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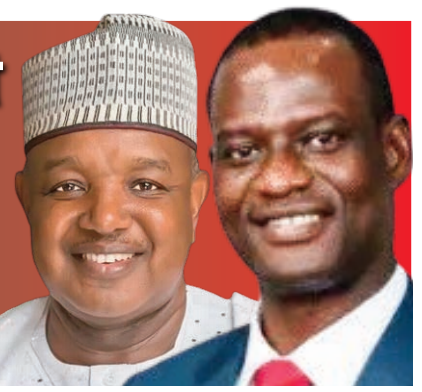


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21 states adopt new tax law as JRB task force targets illegal levies collectors BUSINESS PAGE 15

Nigeria starts 2027 budget process as existing fiscal plans face execution gaps NEWS PAGE 6





Oborevwori signs five bills, introduces 13th-month salary for Delta workers NEWS PAGE 7

FEC approves N594.49b for roads as Nigeria, others seek funding for regional highway

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How OPay is taking financial inclusion closer to more Nigerians

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Elevate Africa Convening Accra 2026. Former President of Malawi, Dr Joyce Banda (left); First Lady of Sierra Leone, Dr Fatima Maada Bio; President of Sierra Leone, Dr Julius Maada Bio; Olu of Warri Kingdom, His Majesty Ogiame Atuwatse III; Queen Consort of Warri Kingdom and Co-Founder of Elevate Africa, Her Majesty Olori Atuwatse III; former President of Nigeria, Dr Goodluck Ebele Jonathan; and representative of the President of Ghana, Julius Debrah, during the opening ceremony and Presidential Roundtable of the Elevate Africa Convening 2026, themed "Africa: Defining Her Future," in Accra, Ghana... on Wednesday. PHOTO: ELEVATE AFRICA

Sunbeth's ₦150 Billion Commercial Paper Offer Attracts Over ₦ 220 Billion in Subscriptions

Sunbeth Global Concepts

Lagos, Nigeria, 27 October 2026 – Sunbeth Global Concept Limited has attracted subscriptions exceeding ₦220 billion for its ₦ 150 billion commercial paper offer, reflecting strong investor confidence in the company's business and growth strategy. The offer exceeded its target by more than ₦70 billion, representing oversubscription of more than 46.7%. Proceeds will support cocoa procurement for the new season and finance the company's trading and working capital requirements.

The successful offer comes as Sunbeth expands its cocoa sourcing and trading operations alongside its investment in processing.

Its planned 70,000 metric tonne cocoa processing plant in Nigeria forms part of a broader strategy to deepen local value addition and supply cocoa products to local, regional and international customers.

Commenting on the outcome, Adeyemi Aduwo, Chief Financial Officer, said: "The strong response reflects investors' confidence in Sunbeth and our growth strategy. We thank our investors and transaction partners for their support. This funding strengthens our cocoa procurement capacity as we continue building an integrated business spanning sourcing, trading and processing."

Sunbeth acknowledged Chapel Hill Denham, its lead arranger, and the participating dealers, advisers and professional partners for their contribution to the issuance.These include AVA Capital Plc, Cordros Advisory Services Limited, Coronation Merchant Bank Limited, FSL Advisory Limited, Meristem Capital Limited, Norrenberger Advisory Partners Limited, PAC Capital Limited, Rand Merchant Bank,CFG Manyard,Absa Nigeria,Zedcrest and KPMG, alongside The New Practice, legal counsel to the transaction.

Sunbeth remains focused on strengthening its sourcing network, expanding its global customer base and developing its processing capacity, supported by disciplined financial management.

Panorama

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SPOTLIGHT

WHO: Survivors can only transmit Ebola through sex, not sweat, saliva

THE World Health Organisation (WHO) has explained that Ebola survivors may transmit the virus through sexual intercourse if it persists in their semen after recovery.

In contrast, survivors who have met the criteria for discharge from treatment are not expected to transmit the virus through sweat or saliva.

Patrick Otim, programme area manager for emergency response at the WHO Regional Office for Africa, stated this in a video while answering questions about the virus.

Otim said male survivors should receive counselling on safer sex practices and access to condoms after discharge from treatment centres. He added that they should undergo regular semen testing until they obtain two consecutive negative results.

"Ebola virus after recovery and for patients with what we call a viral persistence can be transmitted through sexual intercourse," he said.

He stated that the virus could remain in certain parts of the body after clinical recovery, posing a risk of transmission through infected semen.

WHO recommends male survivors practise safer sex for 12 months in the absence of a semen-testing programme. Where testing is available, they should undergo regular testing until two consecutive negative results are obtained. Otim said survivors who had recovered could not transmit the virus through sweat or saliva because the virus would have been cleared from their blood.

Dockworkers threaten to shutdown ports nationwide

By **Adaku Onyenucheya**

DOCKWORKERS have threatened to shut down ports nationwide over terminal operators' failure to commence negotiations on the National Joint Industrial Council (NJIC) agreement for their welfare packages and remuneration.

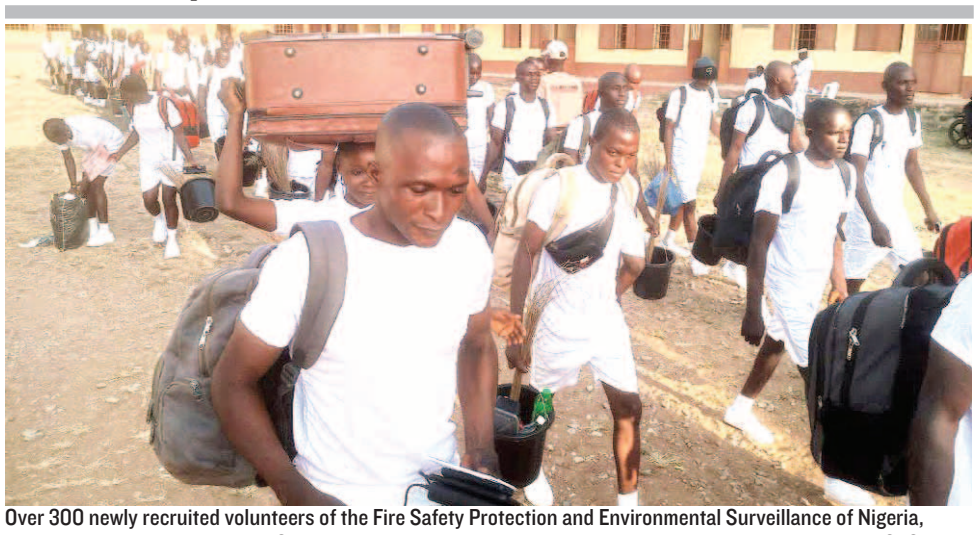
The Dockworkers Branch of the Maritime Workers' Union of Nigeria (MWUN) said the ports would be shutdown next week following delay tactics by terminal operators that fail to honour the previous NJIC agreement that expired at the end of May 2026, with revised rates expected to take effect from June 1.

Speaking in Lagos on Wednesday, President of the Dockworkers Branch, Comrade Bolaji Agboola, said workers were growing frustrated, warning that port operations could be disrupted unless negotiations began urgently.

Agboola said workers' anger was mounting over the prolonged delay, raising the prospect of an industrial crisis in the maritime sector.

He warned that the branch leadership was finding it increasingly difficult to contain workers' agitation over the failure of terminal operators to negotiate a new agreement.

He maintained that dockworkers should already be receiving revised rates following expiration of the previous agreement and urged terminal operators to begin negotiations without further delay.



Over 300 newly recruited volunteers of the Fire Safety Protection and Environmental Surveillance of Nigeria, leaving their camp to the Police College for one week training in Kaduna, yesterday. PHOTO: NAN

Netanyahu bloc loses majority with most ballots counted

ISRAEL'S future hung in the balance on Wednesday as it became clear that Benjamin Netanyahu had lost his governing majority. His political fate now depends on whether opposition Jewish parties are prepared to forge a common front with Palestinian parties, whose support surged in Tuesday's elections.

The leader of the Jewish opposition bloc, the retired general Gadi Eisenkot, appeared to rule out such a broad coalition in a premature declaration of victory overnight for what he called a "Zionist majority".

As the vote count proceeded on Wednesday, initial exit poll projections that Eisenkot's bloc would have a narrow lead over Netanyahu's coalition looked increasingly in doubt as the prime minister's bloc edged ahead, with the votes of deployed soldiers and other absentee ballots – about 14% of the total electorate – yet to be fully counted.

Complex immigration rules deter 43% of air travellers, says IATA

By **Olusegun Koiki**

COMPLEX immigration and visa requirements have discouraged 43 per cent of air travellers from visiting certain destinations, a survey conducted by the International Air Transport Association (IATA) has said.

The association also revealed that 84 per cent of global air travellers were interested in using a digital passport for online check-in instead of their physical passport.

IATA in its 2026 Global Passenger Survey (GPS), convened physically and virtually yesterday in Macao, China, said that the 43 per cent complex barriers imposed on travellers by immigration was an increase from 33 per cent recorded in 2025.

IATA said the complexity of entry procedures remained the leading reason travellers abandoned plans to visit particular destinations.

According to the survey, 53 per cent of passengers discouraged by immigration requirements cited complicated processes as their primary concern, while 17 per cent each identified privacy concerns and the cost of obtaining entry documents.

The findings showed the growing disconnect between passengers' demand for seamless international travel and the administrative hurdles they encounter when crossing borders.

... DAY 4568

OUR GIRLS STILL MISSING

Tope Templer Olaiya, News Editor

@TopeTempler

RANDOM FACTS

- The name of all the continents end with the same letter that they start with.
- You can't kill yourself by holding your breath.
- Ghana has secured legal ownership of kente cloth, the country's national fabric.
- Living with a view of water, such as the sea, lake or river, can make you calmer, happier, and more creative.
- Adomania (noun): The sense that the future is coming too quickly.

TODAY'S QUOTE

O Lord Almighty in whom there's no weakness, eternal in whom there's no transcience; in admiring your work and judgments, a created being even after much searching cannot fathom them.

If we succeed in the tasks which lie before us, our names will be remembered and our deeds recalled by those who follow us. If we fail, history will puzzle at our failure and mourn what was lost.

HAILE SELLASSIE

Emperor of Ethiopia for 44 years

Originality is the essence of true scholarship. Creativity is the soul of the true scholar.

NNAMDI AZIKIWE

TODAY IN HISTORY

• 2024 - Nigeria
Osun State Chapter of APC suspended ex-governor Ogbeni Rauf Aregbesola, over alleged anti-party activities

• 2018 - Indonesia
Indonesian low-cost airline Lion Air Boeing 737 MAX crashed after taking off, killing all 189 people on board. The two-month-old 737 MAX 8 jet plunged into the Java Sea 13 minutes after take off from Jakarta for Sumatra. The private carrier was founded in 1999 to provide access to air travel to everyone.

• 2015 - China
China announced the end of One-child policy after 35 years. It was part of a birth planning program to control the size of its population.Effective from Jan 2016 the policy became a universal two-child policy that allowed each couple to have two children.

• 2013 - S/Africa
In South Africa Mike du Toit the mastermind behind 2002 right-wing extremist plot to kill former Pres. Nelson Mandela and drive blacks out of the country, was sentenced with four others to 35 years in jail.

• 2013 - USA
Conrad Murray (60), the doctor convicted of killing Michael Jackson with an overdose of a powerful anesthetic, was released from prison in LA after serving about half of his maximum sentence.

• 2012 - USA
Hurricane Sandy hit east coast of the United States, killing 286, while leaving nearly $70 billion in damages and causing major power outages.

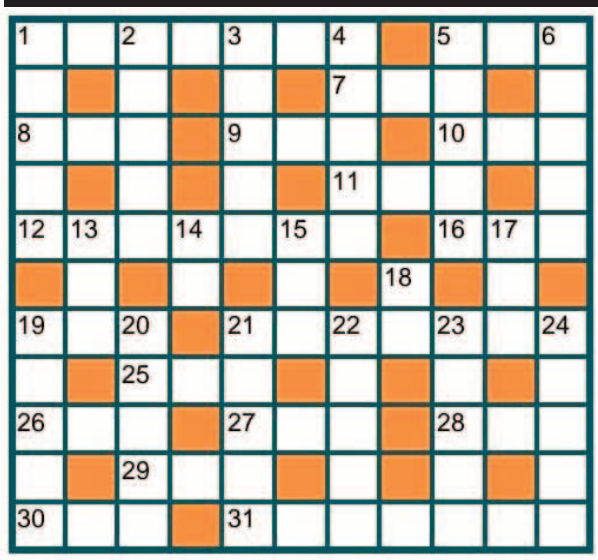
• 2011 - Libya
Volunteers buried over 500 bodies, most of them fighters across Sirte a week after Gaddafi's death. This included 50 bodies of civilians found under the rubble of a building flattened in a NATO air strike.

• 2008 - Nigeria
Pres. Umaru Yar'Adua dropped 20 ministers out of 44 in a cabinet shake-up.

• 2008 - USA
Delta Airlines merged with Northwest Airlines, creating world's largest airline.

• 2006 - Nigeria
ADC Airline Boeing 737-2B7 Flight 53 crashed at the Nnamdi Azikiwe Airport, Abuja moments after take off, killing 98 people on board including spiritual leader of Nigeria's Sunni Muslims, Sultan of Sokoto, Alhaji Muhammadu Maccido, his Senator son, Badamasi Maccido and Sokoto deputy governor, Garba Muhammed. Three generations of the Maccidos died in the crash as it also claimed Senator Maccido's son, Umar. Nine persons survived the crash.

CROSS WORD PUZZLE



• ACROSS
I. Intense delight, (7).
5. Flap for holding, (3).
7. Nigerian staple food, (3).
8. Local Area Network, abbr., (3).
9. Operation Feed the Nation, abbr.
10. Indicating 'one', (3).
11. Thick, black liquid, (3).
12. Tea-scented flowers, (7).
16. Yoruba crown, (3).
19. Payment for services, (3).
21. Make something available, (7).
25. Town in Abia state, (3).
26. Item of baggage, (3).
27. Expressing approval, (3).
28. Grass with edible seed, (3).
29. Editor-in-Chief, abbr., (3).
30. Make mistake, (3).
31. Place of refuge, (7).

• DOWN
1. Success, (5).
2. Woman who is a saint, (5).
3. Town in Ondo State, (5).
4. 'Busybody' in America, (5).
5. LGA in Jigawa State, (5).
6. Woman at her wedding, (5).
13. Town in Osun State, (3).
14. Concerning, (2).
15. Knight's title, (3).
17. Failure at something, (3).
18. Intravenous, abbr., (2).
19. False account, (5).
20. Full of enthusiasm, (5).
21. Dry out, (5).
22. Brownish-yellow colour, (5).
23. Hard wood, (5).
24. Go in, (5).

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Check 31 for solution to the puzzle

News

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Labour divided over N70,000 palliative, insists on N500,000 minimum wage

ActionAid, others decry poor minimum wage compliance in states

From **Collins Olayinka** and **Joke Falaju**, Abuja

THE Trade Union Congress of Nigeria (TUC) has rejected the Federal Government's proposed N70,000 transport palliative, insisting that workers need an immediate salary increase and full implementation of the outstanding agreement with health workers to address the worsening cost of living.

The congress said temporary wage awards were neither sustainable nor far-reaching, citing the failure to fully implement the 2023 wage award agreed upon by the government and labour.

But the National Secretary of the Joint National Public Service Negotiating Council (JNPSNC), Gbenga Olowoyo, accepted the N70,000 wage award, while reaffirming labour's demand for a N500,000 minimum wage.

Meanwhile, ActionAid Nigeria and the Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC) have decried poor implementation of the N70,000 minimum wage in some states, with a recent assessment putting compliance at 67 per cent at the state level and 48 per cent at the local council level.

