering reflections of themselves alongside the images.

Hankson said this visit to Nigeria is his first, despite having exhibited in many countries all over the world. He explained that discussions over the possibility of exhibiting in Nigeria, with the gallery's owner, Richard Vedelago, began on social media about three years ago, but his busy schedule delayed the visit until now.

The residency also provided an opportunity to meet Nigerian artists and learn more about the country's art scene. Hankson described the level of artistic activity in Lagos as inspiring and expressed interest in future collaborations with Nigerian practitioners.

He said he was particularly impressed by artists who approach their work as a long-term professional commitment, planning to sustain and develop their practices over decades rather than treating art merely as a hobby.

The artist's international exhibition history includes presentations with OH Gallery in Dakar, Primo Marella Gallery in Italy and Switzerland, and L'Atelier 21 in Casablanca. In 2024, he represented Cameroon at the 60th Venice Biennale.

His works are held in collections including Fondation Cartier pour l'art contemporain in France, the Musée d'Art Contemporain Africain Al Maaden (MACAAL) in Morocco, Fondation H in Madagascar, Fondation Donwahi in Côte d'Ivoire, the Gervanne and Matthias Leridon Collection in France, and the Benetton Collection in Italy.



Hako Hankson

Lagos singer, Labule, in *Bi Ere Bi Ere, Eje*

By David Emokpae

LABULE is a singer, songwriter and performer whose live shows draw on the spirit of Fela and Lagbaja. On November 2, 2026 he will release two new songs, *Bi Ere Bi Ere* and *Eje*, on all platforms. Both look



Labule

closely at things Nigerians know well: change that nobody notices, and promises that never get kept.

Bi Ere Bi Ere is about change that happens quietly. It does not arrive overnight; it builds while people are not paying attention, until one day it is suddenly impossible to ignore.

The song uses Nigeria as its example, pointing to how government keeps speaking of progress in areas like agriculture while hunger remains in the land.

It is meant to wake listeners up.

Eje turns to empty promises made in desperation. It retells the story of Oluronbi and connects it to politicians who make big promises while chasing elective office.

The message is simple: Nigeria would not be where it is today if those promises had been kept.

Over 70 artists to grace Lagos biennial

By Gregory Austin Nwakunor

NIGERIAN artist and curator, Folakunle Oshun, has said the Lagos Biennial is an important platform for contemporary artistic expression and international cultural exchange.

Speaking ahead of the opening, Oshun, Founder and Artistic Director of the Lagos Biennial, stated: "Bringing this exhibition to Eko Atlantic City allows us to reflect on the relationship between Lagos rapidly changing urban landscape and its cultural memory."

The biennial returns for its fifth edition from November 14 to December 6, 2026 at Eko Atlantic City, Lagos. Themed *The Museum of Things Unseen*, the international contemporary art exhibition will feature over 70 artists from Nigeria and across the world, alongside special pavilions presented by the European Union, Floating Museum

Chicago, and other international cultural organisations.

He said, "*The Museum of Things Unseen* invites us to reconsider what museums preserve, what they leave out, and how we might imagine new institutions that respond to our own histories."

Founded in 2017 by Oshun, previous editions have been staged at the Nigerian Railway Corporation compound

in Yaba (2017), Independence House (2019), and Tafawa Balewa Square (2024), transforming historically significant locations into spaces for contemporary art.

This edition, curated by Furen Dai, Chinyere Obieze and Sam Hopkins, under the artistic direction of Oshun, *The Museum of Things Unseen* challenges conventional ideas of what a museum should be and whose histo-

ries it represents. The exhibition asks: "What lies hidden in the shadows of our museum spaces? Whose stories are silenced, and whose voices are amplified? If we were to build a museum from scratch, unbounded by structural inequities, what form would it take? Through installations, sculpture, photography, film and performances, participating artists explore the politics of visibility, cultural memory and the possibilities of imagining new museum institutions."

This year's edition moves to Eko Atlantic City, one of Africa's most ambitious urban developments. The exhibition explores the histories, objects and narratives often overlooked or excluded from conventional museums, while examining the relationship between cultural heritage, collective memory and the transformation of African cities.



One of the works to be displayed at the show

Sandra Mbanefo, others to headline FWIFT convention 2026

By David Emokpae

ART, cultural expert and curator, Mrs Sandra Mbanefo Obiagio, will deliver the keynote address at this year's national convention of Forum of Women in Film and Television Nigeria (FWIFT) holding on Thursday. The event, which holds at Glover Memorial Hall, Lagos, is themed, "One Industry, Many Voices: We Build Together."

The gathering will unite women across film, television, radio, advertising, and digital media to connect,

share insights, and create agency for one another across sectors.

Besides presentation by Obiagio, the programme will feature interactive panel discussions, break-out sessions, speed networking, and a fireside chat, titled, "The Cross Over: A Career Beyond Borders."

A statement by FWIFT noted: "Featured speakers and panellists joining the conversation include media executive Kadaria Ahmed, filmmaker Biodun Stephens, media personality Gbemi Olateru-Olagbegi,

executive director Rosemary Egbor-Afolahan, and Esosa Osagiede."

It added that the convention is free and open to the public "Our goal is to build an interconnected media ecosystem where women across screen, broadcast, and digital platforms can pool resources and create collective momentum."

"By bringing together diverse practitioners under one roof, we are establishing practical pathways for cross-industry growth, mentorship, and cross-border careers that elevate

African storytelling on the global stage," it quoted FWIFT leadership as saying.

According to statement, the convention is sponsored by the African Women's Development Fund (AWDF). "FWIFT is a professional organisation dedicated to empowering Nigerian women in screen-based, audio, and digital media through advocacy, skill acquisition, mentorship, and strategic networking."

It also gives free support to filmmakers.



Sandra Mbanefo Obiagio

World Report

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Israel records highest turnout so far in pivotal election

TURNOUT has been described at the highest so far as Israelis vote in what many view as one of the most pivotal elections in the country's history.

Polling published last Friday showed incumbent Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, almost neck-and-neck with former military chief, Gadi Eisenkot, in the race to become the country's Prime Minister.

However, neither of their political blocs are projected to win the 61 seats needed to form a majority government, raising concerns about imminent

political wrangling.

The campaign has been shaped by the issues of democracy and security, and the election is widely seen as a referendum on Netanyahu's rule.

While many leading parties complained yesterday morning of alleged irregularities at polling stations across the country, Israel's Central Election Committee (CEC) says there is no evidence of systematic tampering with ballot slips.

Israel's proportional representation system means governments have always been coalitions and the race to power can produce unexpected alliances.

Eisenkot, who leads the newly formed Yashar Party, is the main figure in the 'change bloc', a collection of parties with ideological differences but share the goal of ousting Netanyahu.

Other leaders in the bloc include former Prime Minister Naftali Bennett and Avigdor Lieberman, both right-wingers who take hardline positions on security and Yair Golan, a left-leaning former general.

World leaders call for urgent aid access in Sudan over looming famine

By Ngozi Egenuka

THE European Union, United States, United Kingdom and other countries have warned of looming famine in Sudan, calling on parties to the conflict to remove restrictions on humanitarian assistance and allow aid to reach millions facing severe food insecurity.

In a joint statement, the countries said an estimated 19.5 million people, representing 41 per cent of Sudan's population, were experiencing acute food insecurity, including five million facing emergency levels.

They warned that the number of children suffering from acute

malnutrition could exceed the projected 825,000 without immediate intervention while the number of food-insecure areas, initially assessed at 14, was expected to double.

The statement attributed the crisis primarily to the ongoing conflict, which has displaced millions, damaged critical infrastructure and disrupted healthcare services, food production, supply chains and markets.

The statement added that restrictions on humanitarian assistance and the effects of El Niño, including reduced rainfall and drought across more than half of Sudan, have worsened the situation.

The countries urged the warring

parties to facilitate safe, rapid and unhindered humanitarian access, authorise aid operations through cross-border and crossline routes, including air access into Darfur, and protect humanitarian workers.

They also called for faster visa and customs clearance as well as end to attacks on civilian infrastructure, particularly agricultural and food systems.

They further called on the international community to increase emergency funding, support the winter cropping season and strengthen locally led responses to avert famine, stressing that immediate action is necessary to save lives.