In a statement signed by its President, Festus Osifo, and Secretary General, Nuhu Toro, TUC urged the Federal Government to increase workers' salaries without waiting for another negotiation.

TUC argued that the government faced no legal impediment in increasing salaries beyond the minimum wage, noting that some states had already raised their minimum wages above N100,000.

It maintained that the government could immediately raise the pay of its lowest-paid workers to N300,000, with appropriate consequential adjustments for other salary levels.

According to the TUC, the statutory minimum wage sets a wage floor, not a ceiling, allowing the government to improve workers' earnings without waiting for a new minimum wage agreement.

TUC said it communicated its position to the Federal Government in a demand letter dated October 8, 2026, following a meeting of its National Administrative Council in Abuja.

"How can workers be expected to trust fresh promises when previous obligations remain outstanding?" the congress asked.

It called on governments at the federal, state and local council levels to introduce measurable interventions to reduce the cost of essential goods and services, ensure prompt payment of salaries and pensions, protect existing jobs and curb exploitative labour practices.

ON the new wage, Olowoyo said labour remained committed to the proposed wage, but was open to reasonable negotiations with the Federal Government to reach an agreement that would improve workers' welfare.

He spoke during an interview on *Arise News* yesterday, following a meeting between organised labour and the Federal Government that lasted more than six hours to discuss workers' welfare and measures to cushion the impact of rising petrol prices.

The labour leader, who welcomed the Federal Government's agreement to provide workers with N70,000 transport support monthly for six months, beginning next month, described the intervention as a positive outcome of negotiations.

According to him, the agreement demonstrated the government's willingness to address workers' concerns, adding that labour expected the government to honour its commitment and implement the intervention as agreed.

"I think with what happened today – the negotiation that lasted over six hours – and with the outcome of the meeting, I think, it is a good omen," Olowoyo said.

He explained that the transport support was designed to benefit workers at all levels, including those at the grassroots, following concerns over the increasing cost of transportation and the pressure of higher fuel prices on household budgets.

"The template of N500,000 is still subsisting. At the same time, if government is able to dance around N500,000, we would be alright to support the President. So, we are not going to be rigid, but reasonable," he said.

Tinubu proposes $20.5b, €1.045b loan requests to Reps

- Oyedele defends borrowing, claims reforms averted economic collapse
- Lawmakers approve Yobe Airport refund

From **Terhemba Daka** and **Joel Oladele**, Abuja

PRESIDENT Bola Tinubu has asked the House of Representatives to approve external loans totalling $20.52 billion and €1.045 billion to finance projects across critical sectors of the economy.

The request came as the House approved a N100.51 billion promissory note to reimburse the Yobe State Government for constructing the Muhammadu Buhari International Cargo Airport in Damaturu.

Meanwhile, the Federal Government has defended its proposed $21.7 billion external borrowing plan, describing it as a long-term investment in infrastructure, human capital and economic growth, rather than an additional debt burden.

The Minister of Finance and Coordinating Minister of the Economy, Taiwo Oyedele, said the five-year project financing plan was designed to create productive assets whose long-term economic value would outweigh the cost of borrowing.

Tinubu's borrowing request was conveyed in a letter read by the Speaker, Tajudeen Abbas, at plenary yesterday.

The proposed facilities, valued at $20,517,755,901 and €1,045,083,643, form part of the Federal Government's 2026–2027 Supplementary External Borrowing Rolling Plan.

In the letter, the President urged lawmakers to expedite consideration of the request to enable the government implement the planned projects and programmes.

Oyedele said the proposed loans would support infrastructure, agriculture, healthcare, education, water supply, security and employment generation, among other sectors.



President Bola Tinubu (right); Vice President Kashim Shettima; Secretary to the Government of the Federation (SGF), George Akume; Head of Civil Service of the Federation, Abel Enitan, and Chief of Staff to the President, Femi Gbajabiamila during the Federal Executive Council (FEC) meeting, at the Presidential Villa, Abuja, yesterday.

Ebola: ADC warns Tinubu over alleged plot to shift presidential poll

Obi threatens vote riggers as Presidency alleges hypocrisy

From **Andrew Oota**, Abuja

THE African Democratic Congress (ADC) Presidential Campaign Council (PCC) has raised the alarm over a suspected scheme to pressure the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) into postponing the January 16, 2027, presidential election.

Relatedly, while the presidential candidate of the Nigerian Democratic Congress (NDC), Peter Obi, threatened that his camp will "rig those who rig" the 2027 elections, the Presidency accused him of playing to the gallery.

In a warning to President Bola Tinubu, ADC cautioned against using the Ebola public health situation to alter the established electoral timeline.

APC PCC's Director of Strategic Communication, Phrank Shaibu, yesterday released a statement claiming they received information that the INEC Chairman, Prof. Joash Amupitan, would be summoned to the Presidential Villa to rewrite the election timetable behind closed doors.

The party warned the presidency against leveraging the ongoing Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) outbreak as an excuse to evade voters, pointing out that the Nigeria Centre for Disease Control and Prevention (NCDC) had indicated there was no valid medical justification to push back the poll.

"The election date belongs to Nigerians. It must not be rewritten behind closed doors at the Villa," the council said.

It said Nigerians had endured three and a half years of relentless hardship, insisting that they must be allowed to judge the Tinubu administration at the ballot box on January 16.

"A government that has made life this difficult for Nigerians must not be allowed to postpone its day of judgment," it said.

While acknowledging Ebola as a serious public health concern, the council said health professionals must be allowed to contain the disease, and INEC must take necessary steps to protect voters and election workers.

The council also put INEC, domestic observers and international election monitors on notice, demanding that any proposal to alter the timetable be made openly, backed by published health evidence and subjected to public scrutiny.

OBI made the threat yesterday at a town hall meeting of the NDC in Nasarawa State, where he addressed party supporters on electoral integrity and the need to strengthen Nigeria's electoral system.

"Let me assure you: number one, in this coming election, we will rig those who rig it," he said, assuring that, if elected president, he would ensure no one rigs elections in Nigeria.

The former governor of Anambra State said strengthening political parties and electoral processes would be central to preventing electoral malpractice in the country.

"Let me assure you, number two, if elected the president of Nigeria, nobody will rig the election in this country again," he said.

Obi also called for stricter enforcement of educational requirements for candidates seeking elective offices, saying anyone contesting an election must have attended primary and secondary school.

He said anyone who forged educational certificates or failed to meet the requirements should face imprisonment.

"For you to contest the election, you must have attended a primary and a secondary school, and it will be clear," he said. "Any high-ranking official, anybody who is involved with the election, under my watch, that rigs the election, will go to jail."

SENIOR Special Assistant to President Tinubu on Information and Strategy, Bayo Onanuga, in a post on *X* yesterday, blasted Obi, stating that he always says what he does not practise.

Onanuga stated that Obi's comments were misleading and aimed at deceiving Nigerians.

He asserted that while Obi was governor of Anambra, "he did not do what he is preaching" to the Tinubu administration.

President approves N45b for disease surveillance in five airports

We've not advised Nigeria to restrict gatherings, says WHO

From **Terhemba Daka** and **Nkechi Onyedika-Ugoeze**, Abuja

PRESIDENT Bola Tinubu has approved N45 billion for the deployment of an integrated biosecurity and disease surveillance system at five international airports to boost Nigeria's capacity to detect and respond to emerging infectious disease threats.

However, the World Health Organisation (WHO), yesterday, said it had not advised the Federal Government to restrict public gatherings following the Ebola case recorded in the country.

The Minister of Health and Social Welfare, Prof. Ali Pate, after the Federal Executive Council (FEC) meeting presided over by Tinubu yesterday, listed the five airports as Lagos, Abuja, Kano, Port Harcourt and Enugu airports.

According to the minister, the project will be delivered through a 20-year public-private partnership (PPP) with the BioHealth Consortium, using technologies such as aircraft waste water surveillance, air and surface sampling, and specialised pathogen detection systems.

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FEC approves N594.49b for roads as Nigeria, others seek funding for regional highway

From **Terhemba Daka**, Abuja

- Umahi to chair regional talks on financing 1,028km corridor
- Abuja-Kaduna-Zaria-Kano highway to get solar-powered streetlights

FEDERAL Executive Council (FEC) has approved eight road projects worth N594.49 billion across the country, while Nigeria and four other West African nations pursue financing from the African Development Bank (AfDB) for their respective sections of the proposed 1,028-kilometre Lagos-Abidjan highway.

The Minister of Works, Dave Umahi, disclosed this while briefing State House correspondents on the outcome of yesterday's FEC meeting presided over by President Bola Tinubu at the Presidential Villa, Abuja.

Umahi said ministers from Nigeria, Benin Republic, Togo, Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire would meet on Friday to discuss financing arrangements for the regional highway, with him chairing the meeting.

Under the proposed arrangement, the AfDB would provide funding to participating countries to develop their respective sections of the transnational corridor, although the financing remains subject to the outcome of the discussions and the bank's arrangements.

Nigeria's section, stretching from Tincan Island in Lagos to the Seme border with the Republic of Benin, covers 79 kilometres. The other sections comprise 89 kilometres in Togo, 576 kilometres in Ghana, 155 kilometres in Côte d'Ivoire and 128 kilometres in Benin Republic.

The proposed highway is expected to strengthen cross-border connectivity, facilitate the movement of goods and support trade and economic integration across West Africa.

On the domestic front, Umahi said the council approved eight road projects with contract sums ranging from N11.33 billion to N209 billion, alongside remedial works on deteriorated sections of the East-West Road.

Among the approved projects is the 18-kilometre Amaseri Road, from Ishagu to Otakot on the Enugu Expressway, awarded at N20.257 billion.

The council also approved N11.33 billion for the third phase of the Umuahia-Bende-Afikpo Road in Abia State, with about five kilometres remaining under the Federal Government's scope.

Umahi explained that the project had previously been funded under the NNPC tax-credit scheme, but work stalled after the funding arrangement was discontinued.

He said the project was subsequently rescoped, while the Abia State Government undertook to construct the remaining 43 kilometres.

In Kogi State, the council approved the reconstruction of the 95-kilometre E2K-Okey-Ampa-Otopa Road at N160 billion.

It also approved N209 billion for the 81.1-kilometre Ado-Ekiti-Ijan-Ilumoba-Ikole Road in Ekiti State, including a bridge.

Sanwo-Olu: Lagos targets $1tr GDP by 2052, seeks more investment

Gov wishes to be remembered for impact on Lagosians

GOVERNOR of Lagos State, Mr Babajide Sanwo-Olu, yesterday reaffirmed the State's position as Nigeria's commercial gateway and a major driver of economic growth.

Sanwo-Olu said his administration was committed to the Lagos State Development Plan 2052 to promote sustainable growth and attract investment, adding that the state aimed to grow its economy to nearly one trillion dollars by 2052.

He said the Lagos 2052 Development Plan, a long-term blueprint comprising 447 initiatives across 21 strategic sectors, aimed to position the state as Africa's model megacity and a globally competitive economic and financial hub, focused on four major pillars: a thriving economy, a human-centred city, modern infrastructure and effective governance.

The governor spoke as a guest speaker at the Lagos Executive Business Breakfast Meeting, organised by the Nigerian-British Chamber of Commerce (NBCC).

Tinubu departs Abuja for Makkah to pray for Nigeria

From **Terhemba Daka**, Abuja

PRESIDENT Bola Tinubu will depart Abuja today for Makkah, Saudi Arabia, to perform Umrah, the Islamic lesser pilgrimage, and offer prayers for Nigeria's peace, unity, stability and progress.

According to a statement issued yesterday by his Special Adviser on Information and Strategy, Bayo Onanuga, the visit will provide the President an opportunity for spiritual reflection and devotion, as he seeks Allah's guidance and blessings for the country and its people.

Before departing, Tinubu will commission equipment acquired by the Nigerian Air Force for its operations at the Presidential Wing of the Nnamdi Azikiwe International Airport, Abuja.

The President is expected to return to Nigeria next week after completing the spiritual exercise.



Business Development Director, Barzan Holdings, Miles Cormac Lalor (left); Consultant, Barzan Holdings, Zakary Yusuf; Minister of State for Defence, Dr Bello Matawalle; Regional General Manager for Africa, Barzan Holdings, Thamer Al Emadi; Director General, Defence Industries Corporation of Nigeria (DICON), Major General Babatunde Alaya; and Relationships Manager, Barzan Holdings, Omar Hasnah, at the ongoing 2026 Africa International Defence Exhibition in Lagos, yesterday.

Olu of Warri advocates investment in Africans, not resources

OLU of Warri, Ogiame Atuwatse III, has called on African leaders to prioritise human capital development, strengthen institutions and expand economic opportunities, declaring that the continent's future prosperity depends more on the capabilities of its people than its abundant natural resources.

The monarch made the call yesterday while delivering the opening address at the third Elevate Africa Convening in Accra, Ghana, with the theme, "Africa: Defining Her Future."

The two-day gathering brought together prominent African leaders, including heads of state, former presidents, ministers, traditional rulers, business executives, investors, development institutions, creatives, youth leaders and members of the African diaspora to deliberate on trade, governance, leadership, the creative economy and strategies for advancing the continent's development.

Among the dignitaries at the event were former Nigerian President Goodluck Jonathan, Sierra Leonean President Julius Maada Bio, former Malawian President Joyce Banda and former Mauritian President Ameenah Gurib-Fakim.

Speaking at the well-attended event, Atuwatse III, who is also the co-founder of Elevate Africa, said African leaders should be assessed not only by their achievements while in office but also by the opportunities they create and the institutions they establish for future generations.

The monarch maintained that Africa must move beyond its dependence on natural resources by investing in the skills, knowledge, creativity and ingenuity of its people.

Reps order arrest of telecom CEOs for ignoring invitation

NCC begins review of competition in Nigeria's telecom industry

From **Kehinde Olatunji** (Lagos) and **Joel Oladele** (Abuja)

HOUSE of Representatives has issued arrest summons for chief executives of telecommunications companies after they failed to honour an invitation to appear before its committee investigating the quality of services in the sector.

The lawmakers took the decision yesterday after rejecting the chairman of the Association of Licensed Telecommunications Operators of Nigeria (ALTON), Gbenga Adebayo, whom the companies sent to represent them.

The ad hoc committee, chaired by Olumide Osoba (APC-Ogun), directed that the chief executives and other top management officials of licensed operators appear before it on November 4, 2026.

However, rather than appear personally, the companies sent Adebayo, a move that angered lawmakers who insisted that the operators must answer individually to the House.

Moving the motion, Sunday Umeha argued that each company held a separate licence from the Federal Government and could not use its membership of an industry association to avoid the invitation.

He also criticised a letter from ALTON which, according to him, challenged the committee's authority to compel the companies to appear.

Supporting the position, House spokesperson Rep. Akin Rotimi Jr. faulted ALTON's decision to speak on behalf of the operators, arguing that subscribers dealt directly with individual telecommunications companies.

MEANWHILE, the Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC) has commenced a review of competition in the telecommunications industry to identify barriers to effective competition and determine appropriate regulatory measures to protect market conditions.

The Executive Vice Chairman of NCC, Dr Aminu Maida, said the study would provide an evidence-based assessment of competition across relevant telecommunications markets.

Nigeria mandates MDAs to bolster cybersecurity amid rising threats

NITDA includes DNSSEC as part of assessment criteria

By **Adeyemi Adepetun** (Lagos) and **Joel Oladele** (Abuja)

NIGERIA has directed all Ministries, Departments, and Agencies (MDAs) to immediately implement a new set of cybersecurity measures aimed at safeguarding government digital infrastructure.

The directive, issued by the National Information Technology Development Agency (NITDA) underscores growing concerns over the rising frequency and sophistication of cyberattacks targeting public institutions and critical national assets.

NITDA noted that the new framework introduces stricter authentication protocols, enhanced monitoring systems, and mandatory compliance checks across MDAs.

Nigerian startup, Aeon, secures $1m funding to enhance cybersecurity

From **Adamu Abuh**, Abuja

NIGERIAN cybersecurity startup, Aeon, has secured $1 million in funding to advance its technology development amid growing concerns over cyberattacks and vulnerabilities threatening digital infrastructure.

The funding round, led by Terra Industries in September 2026, highlights growing investor interest in cybersecurity and defence technology as governments and businesses face increasing pressure to protect sensitive information and digital services.

The investment comes amid renewed concerns over critical vulnerabilities in PHP, a programming language widely used to power websites and web applications. Security advisories concerning vulnerabilities identified as CVE-2026-109618 and CVE-2026-109619, collectively referred to as "PHP2Shell."

NAF to continue salaries until crash victims' benefits are paid, says CoAS

From **Sodiq Omolaoye**, Abuja

THE Nigerian Air Force (NAF) has assured families of personnel who died in the October 5 aircraft accident at Igbokoda, Ondo State, that their salaries will continue to be paid until their death benefits are fully settled.

Chief of the Air Staff, Air Marshal Sunday Aneke, gave the assurance yesterday during an engagement between the Air Force and the bereaved families while trying to address their concerns and provide updates on the recovery operation and investigation into the crash involving its ATR 42-500 aircraft, NAF 931.

Aneke, who was represented by the Chief of Civil-Military Relations, Air Vice Marshal Edward Gabkwet, expressed condolences to the families and reaffirmed commitment to their welfare.

Gabkwet said the Chief of the Air Staff had directed that the salaries of the deceased personnel should continue until their death benefits were fully paid to their next of kin.

The measure, according to the NAF, is intended to provide financial stability for dependants while the applicable benefits are being processed.

"The Nigerian Air Force stands with you, and our thoughts and prayers remain with every family affected by this tragedy," Gabkwet said.

Ikorodu residents lament prolonged blackout, faulty meters as FCCPC intervenes

By **Divine Yusuf**

RESIDENTS of Ikorodu, Lagos State, have lamented prolonged power outage, faulty meters, disputed electricity bills and delay in transformer replacement, calling on Ikeja Electric and regulators to address problems they say are disrupting their businesses and household activities.

The complaints emerged at a consumer complaint redress forum organised by the South-West Zonal Office of the Federal Competition and Consumer Protection Commission (FCCPC), Lagos, in collaboration with Ikeja Electric Distribution Company (IKEDC) and Eko Electricity Distribution Company (EKEDC), to provide on-the-spot resolution of disputes between electricity consumers and their providers.

Deputy Director of Surveillance and Investigation, Mrs Omagu Nwachukwu, representing the FCCPC Executive Vice Chairman and Chief Executive Officer, Mr Olatunji Bello, said the Commission had recorded 22,800 complaints on its portal as of the day before the meeting, with 18,200 resolutions recorded by the day of the forum.

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



Ooni of Ife, Oba Adeyeye Enitan Ogunwusi, Ojaja II (left); Olubadan of Ibadanland, Oba Rashidi Ladoja; Group Executive Director, Corporate Services, Dr Yemisi Shittu; wife of the Founder of CapitalSage Holdings, Rachael Alamu; Founder, John Alamu, and Oyo State Governor and Allied Peoples' Movement (APM) presidential candidate, Seyi Makinde, during the commissioning of CapitalSage Holdings Global Headquarters in Ibadan, yesterday.

FG approves East, West super grids to raise transmission capacity to 19,000MW

From **Terhemba Daka**, Abuja

- Pays N1.23 trillion of N3.3 trillion power sector debt
- Orders clearance of 300 containers of stranded power equipment at ports

THE Federal Government has approved the commencement of procurement for the proposed East and West Super Grids as part of efforts to strengthen the national electricity network and raise transmission capacity from about 5,000 megawatts to 19,000MW within two years.

Minister of Power, Joseph Olasunkanmi Tegbe, disclosed this while briefing State House correspondents on the outcome of the Federal Executive Council (FEC) meeting presided over by President Bola Tinubu, explaining that the projects would improve grid resilience and enable the country to evacuate more electricity to consumers.

He said the government had also approved three major interventions to strengthen transmission infrastructure, particularly around Abuja and Lagos, while accelerating efforts to clear more than 300 containers of stranded power equipment at the nation's ports.

Tegbe said the first approval was for the construction of a 33kV double-circuit underground and overhead line linked to the Katampe Transmission Substation, a major electricity distribution hub serving the North-Central region.

The second approval, according to him, covers the design, manufacture and supply of three 300MVA, 330/132/33kV power transformers for the Ikeja West Transmission Substation, a critical node supplying the Lagos axis.

The third project, he said, involves the reconstruction and upgrade of the 35.6-kilometre Itumola–Mapasin–Sagamu 132kV single-circuit transmission line to a double-circuit line to accommodate increasing electricity demand along the Lagos–Sagamu corridor.

The minister said the interventions formed part of the government's broader strategy to improve transmission infrastructure, stabilise electricity supply and maximise existing power sector assets.

He disclosed that the ministry had commenced a technical audit of electricity infrastructure nationwide, dividing the country into three major energy zones: Lagos and its surrounding industrial corridor, the Abuja-Kaduna-Kano axis, and the Enugu-Onitsha-Benin axis.

According to him, the audit, which had been underway for four weeks, would identify ageing and weak infrastructure requiring replacement or rehabilitation to improve the reliability of the national grid.

Experts warn against weak physical planning in cities

By **Victor Gbonegun**

THE President of the Association of Town Planning Consultants of Nigeria (ATOPCON), Hakeem Badejo, has cautioned against the worsening state of physical planning across Nigeria's major urban centres.

He lamented that despite Nigeria's natural advantages, ranging from the strategic geographical location and unique climate to rich mineral resources and human capital, poor physical planning and weak regulatory enforcement continue to prevent the nation from leveraging the benefits into sustainable socio-economic growth for the people.

Badejo spoke at the ongoing 57th conference of the Nigerian Institute of Town Planners (NITP) in Lagos.

He observed that a city's structural organisation is most evident from the sky, expressing concerns that aerial views during descent into major airports leave a lasting, but often troubling impression of uncoordinated urban sprawl and neglected physical planning in the city centres.

Severe consequences of poor urban management, Badejo noted, are visible through traffic congestion, flooding, and lawlessness.

Essentially, he said inadequate infrastructure and weak development control had severely degraded quality of life in low-lying urban settlements across the country.

He, however, raised worries over communities demanding high-quality living environments while rejecting necessary public facilities, such as waste management sites and cemeteries, despite their universal necessity.

The ATOPCON President urged planners to transition from reactive measures to proactive long-term planning, taking into account modern national security and urgent preparedness.

Awujale: Abiodun urges patience, peaceful succession process

From **Segun Ayinde**, Abeokuta

- Says new monarch will emerge before May 2027
- Reassures Ijebuland on projects' economic boom for Ogun East
- Tinubu's Renewed Hope Initiative takes food relief to vulnerable in Ogun

OGUN State Governor, Dapo Abiodun, has called on the people of Ijebuland to exercise patience and support a peaceful succession process as efforts continue to select a new Awujale.

He said that a new Awujale would emerge before May 29, 2027.

According to a statement made available by his Media Adviser, Kayode Akinmade, in Abeokuta, Abiodun gave the assurance yesterday, during a stakeholders' meeting in Ijebu-Ode.

The governor, while reaffirming his administration's commitment to a peaceful succession process for the vacant stool of Awujale, said that when the process is completed, the successor would be widely accepted by the people of Ijebuland.

He, however, called on residents to remain calm and be patient while the necessary processes were being concluded, stressing that the traditional institution played a vital role in preserving the cultural heritage, identity and unity of the people.

In another development, Abiodun highlighted the economic potential of the Ogun East District, citing ongoing oil exploration activities and plans for the proposed Gateway Deep-Seaport in Ogun Waterside Local Council.

IN another development, the First Lady of Nigeria, Oluremi Tinubu, has assured vulnerable Nigerians of sustained support through the food outreach scheme of the Renewed Hope Initiative, as the programme extended its reach to Ogun State with the distribution of food items to disadvantaged groups.

2027: Adeleke denies deal to share legislative seats with Osun APC

I will focus only on Tinubu's re-election, governor states

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

AHEAD of the 2027 general elections, Osun State Governor, Ademola Adeleke, yesterday, said that despite supporting President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's re-election, he had no pact with the All Progressives Congress (APC) to share legislative or local council seats.

In a statement by his spokesperson, Olawale Rasheed, the governor said that the clarification followed trending social media reports that he and the Presidency had agreed to share local council positions, as well as those of the Senate, House of Representatives and State Assembly, between Osun State Accord Party (AP) and the All Progressives Congress (APC) in the forthcoming elections.

Adeleke, who is the Osun State Coordinator of the APC Presidential Campaign Council (PCC), said the negotiation for the resolution of the local council crisis focuses on the interests of both the APC chairpersons and those of the elected PDP chairmen and

Security: DICON-D7G to produce MRAPs, APCs, drones in Lagos

By **Eniola Daniel**

IN a move to support Nigeria's efforts in military hardware production, a manufacturer of arms, ammunition, and other military hardware for the Nigerian Armed Forces and other African countries, DICON-D7G, has stated that it will from November 2026, launch a military jetty in Ojo area of Lagos State and begin the manufacturing, assembling of tanks, Armoured Personnel Carriers (APCs), boats, Mine Resistant Ambush Protected Vehicles (MRAPs), drones, Armoured Tanks and others.

DICON-D7G made the promise during the ongoing Africa International Defence Exhibition (AFRIDEX) in Eko Atlantic, Victoria Island, Lagos.

The exhibition, organised in partnership with the Defence Industries Corporation of Nigeria (DICON) and backed by the Federal Government of Nigeria and the Ministry of Defence, runs until today.

The arms manufacturer reaffirmed its commitment to strengthening Nigeria's defence industrial base and advancing the nation's drive towards self-reliance in military technology, equipment, and production.

Director, Logistics and Marketing, DICON-D7G, Brig.-Gen. Morakinyo Abiodun (rtd), said that the efforts aligned with the broader national objective of reducing dependence on foreign suppliers, conserving foreign exchange and strategic autonomy, among others.

Reps to quiz INEC's readiness for 2027 elections amid AI voters' register row

From **Leo Sobechi, Azimazi Momoh Jimoh, Sodiq Omolaoye, Joke Falaju, Joel Oladele** (Abuja), **Seye Olumide** and **Kehinde Olatunji** (Lagos)

- Committee to question commission over logistics, security, technology
- CSOs demand proof of poll readiness, cite 2023 election failures
- MBF, Afenifere, CHRICED, others task INEC on register, demand review

THE House of Representatives has directed its Committee on Electoral Matters to invite the Chairman of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) to explain the commission's preparedness for the 2027 general elections, with lawmakers seeking assurances on logistics, technology, personnel training, security and funding.

The move comes amid growing calls from civil society organisations (CSOs), political stakeholders and electoral experts for INEC to demonstrate its readiness through transparent and verifiable evidence, as concerns over the credibility of the electoral process persist following the shortcomings of the 2023 general elections.

Separately, the appearance of suspected artificial intelligence (AI)-generated photographs and questionable entries in INEC's preliminary voters' register has triggered public outrage, prompting the commission to launch an investigation and promise to correct verified irregularities before certifying the final register.

The House's decision followed a debate on a motion jointly sponsored yesterday by the Minority Whip, Mansur Manu Soro, and Abdussamad Dasuki, seeking an assessment of INEC's capacity to conduct credible, transparent and acceptable elections.

The lawmakers said preparations for the 2027 polls must cover voter registration and education, logistics, technology, personnel training, security coordination and funding.

Leading the debate, Soro stressed that INEC's readiness in these areas would play a major role in determining the credibility of the elections. The lawmakers also cited lessons from the recent Ekiti State governorship election, particularly in logistics management, technology deployment, stakeholder engagement, security and voter participation.

The motion sparked debate over whether the INEC chairman should address the entire House during plenary or appear before the Committee on Electoral Matters.

Deputy Speaker Benjamin Kalu opposed an appearance before the full chamber, arguing that the committee could conduct the necessary oversight. He acknowledged the importance of legislative scrutiny but said INEC had already addressed some concerns during a recent public presentation by its chairman.

Kalu added that the commission had not raised concerns about logistics, had commenced recruitment on time and had not expressed reservations about deploying technology.

He consequently proposed an amendment directing the committee to invite the INEC chairman to answer questions on the commission's preparations.

Supporting the amendment, Dasuki said the sponsors wanted INEC to explain how it planned to conduct elections amid the country's security challenges.

He warned that insecurity could prevent some communities and polling units from participating in the 2027 elections.

"On this floor, Mr Speaker, we have had unprecedented 255 security-related motions that are captured here, and we believe there are a lot of constituencies, a lot of polling units that will not be able to participate in the election," Dasuki said.

He said the lawmakers wanted the commission to outline measures to address these risks and ensure an inclusive electoral process.

Speaker Abbas Tajudeen, who presided over the session, urged members to allow the committee to provide the appropriate platform for questioning the INEC chairman. He directed the committee to publicise the meeting date so interested lawmakers could attend, raise concerns and obtain answers from the commission.

Tajudeen cautioned against treating the number of security-related motions before the current Assembly as conclusive evidence that insecurity had worsened, arguing that the figures could also reflect lawmakers' increased responsiveness to security concerns.

"We are all in agreement that the INEC Chairman should be invited by the committee to answer questions from the members," the Speaker ruled.

The House subsequently referred the motion to the Committee on Electoral Matters for further legislative action.

Suspected AI photos trigger public outcry, INEC probes lapses

THE legislative intervention coincides with mounting public concern over suspected AI-generated photographs and questionable records in INEC's preliminary voters' register, particularly following the circulation of screenshots purportedly showing irregularities in parts of Edo State.

In response, the commission said it was investigating the circumstances surrounding the photographs, including possible technical or procedural lapses, and would take appropriate action based on verified findings.

The Chairman of INEC's Information and Voter Education Committee, Mohammed Kudu Haruna, explained that the register published on the commission's website on October 26 was the same preliminary register physically displayed at Registration Areas nationwide from October 9 to 15 during the Display, Claims and Objections exercise.

According to him, questionable registration records had been identified and flagged during the physical display for further examination, while the commission had commenced the process of reviewing them and taking corrective action in line with established procedures.

He said the online publication represented the original preliminary register and did not reflect all ongoing data-cleanup activities.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 28



Deputy President & Chairman, Membership, Nigeria-British Chamber of Commerce (NBCC), Mr Nnamdi Okonkwo (left); President/Chairman of Council, NBCC, Prince Abimbola Olashore; Governor of Lagos State, Mr Babajide Sanwo-Olu; Deputy President & Chairman, Financial & General Purpose Committee, Mr Akin Osuntoki and Dr Michael Olawale-Cole, during the NBCC–Lagos State Executive Business Breakfast meeting themed "The Future of Lagos: Business, Investment & Global Competitiveness", at the NBCC Plaza in Lagos, yesterday.

Nigeria starts 2027 budget process as existing fiscal plans face execution gaps

From **Terhemba Daka** (Abuja) and **Isaac Chibuife** (Lagos)

- 2025 capital spending still running alongside 2026 budget
- Overlapping budgets weaken oversight, dull investment signal, says expert
- Oil output rise falls short of FG's 2026 budget target

AMID previous pledges to end multi-year fiscal overlap, the Federal Government yesterday disclosed plans to present the 2027 budget before the end of the year, thereby adding another spending plan to a fiscal calendar that is already crowded.

As of today, the capital component of the 2025 budget is still in force, alongside the 2026 budget after the National Assembly, earlier in the year, ratified both budgets to run concurrently.