UN canvasses protection of women, girls as conflict killings rise

By Silver Nwokoro

THE United Nations has called for stronger protection of women and girls following a sharp increase in civilian deaths resulting from armed conflicts around the world.

The call came as the 2026 UN

Secretary-General's report on Women, Peace and Security revealed that more than 37,000 civilians were killed in conflicts in 2025, with women and girls accounting for one in four deaths, double their 2021 figure.

The report, which was released

yesterday also disclosed that approximately 750 million women and girls currently live within 50 kilometres of an active conflict, an increase of 40 million from 2024 and the highest figure recorded since 1990.

UN Women Executive Director, Sima Bahous, warned that the growing exposure of women and girls to armed conflict has been compounded by rising military expenditure and declining development assistance.

"More women and girls are trapped in wars than at any point in decades. Yet, military spending keeps rising and development assistance keeps falling, even as investing in women's leadership, conflict prevention and peacebuilding has never been more urgent", Bahous said.

The report highlighted the growing threats confronting women and girls in conflict zones, including sexual violence, displacement, extreme poverty and increased unpaid domestic and care responsibilities.

Cases of conflict-related sexual violence verified by the UN nearly quadrupled between 2022 and 2025, according to the report, adding that about 170 million women and girls live in both conflict zones and extreme poverty, surviving on less than \$3 daily and accounting for almost 40 per cent of women and girls living in extreme poverty globally.

Free-market groups urge Trump to extend Jones Act waiver to curb prices

By Silver Nwokoro

THE National Taxpayers Union (NTU) and 17 other free-market organisations have urged United States President, Donald Trump, to issue a new waiver of the Jones Act to ease prices and increase the supply of oil, natural gas, fertilizer and other essential commodities.

The groups in a letter sent to Trump, said extending and expanding the most recent Jones Act waiver, which expires November 15, will ease price pressures and supply disruptions by allowing more vessels to transport essential commodities to Americans.

The Jones Act, an ageing shipping law, has been criticised by the organisations for raising costs and creating bottlenecks in maritime commerce.

"Jones Act waivers are a major, historic win for Americans. Previous waivers are currently helping prices, and we should extend and expand the waiver so

Americans around the country enjoy abundant goods and fuel supply beyond November 15", NTU Free Trade Initiative Director, Bryan Riley, said.

According to the groups, shippers had used the flexibility provided by Jones Act waivers issued earlier this year to transport millions of barrels of gasoline and diesel fuel to U.S. markets.

They added that more petroleum products had been delivered to the West Coast than in any year on record.

"Acting now will allow Americans to plan to unleash additional supplies of diesel fuel, heating oil and other goods. It is particularly imperative that the waiver remain in place during the coming cold weather months", the letter read.

The organisations urged Trump to make the next waiver stronger by extending it for longer periods and expanding the categories of goods that could be transported under the waiver.



ECOWAS COMMISSION
COMMISSION DE LA CEDEAO
COMISSÃO DA CEDEAO

LOCAL COMPETITIVE BIDDING (LCB)

SUPPLY, DELIVERY, INSTALLATION AND TESTING OF CLINICAL EQUIPMENT, LABORATORY EQUIPMENT AND CONSUMABLES FOR ECOWAS COMMISSION IN-HOUSE CLINIC (LOTS 1, 2 & 3)

Invitation for Bids

REF No: ECW/DAGS/DHR/IHC/LCB/10-26.

23rd October, 2026.

- The Commission of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) intends to allocate a portion its budget 2026 to make eligible payments under this contract for which this invitation to Bids is being issued.
- The ECOWAS Commission is now inviting you to bid for the "Supply, Delivery, Installation and Testing of Clinical Equipment, Laboratory Equipment and Consumables For ECOWAS Commission In-House Clinic" in three Lots as indicated below:
 - Lot 1: Supply, Delivery, Installation and Testing of Clinical Equipment for ECOWAS Commission In-House Clinic.
 - Lot 2: Supply, Delivery, Installation and Testing of Laboratory Equipment and Consumables for ECOWAS Commission In-House Clinic.
 - Lot 3: Supply, Delivery and Installation of Laboratory Furniture and Pharmacy Shelves for ECOWAS Commission In-House Clinic.

The Bid Securities Shall Remain Valid for 150 Days after Bid Opening.

- The three (3) lots are distinct and indivisible, and the contract will be awarded per lot. Interested bidders with the requisite qualification and experience may bid for one, multiple or for all the three (3) lots.
- The Bidder shall bear all costs associated with the preparation and submission of its Bid, and the ECOWAS Commission shall not be responsible or liable for those costs, regardless of the conduct or outcome of the bidding process.
- The Bidding Document shall be mailed (soft copy only) to interested Bidders upon submission of a written request and payment (by Bank Transfer in favour of ECOWAS Commission, Abuja) of non-refundable fee of One hundred Thousand Naira (NGN 100,000) only. Account Details available on request.
- Interested and eligible bidders may obtain further information from ECOWAS Commission, Directorate of Administration and General Services, Procurement Division, 2nd Floor, ECOWAS Commission Headquarters, 51, Abubakar O. Suleiman Avenue, Institutions & Research Cadastral Zone, Piwoyi, Airport Road, PMB 401, Abuja. FCT, Nigeria; Monday to Friday from 9:00 am to 4:00 pm. Email: procurement@ecowas.int with copy to: ikkamara@ecowas.int, sbangoura@ecowas.int; sshadrach@ecowas.int; mnnoli@ecowas.int; vvieira-bamba@ecowas.int.
- Bids (1 Original + 3 Copies) shall be delivered in a sealed envelope and deposited in the ECOWAS Tender Box located in the Directorate of Administration and General Services, Procurement Division, 2nd Floor, ECOWAS Commission Headquarters, 51, Abubakar O. Suleiman Avenue, Institutions & Research Cadastral Zone, Piwoyi, Airport Road, PMB 401, Abuja. FCT, Nigeria.
- Bids should be clearly marked "Supply, Delivery, Installation and Testing of Clinical Equipment, Laboratory Equipment and Consumables For ECOWAS Commission In-House Clinic." "Do Not Open, Except in the Presence of the Opening Committee." The envelope SHALL also indicate the bidder's name as well as the Lot No (s) bid for.
- Bids SHALL be deposited in the ECOWAS Tender Box located at General Administration, Procurement Division Office, 2nd Floor, No 51, Abubakar O. Suleiman Avenue, Institutions & Research Cadastral Zone, Piwoyi, Airport Road, PMB 401, Abuja. FCT, Nigeria on or before November 16th, 2026 at 11.00 am (Nigeria Time, GMT + 1).
- Bids will be opened same day in the presence of bidders/representatives who choose to attend, on 16th November, 2026 at 12.00 pm (GMT +1), ECOWAS Commission Headquarters, 51, Abubakar O. Suleiman Avenue, Institutions & Research Cadastral Zone, Piwoyi, Airport Road, PMB 401, Abuja. FCT, Nigeria.
- A site inspection of the ECOWAS Commission In-House Clinic (same address indicated at point 8), will take place on 6th November 2026 at 2:00 pm (Nigerian Time). All bidders may wish to attend this important meeting and will have the opportunity to physically inspect and seek clarification especially, with regards to the furnishing and minor works component of the bids.
- This invitation for Bids can be also consulted on the ECOWAS Official website: <https://ecowas.int/procurement/>

Commissioner for Internal Services



CHANGE OF NAME

www.guardian.ng Guardian Nigeria GuardianNigeria Guardiannigeria Guardian Nigeria - C00264288

ADDITION OF NAME : I, formerly known as Comforter Victor now wish to be addressed as Comforter Victor Emmanuelson. All former documents remain valid. General public take note

ADDITION OF NAME : I, formerly known as Anulika Akpunonu now wish to be addressed as Anulika Joy Akpunonu.. All former documents remain valid. Public take note

ADDITION OF NAME: I, formerly known as Aghedo Isreal now wish to be addressed as Aghedo Israel Osemudiamhen. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

ADDITIONAL OF NAME: I, formerly known as Oladele Oseni now wish to be known as Oseni Lateef Oladele. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

ADELEKE: I, formerly known as Adeleke Ayobami Roseline. now wish to be addressed as Folahan Ayobami Roseline. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

AFOLABI: I, formerly known as Miss. Afolabi Ifeoluwa Janet now wish to be addressed as Mrs. Alabi Ifeoluwa Janet. All former documents remain valid. General public take note

AJIFOWOBAJE: I, formerly known as Deborah Damilola Ajifowobaje now wish to be addressed as Deborah Damilola Adewale. All former documents remain valid. Public take note

AKINNAGBE: I, formerly known as Akinnagbe Oluwatosin Carolinen now wish to be addressed as Anjorin -Akinnagbe Oluwatosin Caroline. All former documents remain valid. Public take note

AKPAN : I, formerly known as Akaninyene Daniel Akpan now wish to be known as Akaninyene Victor Asukwo. . All former documents remain valid. Public take note

AKPAN: Formerly known as Mmokutmfonabasi Godswill Okon Akpan now wish to be addressed as Mmokutmfonabasi Godswill Okon Osiyinu. All former documents remain valid. General public take note

ANTHONY : Formerly known as Miss Anthony Gift Eno'ima now Mrs Sylvanus Gift Eno'ima. All former documents remain valid. Babcock University and the general public please take note.