The Minister of State for Budget, Dr Doris Uzoka-Anite, said on Wednesday after the Federal Executive Council (FEC) meeting in Abuja that the government intends to present the 2027 budget before the year-end, as an early presentation is meant to give the National Assembly time to pass it before the new fiscal year.

She also said that FEC had officially endorsed the National Development Plan 2026–2030 alongside new legal frameworks designed to tackle child stunting and boost national food security. Speaking with correspondents following the council meeting, Uzoka-Anite announced the key approvals while reflecting on the successful conclusion of the 32nd edition of the Nigerian Economic Summit (NES) held in Abuja from October 26 to October 28.

She said FEC also approved a Revised National Policy on Food and Nutrition (2026) to replace older frameworks to establish sustainable financing and strengthen inter-ministerial collaboration across agriculture, livestock, health, education, and development partners.

The planned timeline is expected to allow the National Assembly to scrutinise the proposed estimates and deliberate on the government's revenue projections and expenditure priorities before the commencement of the 2027 fiscal year. The yearly budget serves as the Federal Government's principal fiscal policy instrument, setting out its spending priorities, revenue expectations and economic objectives for the year.

The timeline comes as the 2025 capital budget, which should have expired on December 31, 2025, remains open. President Bola Tinubu signed the fourth extension on September 30, 2026, after both chambers passed it a day earlier. The deadline was earlier moved from March 31 to June 30, then to September 30, and now to December 31, 2026.

Explaining the reason for the adjustments, the National Assembly said the extensions were needed to allow for the execution of some 2025 capital projects in the current year.

The 2026 budget of N68.32 trillion took effect on April 1. It is therefore running at the same time as the unfinished 2025 capital spending. The practice is not new. In 2024, Nigeria effectively operated three budgets: the N21.8 trillion 2023 budget, the N2.17 trillion 2023 supplementary budget and the N28.7 trillion 2024 budget. The capital component of the 2024 budget, due to end in December 2024, was extended to June 2025 and then to December 2025.

In December 2025, the National Assembly repealed and re-enacted the 2024 and 2025 Appropriation Acts. The revised 2024 budget stood at N43.56 trillion, including N22.27 trillion for capital expenditure. The 2025 budget was extended to March 31, 2026. The President then promised that Nigeria would move to a single budget cycle from April 2026 and that outstanding capital obligations would be cleared by March 31.

That did not happen. The government had also directed ministries, departments and agencies (MDAs) to roll over 70 per cent of their 2025 capital allocations into 2026. Weak implementation has driven the rollovers. The Public and Private Development Centre (PLAC) said, citing the 2025 implementation data presented with the 2026 budget, that only 18 per cent of the capital budget had been spent by the end of September 2025, while revenue stood at 61 per cent of target. Officials told the Senate Finance Committee in December that the 2024 capital component was funded after revenue reached the N26 trillion projection, but the 2025 component was not.

Lawmakers have criticised the practice. Recall that Senator Danjuma Goje, representing Gombe Central, called multiple budgets within a fiscal year unacceptable and said it must end. A member of the House of Representatives, Hon. Abubakar Bichi, also acknowledged that extending an old budget deep into a new year weakens clarity and fiscal discipline.

Against this background, Head of Research and Strategy at GTI Investment Group, Abiodun Ogunniyi, said starting a 2027 budget while the 2025 and 2026 budgets are running together is "very, very problematic".

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

TRUEFACT: GOOD LEADERSHIP QUALITY:

NOT SELF-SEEKING

Joshua was a perfect example of this. Though he was a leader. He was not carried away by his status. He apportioned the land to the Israelites while his people apportioned his. "After all the land was divided among the tribes, the Israelites gave a piece of land to Joshua as his allocation." *For the Lord had said he could have any town he wanted. He chose Timnath-serah in the hill country of Ephraim. He rebuilt the town and lived there."* **(Joshua 19: 49 NLT)**

Prayer: Lord take away very spirit of selfishness from me.

Email Address: g.truefact@gmail.com

2027: Opposition faults alleged N150m campaign billboard fees in Ebonyi

From **Lawrence Njoku**, Enugu

THE Ebonyi State government's move to regulate campaign activities with an alleged N150 million fee for political billboards and posters ahead of the 2027 general elections has sparked outrage, as opposition candidates and residents have kicked against it.

Describing the move as repressive and oppressive, they accused the state government of deploying different subtle measures to silence the opposition ahead of the 2027 elections.

Deputy Chief Whip of the Ebonyi State House of Assembly, Arinze Lucas Chukwu, at the Assembly's plenary yesterday, moved a motion banning what can be described as indiscriminate pasting of political posters and billboards in the capital territory.

But the governorship candidate of the Social Democratic Party (SDP) in the state, Dr Kingsley Agbor, deplored the bill, saying it was unfortunate and devastating.

Agbor said: "It is most unfortunate and devastating how our citizens liberated us from military rule only to see the government of the day in Ebonyi State taking us back to those dark eras. People paid the supreme price for this democracy, which some of us are toiling with today. I have always wished that these dictators in civilian clothes joined the military to seize power by the barrel of a gun and rule as they please.

"The government once again wants to stifle the political space for the opposition political parties to operate. This is seen in the outrageous cost of elections and campaign billboards. To this government and its supporters, it is and must be a one-party state even when the constitution of Nigeria stipulates otherwise.

"Most times, stiff decisions like this come when the government is not very popular in the state. So, in a nutshell, the government wants to annihilate the opposition party once again, but in every democracy, opposition can never be silenced."

Also, the governorship candidate of the Labour Party (LP) in the state, Splendour Oko-Eze, condemned the development and warned that the situation could degenerate into anti-democratic tendencies with negative consequences on the state.

In an open letter yesterday, Oko-Eze said: "I wrote this open letter to register my displeasure at the manner in which the Ebonyi State Government is maltreating opposition in the state. This law passed by the State House of Assembly prohibiting billboards and posters from candidates contesting elections is a deliberate attempt to stifle opposition parties in Ebonyi State. Where do you expect opposition parties' candidates to get N150m just to be allowed to erect billboards and posters? This is autocratic leadership going on in our dear State."

Bayelsa upgrades 62 health facilities in two years

BAYELSA State Government, yesterday, said it has, in the last two years, upgraded 62 primary and secondary health facilities across the state as part of efforts to expand access to healthcare delivery.

The Commissioner for Health, Dr Seiyefa Brisibe, stated this during the 201st session of the state's executive council in the Government House, Yenagoa.

He said the government equipped and rehabilitated 49 primary and 13 secondary health facilities within Yenagoa metropolis and in far-flung communities.

The Health Commissioner appreciated the Governor Douye Diri-led administration for its investment in human capacity development initiatives, stating that it had improved the welfare of health workers by directing that every health facility have residential accommodation with at least two sources of power supply.

According to Brisibe, another success achieved in the sector was the provision of ambulance services and the approval of various welfare packages for health workers aimed at enhancing productivity and effective service delivery.



Delta State Attorney-General and Commissioner for Justice, Ekemejero Ohwovoriole (left); Governor Sheriff Oborevwori; Clerk of the State House Assembly, Otto Aghoghophia, and Speaker, Emomotimi Guwor, during the governor's assent to five bills, yesterday.

Oborevwori signs five bills, introduces 13th-month salary for Delta workers

From **Monday Osayande**, Asaba

DELTA State Governor, Sheriff Oborevwori, has signed five bills into law, including the Thirteenth Month Salary Law, 2026, to improve workers' welfare, strengthen the judiciary, protect property rights and reform the state's revenue administration.

The governor signed the bills at the Government House, Asaba, yesterday, in the presence of the Chief Judge of Delta State, Justice Tessy Diai, who was represented by Justice Briki Okolosi, the President of the Customary Court of Appeal, who was represented by Justice Tracy Uriah, the Deputy Speaker of the Delta State House of Assembly, Arthur Akpowowo, and other government officials and stakeholders .

Speaking at the signing ceremony, Oborevwori said the laws reflected his administration's commitment to strengthening public institutions, improving service delivery and creating an enabling environment for economic growth and development.

He described the enactment of the laws as part of broader efforts to ensure that governance translated into tangible benefits for residents, workers, investors and other stakeholders in the state.

On the Thirteenth Month Salary Law, 2026, the governor said the initiative was designed to recognise the contributions of public servants, boost their morale and encourage greater commitment to their duties.

According to him, improving workers' welfare remains an important component of effective governance, as motivated workers are better positioned to deliver quality services and contribute to the achievement of government policies .

Among the bills signed into law were amendments to the laws governing the composition of the Delta State High Court and the Customary Court of Appeal.

The amendments increased the number of High Court Judges in the state from 46 to 50, while the number of judges of the Customary Court of Appeal was raised from nine to 12.

The governor said the amendments were intended to strengthen the judicial system, improve the administration of justice and enhance the capacity of the courts to discharge their constitutional responsibilities.

Experts task family businesses on strong governance, succession plans

By **Gbenga Akinfenwa**

NIGERIAN family businesses have been urged to strengthen governance, embrace succession planning and invest in next-generation leadership to build enterprises that endure beyond their founders.

The advice came during the Family Business Summit 2026 in Lagos, with the theme "Beyond the Founder: Scaling Family Businesses Across Generations," where speakers noted that family businesses need more than the determination of their founders to endure, adding that they need the right structures, values and leadership to thrive across generations.

Organised by My Family, My Business, in partnership with BusinessDay and PwC, the summit featured keynote addresses, panel sessions, masterclasses, a Deal Room, a succession workshop and the Family Business Leadership Awards 2026, as discussions explored succession planning, family governance, investment strategies, global wealth structuring, women's leadership, technology and international expansion.

FG urges states to raise $1m to unlock $7m NTDs elimination grant

From **Nkechi Onyedika-Ugoeze** and **Ernest Nzor** (Abuja)

THE Federal Government has called on state governments to mobilise domestic resources to raise $1 million required to unlock approximately $7 million in external funding for Nigeria's Neglected Tropical Diseases (NTDs) elimination programme in 2027.

The funding opportunity under the Reaching the Last Mile Fund is expected to support Nigeria's efforts to control and eliminate neglected tropical diseases, as the country works towards the World Health Organisation's 2030 targets.

Minister of State for Health and Social Welfare, Dr Adekunle Salako, disclosed this yesterday in Abuja at the 2026 yearly High-Level Advocacy Meeting on NTDs, themed "Translating Commitments into Budgetary Action."

The meeting brought together health commissioners and their representatives, government officials, legislators, development partners and implementing organisations to discuss strategies for translating commitments into concrete budgetary action.

Salako, who was represented by the Director of Public Health in the ministry, Dr Charles Nzelu, urged state governments to translate their commitments to NTD elimination into dedicated budget lines, adequate allocations and timely release of funds.

He said Nigeria had recorded significant progress in tackling the diseases through collaboration among federal and state governments, health workers, communities and development partners, but warned that sustaining the gains would require greater domestic ownership and financing.

Lawmaker urges JAMB to extend admission deadline

From **Adamu Abuh** and **Joel Oladele** (Abuja)

THE Chairman of the House of Representatives Committee on Basic Education, Oboku Oforji, has warned that the tight deadline for completing admissions into public universities for the 2026/2027 academic session could shut out qualified candidates, urging the Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board (JAMB) to extend the timeline.

Oforji appealed in Abuja yesterday while addressing journalists at the National Assembly, expressing concern that the approaching October 31 deadline could disadvantage prospective students who are still seeking admission into universities across the country.

The lawmaker argued that extending the deadline would give universities and candidates additional time to complete outstanding admission procedures, insisting that qualified applicants should not lose the opportunity to pursue higher education because of time constraints.

Reps ask FG to restore Biology as compulsory subject

"It is important that JAMB extends the deadline for admission of our children across the country. I think it is very important that I appeal to the leadership of JAMB. We have also formally reached out to them to appeal to them, and I believe we are together in this journey for the betterment of education in our country," he said.

Oforji said he was particularly encouraged by the commitment of young Nigerians to pursue higher education, stressing that the admission process should take their aspirations into account.

Smart schools won't displace church's role in basic education, Mbah assures

From **Lawrence Njoku**, Enugu

Gov bags Award of Excellence

GOVERNOR Peter Mbah of Enugu State has allayed concerns among Church leaders that the Smart Green Schools initiative could diminish the Church's role in the state's basic education system, assuring them that his administration considers the Church an indispensable partner in educational development.

Mbah acknowledged the historic contributions of the Church to education in Enugu State, the defunct Eastern Region and Nigeria, stressing that no responsible government could afford to disregard its legacy and continuing role in shaping the educational system.

The governor gave the assurance in his keynote address at the 38th Convention of the Canon Law Society of Nigeria (CLSN), held alongside the celebration of the 95th birthday of the society's founder and former Bishop of the Catholic Diocese of Enugu, Most Rev. Anthony Gbuji, at the Ghost Cathedral, Enugu, yesterday.

In the address entitled "Role of the Church in Shaping Education and Development in Enugu State," Mbah said concerns had been raised about whether the scale of government's investment in public schools would leave Church-owned institutions behind.

"I understand that concern. These are institutions that have educated generations of our people. Their leaders have every reason to care about their place in Enugu's educational future. So, I want to answer them directly.

"The Church is essential to the educational transformation we are undertaking."

TheMetroSection

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600 Coastal Highway workers strike over alleged intimidation, pay cuts

From **Tina Agosi Todo** and **Solomon Azu**, Calabar

WORK on Section 3B of the Lagos-Calabar Coastal Highway project in Cross River State has been disrupted after about 600 workers of Hitech Construction Company embarked on a strike, demanding the removal of some expatriate managers and the reinstatement of the state liaison officer, Asuquo Ukpayang.

The workers began the protest on October 26 at the company's project yard in Awi, Akamkpa Local Government Area, accusing the management, led by Lebanese expatriates, of intimidation, arbitrary salary deductions, unfair treatment and poor working conditions.

The protesting workers, who gathered at the facility yesterday, vowed to sustain the action until the company addressed their grievances.

Military personnel were deployed to provide security around the construction yard.

Speaking with journalists, a quality control and laboratory worker, Esikere Peter, alleged that the company had reduced paid working hours from between four and eight hours to two hours, resulting in significant cuts in workers' earnings.

He also claimed that night shifts had been removed from workers' records, despite some employees continuing to work until 11:00 p.m. without corresponding payment.



The workers.. yesterday

Peter accused the project manager of arbitrary dismissals, intimidation and penalising workers who requested materials needed to perform their duties.

"We are demanding the removal of the project manager, the site manager, and the earth-moving supervisor, who have continuously treated workers unfairly. We are not protesting to destroy property or cause violence. We just want Nigerian workers to be treated fairly and with dignity," he said.

A trailer driver, Stephen Oke, also accused the expatriate managers of intimidating and maltreating Nigerian workers, despite their role in carrying out much of the construction work under difficult conditions.

"Nigerian labourers do all the work in harsh conditions, yet we are cheated, shortchanged and underpaid," he alleged, calling on the company's management to intervene.

Similarly, an earth-moving and level-checking worker, Ana Matthew, alleged that employees worked under harsh weather conditions without adequate shelter. He also accused the management of using military personnel to intimidate workers.

One dead, another injured in multiple-vehicle crash on Sagamu-Benin Expressway

From **Segun Ayinde**, Abeokuta

ONE person has died and another sustained injuries in a multiple-vehicle crash near the old Sagamu toll gate on the Sagamu-Benin Expressway in Ogun State.

The accident occurred at about 4:50 a.m. yesterday and involved a white Sino truck without a registration number, a DAF truck with registration number TRE, and a green Mack truck, also without a registration number.

The spokesperson for the Traffic Compliance and Enforcement Corps (TRACE), Babatunde Akinbiyi, confirmed the incident in a statement issued to journalists in Abeokuta.