BAMISAYE : I, formerly known as Bamisaye Dorcas Toluwani now wish to be addressed as Oladejo Dorcas Toluwani. All my documents remain valid. Public to take note.

BETHEL: I, formerly known as Chioma Better and Bethel Nwanosike, now wish to be addressed as Chioma Nwanosike. All documents remain valid. General public take note.

CONFIRMATION OF NAME: I, formerly known as Adeyemi Adedayo Adewusi now wish to be known as Adeyemi Adedayo Anthony Adewusi. All former documents remain valid. Public take note.

CONFIRMATION OF NAME: I, formerly known as Ololade Lewis now wish to be known as Ololade Eugenia Olusola Lewis as stated in my NIN and BVN. All former documents remain valid. STANBIC IBTC and general public take note

CORRECTION OF NAME : I, formerly known as Shuaibu Surajo now wish to be addressed as Sirajo Shehu Sahabi. All former documents remain valid. Public take note

CORRECTION OF NAME : I, formerly known as Bricof Darren Ejiro now wish to be addressed as Okotie Darren Ejiro. All former documents remain valid. General public take

CORRECTION OF NAME : I, formerly known as Ibitoye Micheal Ayomide Now wish to be addressed as Ibitoye Michael Ayomide. All former documents remain valid. Public take note

CORRECTION OF NAME : I, formerly known as Okoli Paschal Uchenna now wish to be addressed as Okoli Uchenna Paschal. All former documents remain valid. Public take note

CORRECTION OF NAME : I, formerly known as Oghoveta Lucky now wish to be addressed as Oghoveta Israel. All former documents remain valid general public take note

CORRECTION OF NAME: I, formerly known as Ohen Chuku John now wish to be addressed as Ohen John Chukuka. All former documents remain valid. General public take.

CORRECTION OF NAME: My name was wrongly arranged in my BVN as Akinsanya Oladimeji Akinwunmi instead of Akinsanya Akinwunmi Oladimeji. All former documents remain valid. Public take note

CORRECTION OF NAME: My name was wrongly Stated Emmanuel, Chinonso Nwatu instead of Nwatu, Emmanuel Chinonso. . All former documents remain valid. General public take note

CORRECTION OF NAME: My name was wrongly stated on my BVN as Onabanjo Nkem Vivian instead of Onabanjo Nkemdilim Vivian. .All former documents remain valid. Public note.

CORRECTION OF NAME/DOB: My name was wrongly captured as Abdullahi Adamu instead of Abdullahi Adamu Abdu, correct DOB 28/2/1997. Former documents remain valid. Public take note

EDOROR : I, formerly known as Edoror God's Power, now wish to be addressed as Edoror God's Power Osemudiamen. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

EGBENOMA : I formerly known as Egbenoma Suzan Osasogie now wish to be addressed as Omobhude Suzan Osas All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

EKWOMADU: I, formerly known as Miss Chinelo Mmachukwu Ekwomadu now wish to be addressed as Mrs. Chinelo Mmachukwu Omeje. All former documents remain valid. Public take note

ENEDEMU : I formerly known as Enedemu Ajiri Praise now wish to be addressed as Ajiri Enedemu, My DOB is 25-09-1995 not 25-09-1994.. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

FADAIRO: I, formerly known as Miss Fadairo Oluwatamilore Florence, now to be addressed as Mrs Ladeowo Oluwatamilore Florence. Former documents remain valid. General public note.

GIFT : I formerly known as Agborofoh Sandra Gift now wish to be addressed as Agborofoh Sandra. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

GREATMAN : I formerly known as Urhoboghara Greatman now wish to be addressed as Urhoboghara Great Oghenewire. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

IBITOYE: I, formerly known as Ibitoye Holymary Bukola now wish to be addressed as Oladimeji Holymary Bukola. All former documents remain valid. Public take note

ILESANMI: I, formerly known as Opadeji Oluwatofunmi Mary now wish to be addressed as Ilesanmi Oluwatofunmi Mary. All former documents remain valid. Public take note

ILUOBE: I formerly known as Miss ILuobe Anita now wish to be addressed as Mrs Ofuma Anita Onemen. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

IRIBHOGBE : I, formerly known as Miss. Iribhogbe Esther Osezele now wish to be addressed as Mrs Oahimire Happiness Osezele. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

IWELA : I, formerly known as Iwela Ezinne Eze now wish to be addressed as Imeri Ezinne Chikaodiri. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

IWUOHA: I, formerly known as Ebele Scholastica Nwokedi now wish to be addressed as Ebele Favourite Iwuoha. All former documents remain valid. General public take note

LASODE: I, formerly Abimbola Victoria Lasode now wish to be addressed as Abimbola Victoria Omotosho. All former documents remain valid. Public take note

LATH: I, formerly known as Oluwafunmike Modesire Yowell Kartchner now wish to be addressed as Lath Yowell Oceane Desiree. All former documents remain valid. Public take note

MICHAEL: I formerly known as Martins-Yedenu Micheal now wish to be known as Martins-Yedenu Michael Oluwasegun. All former documents remain valid. Public note

MURTALA: I formerly known as Murtala Jihadi Illela now wish to be addressed as Murtala Jihadi. All former documents remain valid. Public take note

NWANYISUNDAY: I, formerly known as Ann Nwanyisunday Nwangborogwu, now wish to be addressed as Ann Uzochukwu Daniel. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

OAKHENA: I, formerly known as Oakhena Stephen now wish to be addressed as Oiakehena Steven. My DOB is 05-06-1976 not 25-07-1981. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

ODUNAYA: I, formerly known as Oluwapamilerinayo Oluwapelumi Odunaya now wish to be addressed as Oluwapamilerinayo Oluwapelumi Ogunfidodo. All former documents remain valid. General public take note

OKELUE: I, formerly known as Okelue Oluchi Charity, now wish to be addressed as Eyisi Oluchi Charity. All former documents remain valid. Public note.

ONAIWU: I, formerly known as AKALA Esther Tosin now wish to be addressed as ONAIWU Esther Tosin. All former documents remain valid. Public take note

PETER : I, formerly known as Aghemenlo Ozemebhoya Peter now addressed as Aghemenlo Peter Ozemoya. My DOB is 27-04-1989, not, 27-04-1977 and 27-04-1974. Former documents remains valid. Public note

RAUFU: I, formerly known as Raufu Saudiq Babatunde now wishes to be addressed as Abdulrauf Babatunde Motunrayo. All former documents remain valid. Public note

REARRANGEMENT OF NAME: My name was formerly arranged as Ijeoma Jane Chukwujekwu now to be addressed as Jane Ijeoma Chukwujekwu. All former documents remain valid. Public note

SAMUEL: I, formerly known as Granville Aigbe Uyi now wish to be addressed as Samuel Aigbe Uyi. All former documents remain valid. General public take note

SANI: I, formerly known as Sani Ahmad Chobe now wish to be addressed as Chobe Ahmad Sani. All former documents remain valid. General public take note

USMAN: I, formerly known as Abdulazeed Mutiat Oluwaseun now wish to be addressed as Usman Mutiat Oluwaseun. All former documents remain valid. General public take note

News

Presidency seeks sustainable funding plan, warns against private interests

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

Assembly passed the bill after lawmakers considered its 26 clauses during plenary presided over by the Speaker, Isma'il Falgore.

The Jigawa State House of Assembly also approved the proposed amendment, with Speaker Haruna Aliyu Dangyatin saying the move was aimed at strengthening community policing and improving security at the state and local government levels.

Dangyatin said the bill was transmitted to the assembly following its passage by the Senate and House of Representatives, adding that the approval formed part of efforts to give state governments greater responsibility for addressing security challenges within their jurisdictions.

In Ebonyi, all 24 members of the State House of Assembly voted in favour of the bill during plenary at the Assembly Complex, Nkaliki Road, Abakaliki, following deliberations and consultations with their constituents.

The Speaker, Moses Ije Odunwa, said the unanimous endorsement reflected the law-

makers' commitment to constitutional reforms that would strengthen the country's security architecture and improve the protection of lives and property.

He said the demand for state police had long been supported by the people of Ebonyi, noting that the state had formally expressed its backing for the proposal during the National Assembly's public hearing on the constitutional review.

Odunwa added that a decentralised policing system would bring security services closer to communities, improve access to criminal intelligence and make responses to local threats more effective.

Similarly, the Kogi State House of Assembly unanimously approved the proposed amendment, citing the need to tackle insecurity, strengthen local intelligence gathering and create employment opportunities for youths.

The Speaker, Aliyu Umar Yusuf, said the growing threats to lives and property required more responsive policing mechanisms, iden-

tifying terrorism, banditry, kidnapping, farmer-herder clashes, political thuggery and other criminal activities as persistent security challenges.

He said state police officers recruited from local communities would be more familiar with their terrain, residents and security concerns, helping to improve intelligence gathering, detect suspicious movements and respond swiftly to distress calls.

Yusuf added that decentralising policing could reduce administrative delays and improve operational efficiency, particularly in communities requiring urgent security interventions.

The proposed amendment seeks to establish state police services while retaining the Nigeria Police Force at the federal level.

The National Assembly has given state legislatures a 30-day deadline to communicate their positions on the bill, either supporting or opposing it. The endorsements by the five assemblies form part of the ongoing process required to secure the approval of the states for the constitutional alteration.

Presidency submits National Policing Bill, 29 amendment bills for review

MEANWHILE, providing an update on the reform, Gbajabiamila disclosed that the Presidential Working Group submitted the draft National Policing Bill and 29 consequential amendment bills to the Federal Ministry of Justice on October 19 for review.

The proposals, he said, would be presented to President Bola Tinubu for approval after the review and the Working Group's final consideration, ahead of transmission to the National Assembly.

The proposed framework would allow willing and capable states to take greater responsibility for local security while retaining a strong federal police institution to tackle interstate crime and specialised national security threats.

Gbajabiamila said decentralised policing could improve local intelligence and response times, addressing what he described as the imbalance under which states were expected to respond to insecurity without corre-

sponding authority to organise policing.

He acknowledged concerns that state police could be used against political opponents or vulnerable communities, assuring that the proposed legislation would provide enforceable safeguards, national professional standards and

independent oversight.

"The concern that police powers could be used against political opponents or vulnerable communities is serious. Our answer is to place enforceable limits on those powers and provide remedies when they are abused," he said.

EFCC recovers additional \$40m in ongoing Nestoil investigation, total recovery hits \$100m

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

latest payment as a significant and encouraging development in the recovery process. The lenders have also reaffirmed their commitment to continued cooperation with the EFCC and other relevant stakeholders towards ensuring the full recovery of outstanding obligations.

The lenders consider the recovery significant not only from the perspective of the funds involved but also because of its potential impact on the stability and integrity of Nigeria's financial system. The recovery of funds owed to financial institutions ultimately serves to protect the interests of lenders, depositors and other legitimate stakeholders whose funds are deployed in the financial system.

While the cumulative US\$100 million recovery represents substantial progress, the recovery process is not yet concluded, as a significant portion of the outstanding indebtedness remains to be settled in accordance with the agreed repayment plan.

The lenders appreciate the efforts of the EFCC for deploying its investigative powers professionally and diligently in accordance with its statutory mandate, with the ultimate objective of safeguarding Nigeria's financial system and strengthening public confidence in the fight against economic and financial crimes.

Senate passes bill, okays tougher sanctions for oil spills

From John Akubo, Abuja

THE Senate has passed a bill seeking to empower the National Oil Spill Detection and Response Agency (NOS-DRA) to impose stiffer fines and introduce criminal penalties for environmental violations in Nigeria's petroleum industry.

The proposed amendment aims to strengthen enforcement against oil spills and pollution, particularly in the Niger Delta and other oil-producing communities, where environmental damage has affected livelihoods.

The National Oil Spill Detection and Response Agency (Establishment) Act (Amendment) Bill 2026 was passed after lawmakers considered and adopted the Senate Committee on Environment's report at plenary.

WIEN, KPMG to launch energy sector inclusion benchmark

By Victoria Nwachukwu

THE Women in Energy Network (WIEN) and KPMG Advisory Services will unveil, on November 11, a yearly diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) benchmark for Nigeria's energy sector, aimed at measuring women's participation in the industry and providing data to support engagement with government on policies to promote inclusion.

The report will assess industry performance, identify gaps and highlight opportunities for improvement across the energy value chain, with information gathered from industry players to establish a baseline against which future progress can be measured.

Speaking at a press briefing announcing the collaboration, WEIN's President, Eyono Fatayi-Williams, said the report would be a yearly publication based on data from the players within the industry, saying that with a stamp of approval from KPMG, it will be a global benchmark that would put Nigeria on the map when it comes to fact-based reporting.

She said the initiative was intended to ensure that discussions about diversity and inclusion in the energy sector were supported by data rather than general statements.

The conference Chairperson, Bassey Adie, said the report would cover the wider industry and require information from participating organisations, adding that WIEN was engaging industry stakeholders in partnerships that would allow KPMG to access their systems and communicate with their personnel to gather information for the report.

She said the report would focus on three areas: women in leadership and careers, pathways for young girls through mentorship, internships and employment, and opportunities for women-owned businesses through supplier diversity programmes.

- **PANDEF demands 50% derivation**
- **Says coastal highway completion non-negotiable**

Presenting the report on behalf of the committee chairman, Olubiyi Fadeyi Oluwole, the Senate Chief Whip, Tahir Monguno, said the existing penalties were inadequate to deter environmental offenders.

Monguno, who represents Borno North Senatorial District, said oil spills and pollution continued to damage ecosystems and threaten the livelihoods of residents who depend largely on fishing and farming.

MEANWHILE, the Pan Niger Delta Forum (PANDEF) has demanded an increase in the derivation allocation to oil-producing states from the current minimum of 13 per cent to 50 per cent, citing decades of environmental degradation and developmental challenges in the Niger Delta.

The organisation also declared the accelerated completion of the Lagos-Calabar Coastal Highway non-negotiable, urging the Federal Government to deliver the

project alongside the rehabilitation of the East-West Road and other dilapidated roads across the region.

These demands were contained in a communiqué read by PANDEF National

Chairman, Ambassador Godknows Igali, yesterday, following a meeting of the organisation's Board of Trustees (BoT) and National Executive Committee held in Abuja.



Newly appointed Managing Director of JP Morgan Merchant Bank Nigeria Ltd, Adedapo Olagunju (left), and Executive Chairman, Nigeria Revenue Service (NRS), Zacch Adedeji, during Olagunju's visit to Adedeji at the Revenue House, Abuja.

PHOTO: NRS MEDIA UNIT

Wike unveils Rainbow Coalition candidates, rallies against 'corrupt leaders'

From Ann Godwin, Port Harcourt

THE Minister of the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Nyesom Wike, has cautioned Nigerians against entrusting political power to individuals he accused of mismanaging public funds, citing alleged financial irregularities during the administration of former Rivers State Governor, Rotimi Amaechi.

This comes as the State Assembly positions were shared between members of the All Progressives Congress (APC) and the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), with

the APC receiving the majority of the slots.

Wike accused Amaechi, the former Minister of Transportation and running mate to the All Progressives Congress (APC) presidential candidate, Atiku Abubakar, of misappropriating funds.