According to Akinbiyi, six people, all male, were involved in the crash, which claimed one life and left another person injured.

He said the accident occurred when the driver of a Sienna bus drove against traffic and attempted to flag down an oncoming truck, causing the bus to lose control and ram into vehicles parked at a station.



Incident scene

JIBWIS disowns viral video threatening non-Muslims in Plateau, Enugu

From **Isa Abdulsalami Ahovi**, Jos

THE Jama'atu Izalatil Bid'a Wa'ikamatis Sunnah (JIBWIS) has dissociated itself from a viral video showing individuals described as aides of the group allegedly threatening to kill non-Muslims in Plateau and Enugu states if given AK-47 rifles.

The video, which circulated on social media on Monday, has sparked widespread condemnation, with many Nigerians calling for the arrest and prosecution of those involved.

In a statement issued at the group's headquarters, its National Publicity Secretary, Sheikh Ahmad Muhammad Ashiru, said JIBWIS would not support any statement or action capable of threatening national peace or inciting violence.

Although the group said it was yet to establish the authenticity of the video, it stressed that it would not endorse calls to attack or kill anyone.

Ashiru said anyone making such threats in the name of the organisation did not represent its position and would not be accepted by the group.

"JIBWIS, under the leadership of Ash-Sheikh Muhammad Sani Yahaya Jingir, denounces calls for violence under any guise, especially now that households are trying to endure the pains of insecurity in the form of banditry, kidnapping, armed robbery and Boko Haram activities in the North-West, North-Central, North-East and other parts of the country," he said.

The group called on security agencies to investigate the video urgently and ensure that anyone found culpable was brought to justice.

It also emphasised that threats of violence against people on the basis of their religious beliefs were inconsistent with Islamic teachings.

"We call on security agencies to carry out their duties with due diligence and bring the culprits to justice," Ashiru said.

EFCC increases charges against two to 20 counts over alleged N78.3m fraud

By **Yetunde Ayobami Ojo**

THE Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) has re-arraigned two defendants, Blessing Onyinaya Chimaobi and Uzofor Benson Chinedu, before the Special Offences Court in Ikeja, Lagos, over their alleged involvement in the theft and retention of N78.3 million in proceeds of criminal conduct.

The defendants were re-arraigned yesterday before Justice Olubunmi Abike-Fadipe on an amended 20-count charge.

They were initially arraigned on February 7, 2024, on a three-count charge of conspiracy and stealing. The prosecution subsequently amended the charges, increasing the counts from three to 20. The charges include conspiracy, contrary to Section 409 of the Criminal Law of Lagos State, 2011; stealing, contrary to Section 285 of the same law; and retention of proceeds of criminal conduct, contrary to Sections 17(a) and (b) of the EFCC Establishment Act, 2004.

In the first count, the prosecution alleged that the defendants and one Olisa Charles, who is said to be at large, conspired in 2023 in Lagos to defraud Christopher Onuigbo of N78,347,100.

The second count alleged that the defendants and Charles dishonestly converted the same sum, said to belong to Onuigbo, to their personal use between 2018 and 2023 in Lagos.

The defendants, however, pleaded not guilty to the amended charges when they were read to them in court.

Troops arrest two suspects over attack on vigilantes, burning of office in Plateau

From **Isa Abdulsalami Ahovi**, Jos

TROOPS of Operation Enduring Peace (OPEP) have arrested two suspects over an alleged attack on members of a vigilante group and the subsequent burning of their office in Jos North Local Council of Plateau State.

The suspects were arrested at about 1:40 a.m. on October 27, 2026, in the NEPA area of Jos North.

The Media Information Officer of OPEP, Capt. Chinonso Polycarp Oteh, who confirmed the arrests yesterday, said troops of Sector 1 of the operation apprehended the suspects following allegations linking them to the attack.

According to Oteh, the suspects are currently in custody for further investigation and necessary action.

He said the arrests were part of ongoing efforts by OPEP to tackle criminal activities and maintain peace and security across Plateau State.

Oteh added that security personnel would intensify operations to identify and apprehend individuals involved in activities capable of undermining peace in the state.

He urged the public to cooperate with the military and other security agencies by providing timely and credible information that could help prevent crime and facilitate the arrest of suspects.

Police arrest 15 over attacks on officers, public servants in Ondo, Plateau

From **Adewale Momoh** (Akure) and **Isa Abdulsalami Ahovi** (Jos)

THE police have arrested 15 suspects in Ondo and Plateau states over separate incidents involving attacks on police officers and other public servants, including a mob assault on a police station following the murder of a farmer.

In Ondo State, 14 suspects were arrested after an angry mob attacked the Ala Divisional Police Headquarters in Akure North Local Government Area, attempting to seize two suspects linked to the murder of a farmer, Rasheed Hassan.

Two police officers sustained gunshot injuries during the violence, while the suspects linked to the farmer's murder were rescued by police operatives.

In Plateau State, the police arrested a 45-year-old man, Kabiru Kudi, over alleged criminal conspiracy, assault and obstruction of Vehicle Inspection Officers performing their duties in Jos.

The Ondo State Police Command said Hassan's killing was reported a few days before the mob attack.

The farmer was found dead at General Camp in the Government Reserve Area.

The command's spokesperson, Abayomi Jimoh, said police operatives visited the scene after receiving the report and recovered the body.

Preliminary investigations revealed deep cuts on the victim's head and other parts of his body, while his personal belongings were reportedly missing.



President/CEO, Goldmaster LLC, Kayode Falokun (left); Chairperson, Nigerian Community in Greater Cleveland (NCGC) Women's Committee, Dr Nnennaya Okocha; NCGC President, Pastor Dennis C. Okocha; President/CEO, Consortia Imperiale, Inc., Dr Emmanuel Ibeziako and NCGC Socio/Cultural Secretary, Dr Grace Nnadozie, during a gala night organised by the NCGC in Ohio, USA, recently.

www.guardian.ng

TheMetroSection

Four die, 16 sustain injuries as container truck crushes bus on Lagos Bridge

By **Bertram Nwannekanma**

FOUR people, including a commercial bus driver, died yesterday, while 16 others were injured after an articulated truck carrying a 20-foot container overturned and fell on a passenger bus on Alaro City Bridge along the Ibeju-Lekki-Epe corridor of Lagos State.

The accident occurred as the truck and a fully loaded Toyota Hiace bus were crossing the bridge towards the T-junction in Epe, leaving several occupants trapped in the wreckage.

Lagos State Emergency Management Agency (LASEMA) and Lagos State Traffic Management Authority (LASTMA), in separate statements, confirmed the fatalities and the rescue operation.

While LASEMA reported that 16 adult males sustained injuries, LASTMA said 13 passengers were critically injured. The discrepancy in the figures could not immediately be reconciled.

However, preliminary findings indicated that the truck driver lost control while attempting to avoid a collision as both vehicles negotiated the narrowed single-lane bridge.

The truck subsequently overturned and fell on the bus, crushing it and trapping several occupants in the mangled wreckage.

The truck driver also sustained severe injuries, with both legs reportedly severed and trapped in the wreckage.

Permanent Secretary of LASEMA, Dr Olufemi Damilola Oke-Osanyintolu, said the agency's response team worked with personnel of the Federal Road Safety Corps (FRSC) and the Nigeria Police Force (NPF) to control traffic at the scene, administer first aid and evacuate the injured.

According to LASEMA, the injured victims were taken to Epe General Hospital for treatment, while LASTMA said the Lagos State Ambulance Service (LASAMBUS) conveyed 13 critically injured passengers to a medical facility for urgent attention.

The four deceased victims were evacuated to a mortuary, while police officers from the Epe Division provided security during the rescue operation.



Emergency responders at the incident scene..yesterday

A private crane was also secured to lift the overturned truck and container to facilitate the recovery of trapped victims and clear the wreckage. LASEMA said the operation was ongoing as of its latest update.

The crash caused significant traffic disruption along the corridor, prompting LASTMA and other emergency responders to introduce traffic management measures to ease congestion and regulate vehicular movement.

General Manager of LASTMA, Mr Olalekan Bakare-Oki, expressed condolences to the families of the deceased and wished the injured a speedy recovery. He urged motorists to observe speed limits, obey traffic regulations and exercise caution when navigating bridges, narrow carriageways and other road bottlenecks, where dangerous manoeuvres could lead to fatal crashes.

Onitsha traders petition IGP over demolition, alleged threats

From **John Akubo**, Abuja

TRADERS in Onitsha, Anambra State, have petitioned the Inspector-General of Police (IGP), seeking an investigation into alleged demolitions, threat to their lives and a protracted dispute over the ownership and leadership of a market plaza.

The traders, operating under the Association of Modebeb Traders, while addressing journalists in Abuja, alleged that they had endured about two years of harassment and intimidation by individuals who they claimed were exploiting their connections with security agencies to threaten members.

Chief Okey Muojekwu, who spoke on behalf of the traders, said the dispute had disrupted their businesses and left many members fearful for their safety.

He alleged that four buildings, including property at numbers 77 and 79, were demolished in 2025, resulting in significant financial losses for the affected traders.

Muojekwu also alleged that property documents had been altered or forged to transfer ownership from Osumakan Model Ventures.

He, therefore, called on the police to investigate the documents and establish the legitimate ownership of the disputed property.

He further accused some police personnel, including officers attached to a special anti-narcotics command in Onitsha, of being used to intimidate traders.

Muojekwu, while recounting his personal experience, said he was recently attacked by suspected thugs who allegedly stabbed him with a knife.

He said he escaped the attack and reported the incident to the police but had yet to see effective action against those responsible.

Ifo LG boss faults Lagos over signpost at disputed Ogun boundary

From **Azeez Olorunlomeru**, Abeokuta

CHAIRMAN of Ifo Local Council in Ogun State, Kusimo Idris Olalekan, has called on the Lagos State Government to caution the Chairman of Ojodu Local Council over the erection of a signpost bearing the inscription, "Welcome to Lagos State," at a disputed location along the Yakoyo–Ojodu Road.

Olalekan said the signpost had raised concerns about the boundary between Ogun and Lagos states, particularly around Yakoyo in Isheri-Ojodu Ward, which Ifo Local Council maintains falls within Ogun State's territorial jurisdiction.

He warned that the signpost could confuse residents and road users about the boundary between the two neighbouring states, urging the authorities to resolve the dispute through established procedures.

The development comes amid an ongoing disagreement over the territorial limits of the two states in the area, following the construction of a road by the Ogun State Government under Governor Dapo Abiodun.

Ifo Local Council maintained that the disputed location falls within its jurisdiction and urged the Lagos State Government to intervene by asking the Ojodu council chairman to refrain from actions that could heighten tensions.

Pa Joseph Onuzurike, 92, for burial on November 21

THE family of Elder Joseph Okezie Onuzurike, who died on June 23, 2026, at the age of 92, has announced his burial arrangements.



Elder Onuzurike

According to the burial programme, the funeral service will be held at 10:00 a.m. on Saturday, November 21, 2026, at Community Primary School, Lodu Imenyi, in Bende Local Council of Abia State.

The service will be followed by interment at his residence in Ofemiri, Lodu Imenyi.

A thanksgiving service will take place at 9:00 a.m. on Sunday, November 22, 2026, at Assemblies of God Church, Akaelu, Lodu Imenyi, Bende Local Council of Abia State.

Pa Onuzurike is survived by children, grandchildren, siblings and other relatives.

Lagos DSVA, 70 fathers pledge to protect girls against abuse

By **Bertram Nwannekanma**

THE Lagos State Domestic and Sexual Violence Agency (DSVA) has launched a pilot initiative to promote responsible fatherhood and strengthen father-daughter relationships, with 70 fathers pledging to protect girls from abuse and Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV).

The initiative, organised in partnership with the Daddy's Girl Project, was held on October 27, 2026, at Ikoyi Senior Grammar School, Lagos, themed, "Promoting Responsible, Present and Protective Fathers."

It seeks to encourage fathers to take a more active role in their daughters' lives and recognise how their presence, emotional support and guidance can help prevent abuse.

Speaking on behalf of the DSVA Executive Secretary, Titilola Vivour-Adeniyi, Ramat Balogun-Lamidi stressed that fathers have a crucial role to play in protecting girls and creating homes where children feel safe, valued and heard.

"Protecting our girls begins at home. Fathers must understand that their responsibility goes beyond providing financially; it includes being present, listening to their daughters, earning their trust and creating an environment where they feel safe enough to speak up when something is wrong," she said.

Balogun-Lamidi added that the initiative was designed to encourage more fathers to take an active role in preventing abuse and building stronger, healthier family relationships.

Police call for written petition over Lagos jewellery firm's alleged N600,000 scheme

By **Ayonote Clement**

LAGOS State Police Command has urged customers alleging financial losses in a business arrangement with a Lagos-based jewellery company to submit formal petitions for investigation, as an 18-year-old student claims she can no longer access her N600,000 life savings meant for school fees.

The Command's Spokesperson, SP Abimbola Adebisi, said she had no official brief on the alleged scam at the time of inquiry but noted that this did not necessarily mean the matter had not been reported.

Adebisi said the circumstances of each transaction would determine whether a complaint constituted fraud, obtaining money by false pretence or a civil dispute arising from an unfulfilled contract.

She advised affected participants to report to the nearest police station or submit a written petition to the Commissioner of Police or the appropriate investigative unit, accompanied by payment records, contracts and other relevant evidence.

The complaints involve Royal Jewelry Co. Ltd, also identified in payment records as SQUAD ROYAL JEWELRY CO LTD, which reportedly operates from 30C Oriwu Street, Lekki Phase 1, Lagos.

The 18-year-old student, whose identity is being withheld at her request, said she was introduced to the business by the company's human resources representative, Opeyemi Olukoya.

According to her, the initial arrangement promised N2,000 for every bracelet produced, with 100 bracelets expected in each box. She said she signed a contract on Sunday, October 25, 2026, believing the opportunity would help her finance her education.

Her financial commitment increased when the company introduced a new product scheme reportedly valued at N600,000.

The student said she paid N440,000 as a performance guarantee deposit, added N40,000 and rolled over N120,000 in earnings from previous work to meet the required amount.

Payment records supplied for the investigation indicate that the money was transferred to an account bearing the company's name with Guaranty Trust Bank.

However, she said she had received neither raw materials for the new scheme nor a refund, adding that the money represented her entire life savings and that she could no longer afford her school fees.

The student said she had not reported the matter to the police or the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC).

Police arrest suspected Eiye cultist, recover two pistols, cartridges in Ogun

Launch manhunt for fleeing suspects

From **Segun Ayinde**, Abeokuta

OPERATIVES of the Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) Squad of the Ogun State Police Command have arrested a 26-year-old suspected cultist and recovered two locally made pistols, three live cartridges and a battle axe in the Atan area of Ado-Odo/Ota Local Council of the state.

The suspect, identified as Okiki Muhammed Adewusi, popularly known as "Baba Obo", was arrested in the Ore area of Atan on October 26, 2026, following intelligence received by operatives of SWAT Base 7, Abule Iroko, Sango-Ota.

The Police Spokesperson, Oluseyi Babaseyi, confirmed the arrest in a statement in Abeokuta yesterday.

According to Babaseyi, a search of the suspect's residence after his arrest led to the recovery of a locally made pistol and three live cartridges.

He added that preliminary investigations indicated that the suspect had allegedly admitted to being a member of the Eiye Confraternity.

Babaseyi said information obtained from the suspect led to a follow-up operation at about 6.30 a.m. on October 27, 2026 during which operatives recovered a second locally made pistol and a battle axe from a separate location.

The recovered items have been secured as exhibits, while efforts are ongoing to arrest other suspects believed to be involved in the activities and recover additional weapons.

The police spokesperson said investigations were ongoing to establish the full circumstances of the case.

The Commissioner of Police, Bode Ojajuni, commended the SWAT operatives for their vigilance, professionalism and effective use of intelligence.