He spoke yesterday in Port Harcourt at the unveiling of the Rainbow Coalition candidates, an alliance of six political parties formed to mobilise support for President Bola Tinubu's re-election bid in 2027.

Wike said the coalition was

intended to unite political parties behind Tinubu rather than create divisions, insisting that PDP members across the country had agreed to support the President.

"I have said, and let me reiterate, that the Rainbow Coalition means no harm, but to bring people from all the various political parties together to support Tinubu," he said.

Wike, who described himself as a national leader of the PDP, said the party's National Working Committee had endorsed the arrangement,

adding that members in Imo, Kwara, Gombe, Zamfara, Ogun and other states were expected to support Tinubu. He also dismissed claims of a factional leadership in the PDP, saying the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) had recognised Abdulrahman Mohammed as the party's National Chairman.

The FCT minister subsequently criticised the ADC's presidential ticket, particularly the prospect of Amaechi serving as vice-president under Atiku.

Court overturns Delta's 5% consumption tax law

By Joseph Onyekwere

JUSTICE Peter Lifu of the Federal High Court, Abuja, has nullified provisions of the Delta State Hotel Occupancy, Restaurants and Departmental Stores Consumption Tax Law, 2017, which imposed a five per cent consumption tax on transactions already covered by the federal Value Added Tax (VAT)

regime.

Justice Lifu, in a judgment delivered on October 9, 2026, and obtained by *The Guardian* yesterday, declared the challenged provisions invalid and set aside Sections 3 and 4 of the Delta State law, as well as Section 7(b), Item 13 of the Schedule to the Taxes and Levies (Approved List for Collection) Act (Amendment)

Order No. 77 of 2015.

The court also issued a perpetual injunction restraining the Delta State Attorney-General and Commissioner for Justice, the Delta State Board of Internal Revenue, and their agents or representatives from implementing or enforcing the affected provisions.

The suit was filed by the

Nigeria Employers' Consultative Association (NECA) and Retail Supermarkets Nigeria Limited, which operates Shoprite stores, against the Attorney-General of the Federation, the Delta State Attorney-General and Commissioner for Justice, and the Delta State Board of Internal Revenue.

FG signs over \$100m gas pipelines project in South-East

From Lawrence Njoku, Enugu

THE Federal Government yesterday began its ambitious development of the South-East economy with the signing of an over-\$100 million gas pipeline project in the region.

President Bola Tinubu declared that the over 400-kilometre pipeline spanning from Ohaji in Imo State, through Anambra, Abia, Enugu and Ebonyi states is part of his administration's efforts to build an industrial economy in which affordable energy becomes a foundation

for investment, competitiveness and employment.

At the signing of the project, which is a partnership between the South-East Development Commission (SEDC), Nigerian National Petroleum Company Limited (NNPCL) and Gas Syc Limited, the President declared: "Our ambition is not simply to deliver gas to existing factories. It is to make possible factories that do not yet exist, industrial parks yet to be developed, and investments that have remained on the drawing board because reliable energy

was unavailable."

Represented by the Deputy Speaker of the House of Representatives, Benjamin Kalu, he stated that the true value of the nation's gas lies in the factories it powers, the jobs it creates, and the prosperity it brings to the people.

He said: "Gas infrastructure must therefore serve industries and markets, not stop at political boundaries. That is the economic logic of regional integration."

"Our ambition is not simply to deliver gas to existing factories. It is to make possible factories that

do not yet exist, industrial parks yet to be developed, and investments that have remained on the drawing board because reliable energy was unavailable. We must build an industrial economy in which affordable energy serves as a foundation for investment, competitiveness, and employment.

"With the Assa North-Ohaji South gas processing project in Imo State achieving first gas earlier this year, we have an important opportunity to connect domestic gas resources to productive industries."

provided under Section 162(2) of the 1999 Constitution had remained unchanged for more than two decades despite the environmental damage and economic hardship confronting oil-producing communities.

'Nigeria loses over 300 hectares of forest reserve daily to illegal activities'

From Cornelius Essen, Abuja

THE Conservator General of the National Park Service, Mr Ibrahim Goni, has said that Nigeria is losing over 300 hectares of forest reserve daily, identifying illegal logging and hunting as longstanding threats to forest conservation.

He hinted that the loss has accelerated desertification and worsened environmental degradation.

Goni stated this while receiving members of the Environmental Media Correspondents Association of Nigeria (EMCAN) who paid a courtesy visit to the service's headquarters in Abuja, adding that sustained collaboration between law enforcement agencies and the media was necessary to expose trafficking networks and improve accountability.

To address the problem, he added, the Nigeria Customs Service (NCS), the National Environmental Standards and Regulations Enforcement Agency (NESREA), and the Nigeria Police Force (NPF) had formed an inter-agency committee to combat illegal wildlife trafficking, resulting in the seizure of live animals, carcasses, and other wildlife specimens.

Oyetola, Agbakoba, others to discuss barriers in indigenous shipping

By Anthony Nwachukwu

NIGERIAN maritime stakeholders, led by the Minister of Marine and Blue Economy, Adegboyega Oyetola, will tomorrow explore solutions to the financial and regulatory challenges confronting indigenous ship ownership, especially issues surrounding the disbursement of the Cabotage Vessel Financing Fund (CVFF).

The summit, being planned by the Shipping Correspondents' Association of Nigeria (SCAN) at Apapa, Lagos, focuses on the theme, 'Low-Risk Capital for Indigenous Shipowners: Overcoming Regulatory, Financial Bottlenecks'.

With the former Director-General of the Nigerian Maritime Administration and Safety Agency (NIMASA), Temisan Omatseye, as chairman, and former President of the Nigerian Bar Association, Dr Olisa Agbakoba, as the keynote speaker, the event is expected to examine practical strategies to improve access to affordable financing and strengthen indigenous participation in Nigeria's shipping industry.

Osinbajo urges citizen-centred democracy as Fintiri unveils foundation

From Joy Dennis Yola

FORMER Vice President Yemi Osinbajo has urged governments across Africa to renew their social contract with citizens, insisting that democracy must go beyond elections to delivering tangible improvements in people's lives.

Osinbajo, who spoke on Tuesday in his public lecture at Governor Ahmadu Fintiri's 59th birthday celebration in Yola, warned that the gap between citizens' expectations and democratic performance was eroding public confidence in democratic institutions.

Citing survey data, the former vice president said 64 per cent of Africans preferred democracy to other forms of government, but only 38 per cent were satisfied with how it worked in their countries. He attributed the declining confidence partly to the perception that governments served the wealthy rather than the majority.

Witness says proceeds of NG Eagle's sale in AMCON's CBN account

By Yetunde Ayobami Ojo

A PROSECUTION witness in the ongoing trial of former Managing Director/Chief Executive Officer of the Asset Management Corporation of Nigeria (AMCON), Ahmed Kuru, and four others, has confirmed that proceeds from the sale of NG Eagle were paid into AMCON's account domiciled with the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN).

The Prosecution Witness 4 (PW4), Bawa Usman Kaltungo, made the admission yesterday during cross-examination by Kuru's counsel, Olasupo Shasore, SAN, before the Special Offences Court sitting in Ikeja, Lagos.

Kaltungo also admitted that Kuru obtained the AMCON board's approval before the sale of NG Eagle, which proceeds totalled about N149 million.

The development followed Shasore's request for an explanation of the witness' claim in the investigation report that AMCON illegally established NG Eagle and Super Bravo Limited.

Shasore questioned the basis for the allegation, given Kaltungo's over 22 years of experience as an officer of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC).

Responding, Kaltungo said the investigation relied on intelligence, including a Federal High Court judgment purportedly nullifying the sale of NG Eagle.

Under further cross-examination, however, the witness admitted that he was unaware during the investigation that the judgment had been appealed.

Panel indicts NSCDC for negligence, rights abuse in 33 miners' deaths

From Tina Abeku, Abuja

THE Independent Investigating Committee on the tragic deaths of 33 artisanal miners in the custody of the Nigerian Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC) in Niger State has indicted the agency for negligence and rights abuse.

Presenting the report yesterday in Abuja, the committee chairman, Mr Jonathan Kure-Emeni, said the panel "found extensive failures of leadership," adding that the NSCDC State Commandant, SuberuAnviye, "authorised and supervised the operation without adequate planning, approval or oversight."