Ojajuni reaffirmed the Command's commitment to dismantling criminal networks, curbing cult-related activities and tackling the illegal possession of firearms across the state.

He urged residents to provide timely and credible information about suspected criminal activities, assuring them that the Command would act on actionable intelligence to protect lives and property and maintain public safety.



Suspect

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A*	GRADES: 67%
A*- A	GRADES: 96%
A*- B	GRADES: 99%
A*- C	GRADES: 100%

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LAGOS

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Location: James Hope College, Twin Lakes Estate, Lekki, **Lagos.**

Time: 10AM

ABUJA & PORT HARCOURT

Date: **Saturday, 6th February, 2027**

Locations: 71 Usuma Street, Opp. Transcorp Hilton, Maitama, **Abuja.**

15 Nnamdi Azikiwe Road, Port Harcourt, **Rivers State.**

Time: 10AM



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Editorial

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Time to save real sector from high-energy-cost crisis

THE nation's economy is still at a troubling point, with diesel, the lifeblood of industrial activity, crossing the N2,000 per litre mark recently amid epileptic and expensive electricity supply. If something serious is not done to address the problem of high energy costs, it may suffocate the real sector, forcing some companies to go under and worsening the hardship of ordinary citizens.

Manufacturers are already apprehensive and Nigerians are expressing deep concerns about the situation caused mainly by government policies and gross inefficiency in the power sector. In the last five years, the Manufacturers Association of Nigeria (MAN) has consistently raised the alarm over the rising cost of operation, particularly the cost of energy, lamenting that many of its members have closed shop.

A recent report revealed that energy now gulps nearly 50 per cent of manufacturers' operating expenditure (OpEx). This is not just a statistic; it is a brutal reality that is eroding competitiveness, shrinking margins, and may push many more firms out of business. The MAN Director-General, Segun Ajayi-Kadir, said production costs in the sector had risen by more than 400 per cent, with power-related expenses that previously accounted for about 40 per cent of operating costs now exceeding 50 per cent following the sharp increase in diesel price in the past six months.

The report revealed that as of February this year, a litre of diesel, used to power manufacturing and haulage operations, sold for about N1, 200 in Lagos and Ogun states. The price has since soared by about 75 per cent, following disruptions to energy markets linked to the Iranian conflict and the recalibration of the pricing methodology by the Dangote Petroleum Refinery. Among the concerns is the fact that the rising cost of production has significantly weakened the ability of local manufacturers to compete with their peers in other countries for the local market and leverage the opportunities under the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA).

It was reported that manufacturers' expenditure on alternative energy rose from N782 billion in 2023 to N1.1 trillion in 2024 and further to N1.34 trillion in 2025. According to MAN, spending in the first half of 2026 alone is already at par with the total recorded in 2025, underscoring the escalating cost of keeping factories running. Ajayi-Kadir lamented that manufacturers are now facing a dual threat of soaring production costs and rapidly accumulating inventories. The situation directly threatens the sector's target of 3.1 per cent real growth in 2026.

The manufacturers' complaints deserve special attention from the relevant authorities for the survival of the productive sector. When energy costs consume half of operational budgets, investment in innovation, expansion, and job creation becomes almost impossible. Consequently, companies are forced to scale down production, lay off workers, or shut down entirely. The ripple effect can be devastating to society, especially as it makes unemployment levels rise, consumer purchasing power fall, and the economy spiral further into contraction.

What makes this crisis more infuriating is the paradox of regulation of the electricity sector. Unlike petroleum products, electricity is heavily regulated, but with no positive outcome. Tariffs are adjusted upwards regularly, without commensurate improvement in supply. Even with inadequate supply of power, the Distribution companies (DisCos) still insist on cost-reflective tariffs. The consumers, both households and industries, are left in darkness or saddled with erratic supply.

In other countries, electricity regulation is designed to protect the real sector and incentivise productivity in the interest of the national economy. Checks showed that in South Africa, for instance, despite its energy challenges, industries enjoy structured support mechanisms to cushion them from shocks. In Ghana, regulatory frameworks prioritise stability and predictability. Nigeria, by contrast, has created a system where manufacturers are forced to rely on diesel generators as their primary source of power. This is not regulation; it is abdication from doing the needful.

The rising cost of diesel has become a Nigerian 'cancer'. A publication on the front page of the New Nigerian newspaper dated Monday, March 31, 1975, with the title: "Third National Development Plan launched: Strategy to Beat Fuel Crisis Outlined", confirms that the crisis has been rocking Nigeria for decades. Painfully, 51 years after, Nigeria has remained static in the cycle, nothing significant has been achieved, even after the launch of several other development plan. It is very shameful for the country, to say the least!

Today, the high cost of cement, loaf of bread, tubers of yam, sachet of water, transportation, and practically every other product is directly or indirectly tied to energy costs. When diesel prices soar, the cost of goods and services follows suit. Inflation, already at a record high, is further worsened. The National Bureau of Statistics puts headline inflation (YoY) at 15.43 per cent and food inflation (YoY) at 20.31 per cent as of July 2026.

For the average Nigerian, the consequences of rising energy costs are also stark. Families are forced to cut back on essentials, no more healthy meals, let alone a balanced diet. Small businesses struggle to survive, and the informal sector, the backbone of the economy, is squeezed dry. The promise of economic recovery becomes a mirage when the cost of living rises faster than incomes. Industry analysts frequently argue that the solution is not complicated; it only requires political will and strategic foresight of the country's leaders.

The government must be told again that the real sector needs regular electricity supply, not occasional bursts of power, not promises of future reforms. The gross inefficiency in the power sector must be tackled pragmatically. Without this, Nigeria cannot industrialise, diversify its economy, and lift its people out of poverty. Regular electricity would reduce dependence on diesel, slash operating costs, and restore competitiveness to Nigerian products. It would attract foreign investment, stimulate local innovation, and create jobs. Most importantly, it would ease the burden on ordinary Nigerians who are currently paying the price for systemic failure.

A comprehensive energy reform that prioritises generation, transmission, and distribution should be implemented. Investments in renewable energy must be scaled up, regulatory bottlenecks dismantled, and accountability enforced in the power sector. The manufacturers must be part of the solution. Collective advocacy, strategic partnerships, and investment in alternative energy sources can help mitigate the crisis. But ultimately, the responsibility lies with the policymakers to create an enabling environment.

The rising energy cost is a warning bell. If ignored, it could destroy the real sector and frustrate the hope of millions of Nigerians.

LETTER

Beautiful quotes of a lifetime

Moments of the 'dark nights of the soul!'

SIR: There are times in our lives when all hopes seems lost, a situation where one is so confused, sad and melancholic, thinking the worst would happen after all.

Yes, that very moment, one could be so desperate, gloomy, in dilemma and even contemplating suicide as the way out! Such moments are termed, "The Dark Nights Of The Soul." A situation where one thinks nothing would work again; a condition of complete hopeless thoughts.

There is a very old and witty axiom: "Friends always forget those whom fortune forsakes!" Exactly!

Many times you are lonely, sad and silent over your troubles and travails. The Holy Spirit knows your battles and situation than anybody else. He will intervene, even at the very right time.

You are on your own in life, except you meditate along with Him and accept the philosophy that, "One with God is majority."

You have nobody but God. Listen to the divine rhythm in your heart. Calm your mind in the ethereal comfort of your Maker.

All these boils down to the fact that blood brothers and sisters, friends and even family members would betray, disappoint and forsake you at the moment you needed them most.

But if you have the aura, halo and presence of the Almighty God in your spirit, you are a conqueror and you will definitely become a survivor. Take it or leave it.

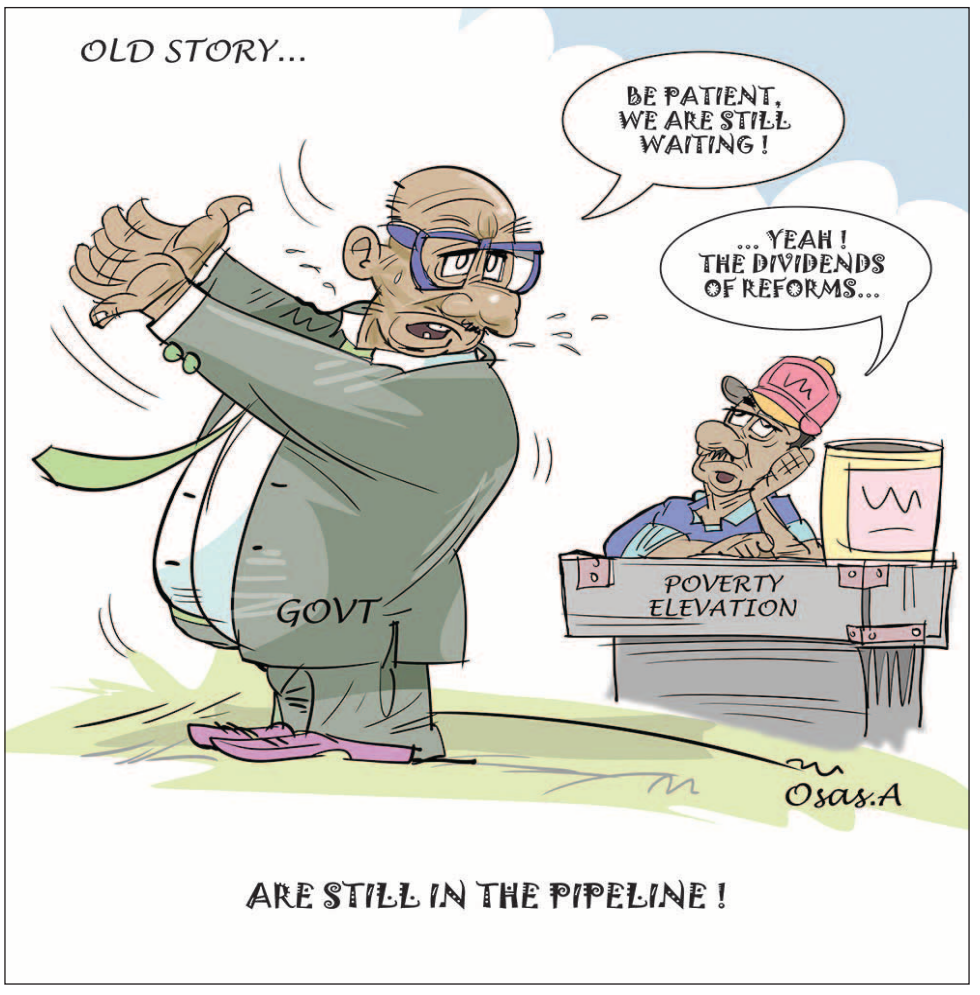
There is this powerful phrase from the Yoruba spiritual cosmology, "Ti o ba ku die ki omo olore jin si koto, monomono a se ise imole fun omo Olorun!" meaning, "Even in terrible darkness and looming disaster, the Almighty God will shine the light and rescue His own people, the kind-hearted, from doom at the nick of time!"

Summarily, another great quote surfaces, "I thank my Maker that in the midst of judgement, He has remembered mercy. I humbly entreat my Redeemer, to give strength to lead henceforth a purer life than I have done hitherto!" The above is a statement from a survivor.

Conclusively, "There is always a sparkling light at the end of a dark tunnel." Do not give up, no matter what. When the whole world dumps and forsakes you, God will keep and uphold you.

The Almighty God is closer to you than you can ever imagine. And He will surely do it!!! Think about it.

Segun Durowaiye can be reached via 08055356855.



Opinion

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Turning the tide on Nigeria's highway inferno

By **Austine Ihonor**

NIGERIA'S roads have become moving minefields, with petrol tanker explosions routinely vaporising lives, flattening livelihoods, and turning transit corridors into catastrophic infernos.

The recent horrific explosions—from the devastating Majiya tragedy to frequent fireballs along major expressways—underscore a systemic failure of haulage regulation, infrastructure management, and public safety enforcement. While the Federal Road Safety Corps (FRSC) has reported significant technical strides under its Safe-to-Load initiative, the sheer volume of volatile fuel hauled daily via decaying asphalt remains an unsustainable national crisis. Nigeria must transition from reactive mourning to aggressive, internationally standardised structural reforms before the next highway bomb detonates.

Every week, Nigerian families wave goodbye to loved ones who never return, their lives cut short by the terrifying fireballs that have become regular occurrences on our national highways. These are not just statistics or numbers in a news report; they are real parents, children, and breadwinners. The recurring tragedies on our roads point to a deeply broken transport system that treats the movement of volatile fuel with casual indifference. It is time to stop viewing these horrors as unpredictable accidents and start treating them as a systemic failure that can—and must—be fixed.

To stop the bleeding, we must first be honest about why these trucks keep crashing and exploding:

Too many tankers on our roads are poorly retrofitted flatbed containers that completely lack anti-rollover stability. Without internal bulkheads to keep the liquid from sloshing around, these top-heavy vehicles easily capsise the moment they hit a bad patch of road.

Because our national rail network and pipeline systems have been neglected for decades, we rely almost entirely on trucks to move millions of liters of highly volatile fuel across the country. Forcing heavy tankers onto crumbling, pothole-riddled roads is a recipe for disaster.

The secondary tragedy is perhaps the most heartbreaking. Driven by extreme economic hardship and a lack of awareness about how quickly fuel vapors catch fire, local residents often rush toward crashed tankers with plastic buckets. Stepping into an invisible cloud of petrol vapor means a single spark from a phone or shoe friction can trigger an instant, inescapable inferno.

We do not need to reinvent the wheel. By aligning our safety laws with international protocols—such as Europe's Agreement Concerning the International Carriage of Dangerous Goods by Road (ADR)—our regulatory bodies like the Nigerian Midstream and Downstream Petroleum Regulatory Authority (NMDPRA) and the FRSC can deploy twenty immediate, practical fixes across five critical areas: Stop the use of oversized 60,000 to 90,000-litre mega-tankers that destroy road surfaces and pose massive roll risks.

Legislate that all fuel compartments must have internal wave-breaking walls to prevent fuel sloshing, which destabilises trucks on sharp bends.

Every tanker must have bottom-loading valves that seal automatically during an impact, keeping the fuel locked inside even if the truck flips upside down.

Ban the dangerous practice of welding second-hand steel tanks onto mismatched truck chassis without structural certifications.

Equip every petroleum haulage truck with a hardwired electronic governor restricting speeds to a maximum of 60 km/h.

Replace vulnerable paper checklists at refinery gates with tamper-proof digital profiles linked directly to a master transport database.

Legally penalise any fuel depot or refinery facility that loads an uncertified, uninsured, or defective truck.

Mandate that all tank vessels undergo rigorous pressure testing every 12 months to check for hidden structural cracks.

Introduce mandatory, on-the-spot breathalyzer and substance abuse checks for drivers at depot exit points.

Use real-time barcode scanning on tankers to instantly verify that vehicle insurance, driver licensing, and vehicle fitness are completely up to date.

Shift long-distance fuel transport away from highways by integrating dedicated fuel container train cars into our national rail corridors.

Invest heavily in securing and upgrading underground pipeline networks to deliver fuel directly to regional mega-depots.

Restrict heavy petroleum trucks from using inner-city roads and fragile residential bridges, keeping them strictly on designated bypasses.

Restrict the movement of highly volatile hazardous goods during high-risk, low-visibility night hours.

Empower first responders to set up physical barriers instantly at crash sites to keep onlookers away from invisible, flammable vapor clouds.

Station dedicated, foam-bearing chemical fire fighting trucks along high-risk transit corridors like the Lagos-Ibadan and Abuja-Lokoja expressways.

Enforce strict logbooks to combat driver fatigue, mandating rest stops for haulage operators after eight hours on the road.

Set up surprise highway inspection points focused entirely on checking truck tire health, braking systems, and steering alignment.