He also "permitted overcrowding, failed to ensure lawful detention practices, and later issued a false public statement attributing the deaths to a disease outbreak. The committee concluded

• Recommends compensation, leadership overhaul

that his actions reflected gross leadership failure, abuse of authority and serious professional misconduct."

Among others, the committee also identified the Head of the Investigation Unit, CSC Oluwadare Sunday, as contributing to the failures by facilitating unlawful detention practices, disregarding legal and medical concerns, and failing to intervene despite knowing that conditions in the detention facility were deteriorating.

The former Deputy Director-General of the Department of State Services disclosed that forensic evidence completely dismissed claims of a disease outbreak, pointing instead to environmental asphyxia and acute respiratory failure caused by prolonged

confinement in a severely overcrowded, poorly ventilated cell, worsened by extreme heat and dehydration.

The panel further disclosed that the command raided mining sites on September 15 and 16, 2026, without an approved operational order, proper planning, or consultation with relevant mining authorities.

It added that by the evening of September 16, about 50 male detainees, comprising both adults and minors, were crammed overnight into a 20-square-metre cell lacking running water, ventilation, proper lighting, or a functioning toilet.

According to the report, detainees banged on doors and pleaded for water from shortly after 7:00 pm. Still, the officers ignored their dis-

tress signals and medical warnings regarding suffocation, with the deaths occurring between 8:00 pm and 7:00 am the following day.

Meanwhile, the committee said it verified 33 deaths and 41 survivors, noting that some officers attempted to conceal evidence by cleaning the detention area and altering the scene before investigators arrived.

Consequently, the panel indicted the state commandant and four other officers for gross leadership failure, unlawful detention, and professional misconduct, and recommended their summary dismissal and prosecution.

It also proposed N30 million in compensation for each bereaved family and N10 million for each survivor,

totalling N1.4 billion, along with a total overhaul of NSCDC leadership.

Beyond the conduct of the individual officers, the committee identified broader institutional shortcomings within the NSCDC, including inadequate detention facilities.

FG clarifies deductions in new tax regime, retains 7.5% VAT

From Murtala Adewale, Kano

THE federal government has allayed fears over possible arbitrary deductions from customers' bank accounts under the new tax regime, assuring that the reforms do not authorise financial institutions to impose unauthorised tax deductions.

Also, the Nigeria Revenue Service (NRS) has dismissed concerns that the new tax framework would automatically impose additional financial burdens on citizens, stating that the Value Added Tax (VAT) rate remains 7.5 per cent.

Speaking at a stakeholder engagement and tax reform sensitisation programme in Kano, the NRS Tax Administrator overseeing Kano, Jigawa and Katsina, Samaila Abdullahi, said the new tax laws contain specific provisions on tax assessment, collection and recovery.

Acknowledging the growing concerns among individuals, traders, business owners and other stakeholders, he explained that the reforms do not grant financial institutions unrestricted powers to deduct money from citizens.

Taraba suspends celebrations over insecurity as community seeks Kefas' visit

From Charles Akpeji, Jalingo

THE Taraba State Government has postponed the golden jubilee celebration of Zing Local Council Area and the 10th anniversary of the LamdoGashaka over the worsening insecurity and its possible impact on public gatherings.

The Guardian learnt that the events were earlier scheduled for October 29 and 31, 2026, respectively, but were postponed after a recent attack on Binari Village in Karim-Lamido Local Council Area, and the ongoing military operations around Gashaka-Gumti National Park in Gashaka Local Council.

In a statement, the Taraba State Security Committee said the decision was taken in consultation with the state government, in response to the prevailing security issues.

This comes as an indigene of Wurkun, Atiku Mohammed, has appealed to Governor Agbu Kefas to visit Binnari community in Karim-Lamido Local Government Area to commiserate with the families of last Friday's attack.



Chairman of the House of Representatives Committee on Communications, Peter Akpatason (left), with the Chief Executive Officer of MTN Nigeria, Dr Karl Toriola, during the Data on Trial forum, where the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) subscribers engaged the network carrier's leadership on their concerns about data consumption and customer experience in Abuja on Monday. PHOTO: LUCY LADIDI ATEKO

BUA hails Tinubu's reforms, rallies 100 new players to productive sectors

From Joseph Chibueze, Abuja

THE Founder and Executive Chairman of BUA Group, Abdul Samad Rabiu, has commended President Bola Tinubu's economic reforms for improving Nigeria's investment environment, particularly access to foreign exchange.

This comes as BUA Group advances major industrial expansion projects expected to double produc-

tion capacity across key food manufacturing operations by 2027.

He further challenged Nigeria to create the conditions for no fewer than 100 more major indigenous industrial enterprises capable of investing across manufacturing, agriculture, mining, technology and other productive sectors.

Rabiu, in his keynote address at the 32nd Nigerian Economic Summit Group

(NESG) in Abuja, said the progress achieved through the reforms must now be translated into increased industrial production, job creation and improved living standards for Nigerians.

Speaking on the theme, "Growth That Works: Building a New Economic Accord for Nigeria," he acknowledged the administration's foreign exchange reforms, removal of petrol subsidies, fiscal and tax reforms, bank-

ing sector strengthening and infrastructure investments, noting that these measures were beginning to address longstanding constraints to business growth.

According to him, the ability to access foreign exchange through a functioning market has brought greater predictability to investment planning, particularly for manufacturers undertaking large-scale projects.

Nigeria to step up arms production, defence capacity

By Eniola Daniel and Ngozi Egenuka

THE Minister of State for Defence, Bello Matawalle, has commended Nigeria's recent progress in arms manufacturing, saying that the current production of over 50 million rounds of ammunition, out of a current yearly requirement of over 300 million rounds, is a move towards self-sufficiency.

Matawalle told The Guardian at the sidelines of the ongoing Africa International Defence Exhibition

• Calls intensify for stronger African defence cooperation, local arms production

(AFRIDEX), organised in Lagos by DMG Events, in partnership with the Defence Industries Corporation of Nigeria (DICON), and backed by the federal government, that the attendance from across the world shows President Bola Tinubu's determination to see Nigeria have lasting peace.

Meanwhile, stakeholders, including the Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces of Liberia, Maj.-Gen. Davidson Forleh, have called for stronger African defence co-

operation and local arms production to help curb insecurity in the continent.

Forleh added that stronger intelligence sharing, regional coordination and improved military logistics among African countries would help address the growing security challenges across the continent.

According to him, modern warfare has changed significantly, requiring African militaries to adapt their strategies, technology and operational capabilities to

emerging threats.

Meanwhile, Matawalle disclosed that many countries are coming to DICON for partnerships on defence capabilities, adding that Nigeria was not producing a single bullet before this administration came on board.

According to him, by investing in the local defence industry, "we are not only strengthening our national capabilities but also contributing to the broader regional effort to enhance security across Africa."

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Hooliganism: NPFL goes hard on erring clubs

By Christian Okpara

THE EuroMatch Nigeria Premier Football League (NPFL), yesterday, descended hard on clubs, whose fans caused troubles during and after last weekend's league matches across the country.

The most hit by the sanctions is Warri Wolves, which lost three points and three goals from their accrued points and goals as punishment for the unruly behaviour of one of their fans, who assaulted and injured a match official after their game in Ozoro against Kano Pillars.

The EuroMatch NPFL charged Warri Wolves for breaching NPFL27 Framework & Rules in their match against Kano Pillars on Sunday in which they failed to provide adequate security, thereby allowing unauthorised persons to gain access to restricted areas.

A yet-to-be-identified Warri Wolves' supporter assaulted the appointed match officials after the match, resulting in the sec-

- Deducts three points, three goals from Warri Wolves
- Abia Warriors, Katsina United also sanctioned

ond assistant referee sustaining an injury to his nose and bleeding.

Warri Wolves were fined N2 million for failure to provide adequate and effective security, and another N2 million for assault on the match official.

The Warri club will also pay a fine of N250,000, being compensation to the affected assistant referee, for treatment of the injury sustained during the incident.

Also sanctioned is Katsina United, accused of breaching NPFL27 Framework & Rules in their match against Plateau United on Sunday in which they failed to provide adequate security, resulting in unauthorised persons gaining access to restricted areas.

The EuroMatch NPFL accused supporters of Katsina United of encroaching into the field of play, thereby compromising the safety of players and officials.

For that breach of the match protocol, Katsina United have been fined N1 million. They will pay another N1 million fine for encroachment into the field of play.

The league body gave Katsina United 48 hours (two working days) from the date of notice to appeal the sanctions.

In their case, Abia Warriors were also charged for

breaching NPFL27 Framework & Rules in their Matchday 10 fixture against Niger Tornadoes on Sunday after failing to provide adequate security as agreed at the technical meeting.

An official of Abia Warriors allegedly attempted to disrupt the live broadcast of the match by harassing a crew member of the league's broadcast partner, thereby engaging in conduct capable of bringing the game into disrepute.

EuroMatch NPFL said: "Abia Warriors have been fined N1 million for failure to provide adequate security as agreed at the technical meeting.

"Another N2 million fine has been slammed on Abia Warriors for attempting to disrupt the live broadcast of the match.

Dakar 2026 Youth Olympic Games

Onyali cautions athletes on discipline, dedication, resilience

- Gumel assures contingent of NOC's support

By Gowon Akpodoron

FORMER African 100m champion, Mary Onyali, has advised Nigerian athletes heading to Dakar, Senegal for the 2026 Youth Olympic Games to be focused and clear minded when the battle for medals begin in Senegal on October 31.

Team Nigeria will depart for Dakar on October 29 for the Youth Olympic, which will run from October 31 to November 12. Onyali, who represented Nigeria in five senior Olympic Games told The Guardian yesterday that winning medals at the Youth Olympics requires a lot, including discipline, dedication and resilience.

Although Onyali did not participate in the Youth Olympics her days, she earned historic podium finishes at the inaugural World Junior Championships in Athens, Greece, in 1986, where she established herself as a rising global sprint talent.

Onyali said: "There was nothing like the Youth Olympics in our days, but the World Athletics Junior Championships was so competitive. The difference is that the Youth Olympics is combined with other sporting events. An athlete requires a lot to compete at that level and emerge champion and I want our young athletes to take note.

"Nigeria has a small but compact team going to Dakar, and this makes it easy for the National Sports Commission (NSC) to manage. The athletes should know they are our ambassadors in Dakar and they should compete without fear. They should approach their events the same way they have approached other local and international competitions. They must remember that crossing the line first matters a lot," Onyali said.

Onyali said that she has confidence Team Nigeria's ability to excel in Dakar, explaining: "An athlete like of Rosemary Nwankwo, for instance, has the experience required to win the 100m gold for Nigeria in Dakar. My prayer is that the athletes should get their acts right when it matters."



Warri Wolves and Abia Warriors are among clubs sanctioned by the NPFL for breaching the league rules.

Rivals spark conspiracy theories on Kane's 'orchestrated' Ballon d'Or win

HARRY Kane's rivals have sparked wild conspiracy theories in the wake of the England captain's historic Ballon d'Or win - with supporters of fellow favourites Lamine Yamal and Kylian Mbappe both hinting that there had been behind-the-scenes machinations to rig the voting, reports dailymail.com.

The Bayern Munich striker - who returned to his club this morning - became the first Englishman to win football's ultimate individual honour in 25 years after Michael Owen claimed the prize in 2001.

All the more special was that the 33-year-old - who bagged a staggering 73 goals during the 2025-26 season - was able to do so in front of a home crowd, with the France Football event relocating from Paris to the capital for the first time since its founding 70 years ago.

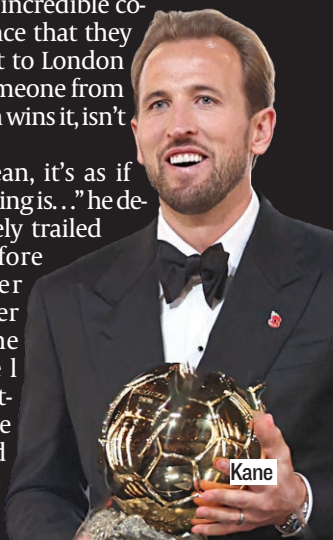
But despite Kane's mammoth contributions to international football making him a worthy winner, those who might have backed his closest rivals Yamal and Mbappe were quick to seek alternative ex-

planations to why their favourites had lost out.

Real Madrid legend Guti suggested that the change of venue had played a large part in the timing of Kane's honour.

"It just so happens that, for the 70th anniversary, they move the ceremony to London and someone from London wins it," the former Los Blancos claimed on Spanish panel show El Chiringuito. "It's an incredible coincidence that they move it to London and someone from London wins it, isn't it?"

"I mean, it's as if everything is..." he deliberately trailed off, before another member of the panel suggested the world 'orchestrated'.



DSTV redefines sports watch with biggest football titles

By Eniola Daniel

SPORTS enthusiasts in Nigeria and across the West Africa sub-region are in for the best of their passion as MultiChoice Group, a Canal+ Company, has introduced its most significant update in years, bringing more of Africa's greatest football, entertainment and new era options to its subscribers.

Under the new structure, DSTV packages will comprise Starter, Select, Sports and Premium, while GOTV customers can choose from Easy, Starter, Select and Sports. The new package line-up is designed around how customers watch today, with clearer choices, more accessible content and greater value across the portfolio.

Announcing the new deals at its Tiamiyu Savage, Victoria Island, Lagos office, yesterday, Multichoice said the new packages took into cognisance the existing economic realities to make its bouquets affordable to its viewers.

Speaking on the new packages scheduled to start on November 5, 2026, CEO, MultiChoice Nigeria, Kemi Omosho, said: "For us, sports is one of our hero packages; Nigerians love EPL, LaLiga, Serie A and others; so, we are giving all the leagues in one package. The focus is on giving subscribers better value and access to the entertainment they love.

"The strength of our platform is the combination of African entertainment, leading international content and unrivalled live sports in one place. We've reimagined our packages to better reflect how customers watch today, with tailored options specifically for general entertainment and sports fans."

"For the first time, some of DSTV's biggest channels will be available at significantly more accessible price points. Starter is the entry-level entertainment package featuring two brand-new channels: SuperSport Kickoff, which brings the Premier League Match of the Week and selected football from the UEFA Champions League; and Africa Magic+, which offers premium local and international series plus more.

Okoko wins Sunshine Development Tour's Rift Valley Championship

By Christian Okpara

GODWIN Okoko, yesterday, showed why he is regarded as one of Nigeria's brightest young stars when he beat the field to win the Rift Valley Championship, the eighth leg of the Sunshine Development Tour - East Africa Swing.

Okoko, who has been in fine form this season, closed with a five-under-par 68 to secure his maiden professional title, finishing on a tournament total of 209.

His final-round scorecard featured six birdies on holes 3, 4, 6, 10, 11 and 17, alongside a spectacular eagle on the 16th. He dropped shots on holes 5, 8 and 12 but maintained his advantage to seal the win.

Speaking after his round, an elated Okoko said: "I'm very happy to win my first title on the Sunshine Development Tour. I've been working hard throughout the season, and it feels good to see that effort pay off.

"The course tested us, but I stayed focused, took my opportunities and kept pushing until the end. This win gives me a lot of confidence as I prepare for the next event back home in Nigeria."

The victory earned Okoko 400,000 Kenyan shillings from the Ksh2 million prize purse, alongside 210 Sunshine Development Tour Order of Merit points.

Simon Njogu of Golf Park Golf Club finished second on nine-under-par 210 after another strong performance. His final-round card featured birdies on holes 5, 8, 10, 11 and 16, with his only dropped shots coming on holes 4 and 17.

Njogu took home Ksh214,000 and 172 Order of Merit points.

Speaking after his round, Njogu said: "I'm pleased with how I played over the three days. I gave myself opportunities and managed to finish strongly, although there are a few shots I would have liked back. Congratulations to Godwin on the win. I'll take the positives from this week and build on them as we head into the next tournament."

Edwin Mudanyi, who began the final round as the overnight leader, finished third on six-under-par 213 after a challenging start. He dropped shots on holes 1, 3 and 4 before recovering with a birdie on the sixth.