Launch visceral, highly visual community campaigns via the National Orientation Agency (NOA) to teach everyday citizens that an overturned tanker is an active bomb, not a source of free fuel.

Train community leaders, local chiefs, and youth groups along major expressways on how to quickly push crowds away from a crash site before emergency vehicles arrive.

Implementing these reforms requires significant capital, but the economic cost of doing nothing—measured in lost lives, destroyed roads, and vaporised cargo—is far higher.

The rehabilitation of Nigeria's 5,120-kilometer pipeline network cannot be funded by the federal budget alone. By offering long-term concession models to private infrastructure firms, Nigeria can leverage private capital to install modern, fiber-optic leak detection and anti-tamper telemetry systems, making pipelines a safe, viable alternative to roads.

To help fleet operators transition away from substandard trucks, the Federal Government should introduce a zero-duty tariff on the importation of ADR-compliant tanker components (such as internal stability baffles and automatic shut-off valves). Logistics companies that modernise their fleets within a 24-month window should receive corporate tax rebates. Transitioning bulk fuel to rail requires dedicated cargo terminals. Part of the infrastructure component of the fuel subsidy savings should be directly ring-fenced to subsidise the cost of rail freight for petroleum products, making rail transport cheaper per liter than road haulage for marketers.

Historically, transport unions like the National Association of Road Transport Owners (NARTO) and the Petroleum Tanker Drivers (PTD) have resisted strict regulations by threatening national strike. Overcoming this requires an ironclad legal framework that shifts accountability from the drivers to corporate entities.

The law must be amended so that if an uncertified tanker crashes, the oil marketing company and the loading depot face joint legal liability. If a major marketer faces a multibillion-naira fine or the suspension of their operating license because they hired a substandard truck, they will naturally stop using sub-standard transport providers.

Any depot official who manually bypasses the digital Safe-to-Load system or issues a fraudulent clearance certificate must face mandatory minimum prison sentences under a revamped Federal Road Safety Act.

If three trucks belonging to the same logistics fleet are caught violating speed limits, operating without baffles, or ignoring driving-hour limits within a year, the entire company's transport permit must be revoked nationwide.

Losing hundreds of citizens to avoidable fuel fires is a tragedy that Nigeria can no longer tolerate. True road safety cannot depend on a driver's luck in dodging a pothole. It requires strict enforcement of engineering rules, heavy corporate accountability for transport companies, and a modern shift in how our nation moves its energy.

Ihonor is a veteran journalist and media consultant based in Asaba, Delta State.

Why Nigeria should decriminalise attempted suicide

By **Angela Uwandu Uzoma-Iwuchukwu**

THE National Suicide Prevention Bill, 2026, offers Nigeria an opportunity to align its criminal laws with its human rights obligations and the evidence on suicide prevention. As the bill advances through the National Assembly, lawmakers must ensure that people who survive suicide attempts receive appropriate care rather than face criminal prosecution.

On October 13, 2026, the Senate passed the National Suicide Prevention Bill (SB. 730) on second reading. During the debate, Senate President Godswill Akpabio reportedly opposed its central reform, stating: "If you attempt suicide, make sure you die. Anyone who attempts and fails will go to jail."

The remark has drawn public concern and brought renewed attention to a fundamental question: should a person who survives a suicide attempt be treated as an offender or someone in need of urgent medical and psychosocial support?

Nigeria's existing legal framework makes this question particularly pressing. The bill provides an opportunity to reconsider laws that criminalise attempted suicide and establish a coordinated national approach to prevention.

An inconsistent legal framework

Under Section 327 of the Criminal Code and Section 231 of the Penal Code, attempted suicide is punishable by imprisonment of up to one year. These provisions derive from colonial-era legislation; the United Kingdom repealed its equivalent offence through the Suicide Act 1961.

Their continued existence sits uneasily alongside Nigeria's National Mental Health Act and the broader recognition that suicidal distress requires appropriate assessment, treatment and support.

The contradiction is clear: a person may need emergency medical attention while simultaneously facing the prospect of arrest and prosecution. Such a framework risks discouraging people from seeking help and places additional burdens on individuals and families already experiencing severe distress.

Sponsored by Senator Asuquo Ekpenyong of Cross River South, the National Suicide Prevention Bill seeks to address this inconsistency. Clause 18 provides for the repeal of the relevant provisions of the Criminal and Penal Codes. Part II establishes rights for people who have attempted suicide, including confidentiality, informed consent, access to legal representation and protection against torture and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment.

The bill also proposes a Suicide Prevention Unit, national and state surveillance systems, 24-hour crisis helplines and mandatory training for healthcare workers, law enforcement officers and correctional personnel.

During the Senate debate, Senator Dayo Faduyile, a medical doctor, reportedly noted that some survivors had subsequently died by suicide while in detention. His observation underscores the importance of ensuring that emergency responses are equipped to protect life and address psychological distress.

The bill has been referred to the Senate Committees on Health and on Judiciary, Human Rights and Legal Matters for further consideration and a public hearing.

Nigeria's human rights obligations

The case for reform extends beyond health policy. Nigeria's constitutional and international human rights commitments require the state to protect human dignity and facilitate access to appropriate healthcare.

Article 12 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights recognises the right to the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health. This obligation includes addressing barriers that prevent people from obtaining necessary care.

Nigeria is also a party to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which provides safeguards against discrimination and supports access to healthcare. Article 16 of the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, domesticated in Nigerian law, recognises the right to health, while Article 5 protects human dignity and prohibits torture and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment. Section 34 of the 1999 Constitution, as amended, similarly guarantees the right to dignity of the human person.

Criminalising attempted suicide can undermine these protections when fear of arrest, prosecution or public humiliation prevents survivors from accessing treatment. Detention may also intensify psychological suffering, particularly where correctional facilities lack appropriate mental health services.

UN human rights experts have raised concerns about the compatibility of criminalising suicide attempts with international human rights standards, including the protections against cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment.

The World Health Organisation has also identified decriminalisation as an important measure in strengthening suicide prevention and advancing the Sustainable Development Goal target of reducing suicide mortality by one third by 2030.

Nigeria should, therefore, assess its criminal laws against both its human rights commitments and its public health responsibilities.

What the evidence tells us

The argument that criminal penalties deter suicide is not supported by compelling evidence. Suicidal behaviour can arise amid severe psychological distress, trauma, social isolation and economic hardship. The threat of imprisonment does little to address these underlying circumstances.

Research examining suicide laws across countries has associated punitive legal frameworks with higher, rather than lower, suicide rates. Studies of decriminalisation in jurisdictions including Ireland, Sri Lanka, Canada and New Zealand have not established that removing criminal penalties leads to an increase in suicide.

These findings do not suggest that decriminalisation alone will prevent suicide. They demonstrate why prevention policy should focus on accessible healthcare, early intervention and sustained support rather than punishment.

Criminalisation can also undermine the information needed to develop effective interventions. Survivors and their families may conceal attempts for fear of legal consequences or stigma. Healthcare professionals may consequently receive incomplete information, while official records fail to capture the full extent of suicidal distress.

Reliable data is essential for identifying patterns, directing resources, training emergency responders and evaluating prevention programmes.

Figures cited during the Senate debate placed annual suicide deaths in Nigeria at approximately 16,000. Such estimates should be interpreted cautiously, given the difficulties of recording and reporting suicide deaths. Nevertheless, they highlight the need for a coordinated national response.

International practice provides useful precedents. Ghana decriminalised attempted suicide in 2023, offering a particularly relevant example from West Africa. Guyana, Pakistan and Malaysia have also removed criminal penalties.

Nigeria can draw lessons from these reforms while accounting for its own legal structure, healthcare capacity and social context. Decriminalisation must be accompanied by practical measures that enable people to obtain help when they need it.

Addressing concerns about the bill

Concerns that decriminalisation could encourage suicide should be examined against the available evidence. Removing criminal penalties does not endorse suicidal behaviour or diminish the state's responsibility to protect life. It changes the legal response so that prevention, assessment, treatment and follow-up can take precedence over prosecution.

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

Uzoma-Iwuchukwu is the Country Director of Avocats Sans Frontières France (Lawyers Without Borders).

Opinion

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NAFDAC, regulatory inefficiency and poison in marketplace (2)

By Kalu Okoronkwo

Continued from yesterday

A SERIOUS discussion of medicine safety must distinguish between falsified medicines, substandard medicines and contaminated medicines. Although these categories can overlap, they describe different problems and may require different regulatory responses. Falsified medicines involve deliberate deception about a product's identity, composition or source. A criminal operator may imitate the packaging of a reputable brand, manufacture a product under a false identity or misrepresent its ingredients. Patients may believe they are purchasing a genuine medicine when the contents do not match what the label claims.

The danger is that a falsified product may contain the wrong ingredient, an incorrect quantity of the active ingredient, no active ingredient at all or a harmful substance. A patient receiving a falsified antibiotic, for example, may fail to obtain effective treatment.

Someone relying on medication for a chronic or life-threatening condition may experience complications because the product does not deliver the expected therapeutic benefit.

Substandard medicines, by contrast, are authorised medical products that fail to meet applicable quality specifications or standards. The failure may result from manufacturing defects, inadequate quality control, degradation during storage or transportation, or other departures from required specifications. Unlike falsification, substandard quality does not necessarily imply deliberate fraud.

This distinction matters because the appropriate response must address the actual cause. A manufacturing defect calls for an investigation of quality systems and corrective action. Deliberate falsification requires investigators to trace the criminal supply chain and pursue appropriate enforcement. Both can endanger patients, but their causes and accountability pathways differ.

Contaminated medicines contain unwanted or harmful substances introduced during manufacturing, handling, storage or another stage of the supply chain. Contamination may occur accidentally because of inadequate quality control or results from deliberate adulteration. The My Pikin tragedy illustrates the devastating consequences when a toxic chemical enters a medicine intended for children.

These categories are not mutually exclusive. A falsified medicine may also be contaminated, while a substandard product may contain an unintended impurity. The concerns are: what the evidence establishes about the product, what hazard it presents and what failure allowed it to reach patients.

The consequences range from treatment failure and avoidable complications to poisoning and death. In some cases, the danger cannot be detected without laboratory testing. A medicine may have convincing packaging, an intact seal and an apparently legitimate registration number while its contents remain unsafe. Consumers cannot reasonably be expected to verify pharmaceutical composition by sight, smell or taste.

Food adulteration may involve the substitution of ingredients, concealment of defects, misleading labelling or the use of prohibited substances. Contamination may arise from unsafe raw materials, polluted water, inadequate sanitation, poor storage or failures in production hygiene. Similar weaknesses can compromise packaged water, soft drinks and alcoholic beverages.

A bottle of water may appear clean while containing a microbial hazard. A processed food may look wholesome while containing an undeclared or unsafe ingredient. A beverage may be sold under a familiar brand identity without having been manufactured by the legitimate producer.

These are different risks, but they share a common feature which consumers often lack the information or technical capacity to identify. Product safety, therefore, cannot rest primarily on the vigilance of individual buyers. It requires effective regulation, responsible manufacturing, reliable distribution systems and consequences for deliberate violations.

Successive NAFDAC administrations have contributed to the development of Nigeria's regulatory framework. From Professor Gabriel Ediale Osuide, the agency's pioneer Director-General, through the tenure of the late Professor Dora Akunyili, the technological modernisation associated with Dr Paul Orhii, the transitional leadership of Mrs Yetunde Oni to the regulatory reforms pursued under Professor Mojisola Christianah Adeyeye. Each administration has left its mark on the institution.

Akunyili became particularly associated with the high-profile campaign against counterfeit medicines. Orhii's tenure was associated with efforts to introduce technology into product authentication and regulatory processes. Later administrations continued efforts to strengthen regulatory systems and improve institutional capacity.

These contributions deserve recognition. However, institutional history must be assessed alongside present-day performance. The relevant question is whether successive reforms have produced consistent and measurable improvements in the safety of products available to ordinary Nigerians.

The challenge is not simply whether NAFDAC conducts raids, seizes goods or destroys products. It is whether enforcement disrupts the networks responsible for placing dangerous products on the market. When investigations end with the removal of goods from a warehouse, without adequately tracing their origin or identifying the people who financed, manufactured or distributed them, the underlying commercial network may survive. Effective enforcement must follow the product through the supply chain, establish how it entered circulation, identify responsible parties and pursue prosecution where the evidence warrants it.

Where a genuine manufacturing defect is involved, regulators must investigate the process that caused the failure and determine whether other batches are affected. Where falsification is established, investigators must trace the supply chain and gather evidence against those responsible. In both cases, recalls and public warnings must be timely, accessible and sufficiently specific to help consumers identify affected products.

The same principle applies to food and beverages. Factory inspections must go beyond paperwork to examine production hygiene, ingredients, water quality where relevant, packaging, storage and the systems used to maintain consistent safety. Registration should not be treated as a permanent guarantee that a product will remain compliant regardless of how it is manufactured, transported or distributed.

These responsibilities are complicated by informal supply chains, counterfeit branding, cross-border trade, limited consumer information and the commercial incentives that encourage some operators to cut corners. Such difficulties are reasons to strengthen surveillance, improve coordination and direct resources towards high-risk products and supply routes—not reasons to lower expectations of regulatory performance.

Where credible evidence establishes negligence, misconduct or corruption by public officials, accountability must extend to those responsible. At the same time, allegations must be investigated fairly, and arrests must not be presented as convictions. Regulatory credibility depends on both the willingness to act and the integrity of the process.

Unsafe products do not respect income, education or geography. A falsified medicine can enter an urban distribution network; contaminated food can reach a major retail outlet; and an adulterated beverage can be sold to consumers who have no reason to suspect wrongdoing. The economic consequences also extend beyond the immediate health risks. Families may face additional treatment costs, loss of income and prolonged care for affected relatives. Public hospitals may have to manage preventable complications, while legitimate manufacturers and traders can suffer reputational damage when counterfeiters imitate their products. Trust in the market and in regulatory institutions is weakened when consumers cannot confidently distinguish genuine goods from unsafe substitutes. These wider costs reinforce the need to treat product safety as a central public-health and governance concern, rather than merely an enforcement issue.

NAFDAC's reported enforcement activities in 2026 demonstrate continued intervention against unsafe and non-compliant products. The volume of operations and the value of goods destroyed are important indicators of activity, but they do not, on their own, establish how much the risk to consumers has declined.

A credible assessment requires a broader set of performance measures. These should include the speed with which safety alerts are issued, the proportion of recalled products successfully removed from circulation, the time taken to investigate reported hazards, the outcomes of prosecutions, the recurrence of violations and the agency's ability to identify dangerous products before they cause widespread harm.

A country's public-health system is judged not only by the medicines it approves, the factories it inspects or the products it destroys. It is also judged by whether parents can reasonably trust the medicine they give their children, whether families can purchase food without undue fear of hidden hazards, and whether consumers can rely on the institutions responsible for product safety.

NAFDAC must, therefore, be judged by a demanding but fair standard: its ability to prevent harm, detect danger, respond promptly, enforce the law and demonstrate measurable improvements in public protection. No regulatory system can eliminate every risk. The question is whether Nigeria can make dangerous products harder to produce and distribute, identify hazards before they cause widespread harm, and ensure that those responsible face meaningful consequences.

The ultimate measure of NAFDAC's success is not simply the monetary value of products destroyed or the number of raids conducted. It is the effectiveness of its vigilance, independence and enforcement in keeping unsafe products out of Nigerian homes and the consistency with which it protects the lives it was established to serve.

Concluded.

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

Religion as weapon of mental destruction,underdevelopment in Nigeria

By Yahaya Balogun

THANK you, Dr Abel Damina for reigniting religious awareness in Nigeria. Your impact is uniting various responsible faiths, putting an end to pastoral bandits or self-proclaimed pastors and fundamentalist or extremist Alfas. The religious landscape is transforming, and I'm excited about the growing consciousness in Nigeria. Keep the momentum going! The days of these religious chalatants are imminently numbered!