Oluwafemi Adekoya

In God we trust

NIGERIANS are very prayerful and religious people. It's evident in the number of religious institutions and affiliations around us, as well as the competition to break records for the longest prayers or the biggest auditoriums to serve God.

But a non-Nigerian would be shocked by the kinds of prayers we say daily. If we are not praying for electricity to be restored so that our refrigerated food does not get spoilt, we'd find some people praying for provision or blessings even when there's no work or 'hustle' to be blessed.

At the national level, we've been urged many times to pray against insecurity and terrorists, or sometimes for the naira to gain some stamina against the dollar. We pray over almost everything but ignore the part where we need to roll up our sleeves and take responsibility.

"Africans are notoriously religious," wrote the Kenyan philosopher and theologian, John S. Mbiti. It was not an insult; it was an observation about a people whose faith saturates daily life, language, family, politics, business and even the way they greet the morning.

Nigeria embodies that description. We pray before interviews, examinations, journeys, surgeries, contracts and elections. We declare that "God will provide," "God will protect us," and "God will heal us." These are not empty words. Faith gives millions of Nigerians courage in a country where institutions often fail, and uncertainty is routine.

But there is a dangerous version of faith: the belief that God should do what government, institutions, communities and individuals have the power—and duty—to do. That is not spirituality. It is abdication dressed in religious language. I remember my lecturer during my days at the University of Ibadan constantly reciting the age-old proverb that "God will not do for men what they should do for themselves" whenever we tried to renounce responsibility or pray our way out of a situation that should have been dealt with by common sense.

Even the United States, which printed "In God We Trust" on its currency, does not interpret the motto as an excuse to abandon planning, regulation, science or personal responsibility. Americans trust God, but they also build institutions, enforce laws, fund research, inspect bridges, regulate aviation and demand accountability from leaders.

Nigeria must recover that balance. We should pray—but pray with our eyes open, our hands working and our votes counting.

A caveat: this is not an argument against God, religion, prayer or religious bodies. Nigeria's churches, mosques and faith-based organisations provide education, healthcare, relief, moral guidance and community in ways the state often cannot. In moments of grief, sickness and insecurity, prayer is not superstition; it is human.

Mbiti's point was that religion in Africa is not a Sunday activity. It is woven into the fabric of existence. African life, culture and belief form an integrated whole. That spiritual depth is a strength. A people who believe that life has meaning beyond money and power should not be ashamed of it.

The problem begins when faith replaces responsibility. When a commuter prays publicly for safe roads but refuses to hold the government accountable to fix them; when a family spends its savings on "spiritual attacks" while ignoring treatable hypertension; when citizens pray against kidnapping but do not demand policing reform; when a nation prays for economic growth while celebrating corruption—then "In God we trust" becomes a national alibi.

God may be our ultimate refuge, but He is not meant to be the contractor who repairs federal



roads, the doctor who supplies oxygen, the engineer who fixes the grid, or the politician who refuses to steal public funds.

So, we pray and sometimes fast before travelling. But the deeper question is this: why should a routine journey require an act of spiritual survival? A functioning society would have well-designed roads, functioning streetlights, enforced speed limits, vehicle inspections, emergency response services and drivers who fear consequences. Prayer should accompany such a system—not substitute for it.

Imagine if we treated aviation the way we treat road transport. No one would accept an airline whose pilots skip maintenance because "God is in control." Yet on Nigerian roads, we often normalise broken vehicles, overloaded buses, untrained drivers and unlit highways, then ask God to bridge the gap created by human negligence. This year alone, the number of accidents involving heavy-duty trucks and fuel tankers is enough to prompt a government review of the issues and a call for a national emergency.

Road safety officials and even the VIO will look past an overloaded vehicle or *danfo* but hound a better-looking private vehicle for papers and all sorts of certifications. Private vehicle owners are punished for missing a day to renew their papers, even when the vehicle is right in their homes, while commercial vehicles are the privileged lot who oil the local economy.

Medicine offers another revealing example. Nigerian doctors and hospitals often say, "We treat, God heals." It is a humble and beautiful statement. It acknowledges the limits of human knowledge while affirming the omnipotence of the supreme being.

But notice the order of the sentence: we treat. Doctors diagnose. They prescribe. They operate. They monitor. They use evidence, training and technology. Only then do they leave the outcome to God. That is the proper relationship between faith and action. A diabetic patient should take insulin, follow medical advice and pray. A mother with malaria should get tested and receive appropriate treatment, not first spend days chasing a



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vote, scrutinise budgets, attend town halls, support credible candidates, report corruption and refuse to sell their future for a bag of rice or a few thousand naira.

A country cannot pray and fast its way out of a bloated cost of governance. It cannot speak in tongues its way out of a corrupt procurement system. It cannot anoint its way out of insecurity if those responsible for intelligence, policing, justice and community protection are incompetent or compromised.

If we leave everything to God, we may unintentionally leave everything to those who exploit God's name.

The American motto "In God We Trust" did not stop the United States from investing heavily in science, infrastructure, law enforcement and institutional accountability. The phrase has appeared on U.S. currency since the Civil War era and became the official motto in 1956. Yet American society generally separates spiritual trust from practical problem-solving.

When an American bridge collapses, there are investigations, engineering reviews, lawsuits, regulatory reforms and political consequences. When a drug fails, scientists demand evidence. When a public official abuses power, journalists, courts, legislators and civil society push back.

That does not make America perfect. Far from it. It has its own crises of violence, inequality and political division. But the lesson is not that Nigeria should blindly copy America. The lesson is that a society can hold religious conviction while still insisting on competence, evidence and accountability.

"In God we trust" should mean: we trust God with the outcomes we cannot control. It should not mean: we refuse to control the outcomes we can.

Nigeria is not suffering because its people pray too much. We may be suffering because we sometimes allow prayer to become an escape from difficult action. We pray for jobs, but do we build the skills, industries and policies that create them?

We pray for security, but do we support community policing, intelligence reform, justice and the protection of informants? We pray for education, but do we insist that public schools have teachers, laboratories, libraries and safe classrooms? We pray for power supply, but do we demand maintenance, investment, transparency and punishment for sabotage? Many are reeling under the Band A billing system. We pray for a better Nigeria, but do we vote as if the future depends on it?

As the Book of James says, faith without works is dead. That biblical warning applies to nations as much as individuals. A country that prays but does not plan is like a farmer who asks God for a harvest while refusing to plant seeds.

Religious leaders also carry responsibility. Pastors and imams should not only promise miracles; they should teach stewardship, civic duty, honesty and excellence. A pulpit that tells people to wait for God while ignoring bad governance can become a tool of social paralysis. A pulpit that tells people to pray and participate in building society can become a force for national renewal.

"In God we trust" is a profound phrase only when it is paired with another truth: God trusts us with responsibility. Nigeria does not need less God. It needs less excuse-making in God's name.

We should continue to pray before every journey. But we should also insist that the road does not become a graveyard. We should pray over sickness, but we should also strengthen hospitals and respect medical evidence. We should pray for leaders, but we should also make them accountable for public trust and our commonwealth.

"spiritual husband" in a prayer house. A man with chest pain should reach a hospital, not wait for a prophet to interpret the pain.

Nigeria's health challenges are not merely spiritual. They include underfunded primary healthcare, shortage of specialists, poor emergency services, counterfeit drugs, weak health insurance and the exodus of medical professionals. Prayer is powerful, but prayer cannot manufacture blood for a bleeding accident victim. Prayer cannot replace a functioning ambulance. Prayer cannot train a surgeon overnight. Palm oil cannot replace blood even though they look seemingly alike.

When we say "God will heal," we must not mean "let us do nothing until God intervenes." God has already given humanity knowledge, vaccines, antibiotics, surgical skills, public health systems, and the intelligence to prevent disease. Rejecting those gifts is not faith; it is negligence.

The most costly form of religious fatalism is political. Too often, Nigerians respond to bad leadership with resignation: "God will change things," "God will expose them," "God will provide a leader."

God may well do all of those things. But in a democracy, God also expects citizens to register,

“We should continue to pray before every journey. But we should also insist that the road does not become a graveyard. We should pray over sickness, but we should also strengthen hospitals and respect medical evidence. We should pray for leaders, but we should also make them accountable for public trust and our commonwealth.”

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