In Nigeria, anyone who encounters the shocking viral images revealing the appalling treatment of vulnerable, innocent, unclothed toddlers—both boys and girls—allegedly from Port Harcourt, and remains unaffected or indifferent to the grim injustices wrought by religion in this nation, Nigeria, has, in effect, become complicit in this horrific violation against children. The Nigerian landscape is marked by three distinct groups of religious adherents:

The gullible, brainwashed, and misinformed believers (mostly poor people in squalor; they can die or be suicide bombers for their ministers, marabouts, and clerics).

The knowingly ignorant and learned followers (such as Ph.D holders and rustic professors; their levels of academic attainment are dwarfed by religious stupidity).

Those who manipulate both categories for personal advantage (specifically, politicians who use them as disposable tools for personal gain).

These three groups embody some of the most dangerous players within Nigeria's religious sphere. They are the evils plaguing and stultifying Nigeria's growth and development.

It perplexes me how African religious leaders have managed—whether intentionally or through negligence—to wield faith as a tool that stifles critical thinking in our everyday lives. The common understanding is that religion was meant to guide human conduct in harmony with divine principles and godliness.

Yet, from Nigeria in Africa to Rome in Europe and Afghanistan in the Middle East—excluding Asia and the Americas—we witness the perversion of religion to reshape human thought. Faith often instills fear in the vulnerable, amplifying perceived threats and weaknesses while overshadowing the potential strengths and opportunities that belief can offer.

Is it any surprise that more individuals are gravitating away from established and traditional faiths toward philosophies like practical stoicism and humanism that care for humanity?

Contemporary Nigerian religions frequently covertly foster hatred, family strife, greed, and a relentless quest for immediate and insatiable satisfaction. Nigeria's religions often sexualise women and children, preying upon the minds of the impressionable.

It's disheartening to observe numerous young people enthralled by the sermons of their "pastors" and "alfas," where women are reduced to mere tools or objects to satisfy immoral cravings. I have heard a "pastor" crudely proclaim that a wife is simply her husband's possession, suggesting she should yield to his every whim without question.

Many women sit in silence, accepting this demeaning narrative from the pulpit, a perspective I find profoundly derogatory and misogynistic. A wife can honor her husband as the leader of the family without forfeiting her dignity. Likewise, a husband can steer his wife without diminishing her worth. Genuine partnerships thrive on love, support, and relationships based on mutual respect, free from man's tyranny.

These ministers and spiritual marabouts have disrupted and destroyed the fabric of countless lives, leaving behind relationships and homes in disarray.

In our modern spiritual landscape, we encounter a troubling environment where these religious bandits and unscrupulous individuals exploit unsuspecting devotees from their deceptive platforms.

Those religious ghouls, allegedly in Port Harcourt, Nigeria, must be fished out and brought to justice. Unless African nations take concrete steps to regulate religious business practices and protect the vulnerable, society will continue to bear the heavy burden of the remnants of brutal British neocolonialism, and jihad often masquerading as religion across the continent of Africa.

Balogun wrote from Arizona, United States of America.

This article was first written on August 14, 2025.

The Guardian Business

www.guardian.ng Thursday, October 29, 2026 Guardian Nigeria GuardianNigeria 08136370421 Guardiannigeria

CRUDE OIL PRICE UPDATE Brent crude: $114.8| WTI crude: $102.3

FOREX MARKET UPDATE I&E window: N1,344.80

21 states adopt new tax law as JRB task force targets illegal levies collectors

From Joseph Chibueze, Abuja

TWENTY-ONE states have passed a harmonised tax law designed to dismantle Nigeria's multiple taxation system, curb illegal revenue collections and reduce the cost of doing business, the Joint Revenue Board (JRB) has disclosed.

The development comes as revenue collections in 23 states rose by 27 per cent in the first half of 2026, from N1.75 trillion in the first half of 2025 to N2.2 trillion in the first half of 2026, despite provisions under the new tax framework that reduce or eliminate personal income tax for eligible earners.

The Executive Secretary of the JRB, Olusegun Adesokan, disclosed this yesterday, in Abuja, describing the harmonisation initiative as a major step towards ending arbitrary levies, overlapping taxes and exploitative collection practices that have increased operating costs for businesses and pushed up consumer prices.

Under the initiative, developed in collaboration with the Presidential Committee on Fiscal Policy and Tax Reforms, more than 100 different taxes, levies and charges imposed at the subnational level have been streamlined into nine approved categories.

The categories cover income tax, stamp duty, property tax, road tax, development levy, economic development levy, annual levies, user charges and other approved charges.

The reform is intended to replace fragmented state and local government revenue practices with a more predictable tax system, particularly for businesses operating across multiple jurisdictions.

For traders, manufacturers, transport operators and other businesses, the changes could reduce the financial burden of repeated tax demands, roadside collections and unofficial payments that raise the cost of moving goods and delivering services.

Adesokan said the new law expressly prohibits the sale of stickers and emblems for revenue collection, the establishment of roadblocks for tax purposes and unauthorised cash collections, warning that offenders would face legal consequences.

The JRB is also working with the police and state revenue authorities to establish a national task force to remove illegal revenue collectors from highways and transport corridors.

The planned enforcement operation will extend to local government areas, where businesses and transport operators frequently encounter multiple demands from different revenue-collecting authorities.

He attributed the high performance of the states in their internally generated revenue (IGR) to the broader objectives of the reforms, which include improving tax administration, expanding economic activity and bringing more taxpayers into the formal system rather than imposing heavier burdens on existing taxpayers.

The figures suggested that states can improve revenue mobilisation while reducing tax pressure on eligible individuals and businesses.



Exhibition Director, Energy Portfolio, inD, Ade Yesufu (left); Special Adviser to the President on Power and Chairman of the Presidential Task Force on Power Sector Reset and Restoration, Dr Rilwan Lanre Babalola: Minister of Power, Joseph Olasunkanmi Tegbe; Group President, SkipperSeil Group, Jitender Kumar Sachdeva; and Group Director, inD, Mark Ring, at at the opening of the Nigeria Energy Leadership Summit 2026 at the Landmark Centre, Lagos.

GTCO posts N879.9b PBT in nine months

By **Helen Oji**

GUARANTY Trust Holding Company Plc has posted a Profit Before Tax (PBT) of N879.9 billion in its nine months operations against N900.8 billion recorded in the corresponding period in 2025.

In its unaudited consolidated and separate financial statements for the period ended September 30, 2026, the group's total assets grew by 3.5 per cent to N18.37 trillion while shareholders' funds closed at N3.5 trillion.

The bank's Capital Adequacy Ratio (CAR) remained very strong at 34.2.per cent. Asset quality improved, with IFRS 9 Stage 3 Loans closing at 4.0 per cent at Group level and 3.4 per cent at the bank level. Cost of Risk (COR) also improved to 0.9 per cent from 2.2 per cent over the same period, while coverage for credit-impaired loans closed at 130.7 per cent.

In addition, the bank's deposit liabilities grew by 8.6 per cent from N12.87 trillion in December 2025 to N13.98 trillion in September 2026, reflecting the continued strength of the group's deposit franchise, while the net loan book moderated by 4.1 per cent to N3.00 trillion, in line with the Group's disciplined approach to risk asset creation.

Earnings quality also improved, with funded income rising to 77.8 per cent of gross earnings and net core earnings growing by 4.4 per cent to N1.505 trillion, while Profit After Tax closed at N614.6 billion from N699.6 billion recorded during the same period in 2025 reflecting changes to Companies Income Tax regulation which affected capital allowance reliefs.

World Bank sees global shocks pushing commodity prices up 23%

By **Abigail Ikhaghu**

GLOBAL commodity prices are projected to rise by 23 per cent in 2026, with energy costs expected to surge by 32 per cent and food prices facing further increases as conflict in the Middle East, disrupted grain shipments and climate risks tighten supplies, the World Bank Group has warned.

In its latest Commodity Markets Outlook, released yesterday, the institution said the shocks were driving up prices across major commodity markets, raising the risks of inflation, food insecurity and weaker economic growth.

The pressure is expected to persist into 2027, when food commodity prices are projected to rise by a further seven per cent, bringing the cumulative increase over 2026 and 2027 to about 18 per cent.

The outlook projected energy prices to reverse three consecutive years of declines, reaching a four-year high in 2026 before easing the following year. Brent crude oil is forecast to average $91 per barrel this year, up from $69 in 2025, before moderating to $79 in 2027.

The World Bank attributed the outlook largely to the Middle East conflict, which has depleted oil inventories and heightened the risk of further supply disruptions. It warned that falling stocks have left global markets more vulnerable to additional shocks, even as high prices begin to curb demand.

Food markets are also facing mounting pressure from disrupted grain shipments, the threat of El Niño to harvests and higher fuel and fertiliser costs. These factors are expected to push food commodity prices up by about 10 per cent in 2026 and another seven per cent in 2027, increasing the risk of reduced food affordability, particularly for vulnerable households.

The World Bank's Deputy Chief Economist and Director of the Prospects Group, Avhan Kose, stated that commodity markets are being hit by several major shocks at once.

He revealed: "Higher energy costs and trade disruptions are driving up prices across a broad range of commodities, threatening to worsen inflation, food insecurity, and economic growth. The priority must be to protect the poorest people and support low-income countries already struggling with heavy debt burdens."

Memory chip shortage drives entry-level smartphones to $100 as shipments decline

By **Adeyemi Adepetun** and **Adaku Onyenucheya**

. Mupita claims Nigerians' data use rises about 30% yearly

GLOBAL smartphone markets are feeling the pinch as a scarcity of memory chips pushes the price of entry-level devices to between $80 and $100, according to MTN Group President and CEO Ralph Mupita.

The shortage, driven by supply chain disruptions and rising demand for semiconductors, is reshaping affordability in emerging markets where low-cost smartphones are critical for digital inclusion.

Mupita noted that the squeeze on component availability has not only raised costs but also led to a decline in shipment volumes, particularly in Africa and other developing regions. He said the trend could slow smartphone penetration, widen the digital divide, and place additional pressure on manufacturers to innovate around cost efficiency and supply resilience.

The MTN Group boss, who disclosed this yesterday during a chat with the MTN Media Innovation Programme (MIP) Alumni in Lagos, said this issue was among the key issues discussed at a recent GSMA board meeting in New Delhi, India, where he serves as vice chairman.

He said that an 80 per cent surge in memory chip prices has caused smartphone shipments to Africa to decline by 27 per cent, thereby threatening efforts to expand digital inclusion and accelerate internet adoption across the continent.

He said the minimum price of a data-capable smartphone, which was previously projected at between $30 and $50, could now rise to between $80 and $100 because of the rising memory costs.

The MTN chief attributed the development partly to the growing demand for silicon and memory chips from artificial intelligence companies building big data centres and developing graphics processing units (GPUs) to power AI technologies.

According to him, these AI companies have increased the competition for silicon, which is also required by handset manufacturers, noting that the United States government has also invested $10 trillion to build AI data centres and the related infrastructure.

Mupita said this competition has pushed up component prices, making affordable smartphones increasingly difficult to obtain, particularly in Africa.

He said the cost of devices had become a more pressing challenge to digital inclusion than data prices, despite the substantial progress mobile network operators had made in expanding network coverage over the past 30 years.

CBN insists on local data hosting as 59% of firms set for 2027 migration

By **Tunde Bodunrin** and **Victoria Nwachukwu**

THE Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) has stressed the need for effective data sovereignty policies to protect the country's economic and security interests while strengthening its digital economy.

The Director of Payments System Supervision at the CBN, Dr Rakiya Yusuf, stated this yesterday, while delivering the keynote address at the seventh CIO & C-Suite Conference and Awards Africa in Lagos.

Speaking on the theme: "Policy, Regulation and Data Sovereignty," Yusuf said the rapid expansion of digital payments, e-commerce, cloud computing, artificial intelligence and platform-based services had made data governance increasingly critical to Nigeria's economic development, hence the need for stronger oversight.

She said the country needed a trusted, inclusive and resilient digital economy capable of supporting innovation, attracting investment and delivering sustainable growth.

To address these concerns, Yusuf said the CBN issued a circular on June 15, 2026, directing financial institutions and participating payment facilitators to ensure that payment transaction data generated in Nigeria were stored and managed locally, in line with applicable data protection laws and regulations.

In a similar development, the National Information Technology Development Agency (NITDA) has revealed that 59 per cent of the 44 financial institutions covered by its detailed survey analysis expect to complete their migration by January 1, 2027, as regulators seek greater control over the digital infrastructure supporting Nigeria's financial system.

Speaking at the Executive Regulatory Dialogue on the Implementation of the National Sovereign Cloud Initiative and Data Localisation, in Lagos, NITDA's Director-General, Kashifu Inuwa, said the country needed the capacity to maintain essential digital services without depending entirely on infrastructure outside its borders.

Presenting the survey findings, NITDA's Special Adviser to the Director-General, Dr Muhammad Aminu, said 39 per cent of the responding financial institutions reported that their systems covered by the requirements were fully hosted and managed in Nigeria.

He said 22 institutions were not yet implementing anything, while 29 were seeking further clarification on the requirements.

The survey also found that 79 per cent of responding digital infrastructure providers were ready to take new financial data, while 74 per cent could onboard new financial sector customers within three months.


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www.zenithbank.com

Request for Expression of Interest (REOI)

EIB Assisted Nigeria Climate Adaptation-Erosion & Watershed Project (NEWMAP-EIB)

CONSULTANCY SERVICES UNDER THE NIGERIA CLIMATE ADAPTATION – EROSION AND WATERSHED PROJECT (NEWMAP-EIB) OGUN STATE PROJECT MANAGEMENT / IMPLEMENTATION UNIT

Reference No.: OGNEWMAP-EIB/CS/RP/2026/001 **Client/Procuring Entity:** Ogun State NEWMAP-EIB
Project: Engineering Design study for Six (6) Gully Erosion Priority Sites in Ogun State **Date: 29th October, 2026**

The Federal Government of Nigeria (FGN), through the Federal Ministry of Environment (FMEnv.) has received a credit from the European Investment Bank (EIB) towards the cost of Nigeria Climate Adaptation Erosion and Watershed Project – EIB (NEWMAP-EIB). Ogun State is a beneficiary of the Credit and now intends to apply part of the proceeds of this credit to payments under the contract for Consultancy Services for Design Study of Gully Erosion Priority Sites in Ogun State.

Accordingly, the Ogun State SPIU invites qualified, experienced and reputable consulting firms, consulting organizations, consortia and/or joint ventures to express their Interest in providing the consultancy services described under the Lots below;

SCOPE OF SERVICES

DESCRIPTION OF CONSULTANCY SERVICES
Engineering Consultant for Design Study of priority Sites: 1. Olorunsogo Gully Erosion, I/Ode, 2. Makalewo Gully Erosion, I/Ode 3. Ojumele Isote Golly Erosion, Sagamu 4. Isakale Gully Erosion, Ijako, Ota, 5. Ilodo Gully Erosion, Ilaro 6. Igbore-Robiyan Comm. High Sch. Gully Erosion, Ifo LGA

2. Interested consulting firms must demonstrate relevant institutional experience, technical capacity and availability of qualified multidisciplinary personnel. The following criteria shall apply, as relevant to the firm expresses interest.

- At least five (5) years' relevant general experience in environmental, water resources, catchment, watershed, erosion-control, climate-resilience or related consulting services.
- Specific and successful experience in catchment/watershed management planning and integrated water resources management.
- Successful experience in erosion and flood-risk assessment and hydrological assessment/modelling.
- Successful experience in GIS/remote sensing and spatial watershed analysis.
- Successful experience in environmental and social assessment, participatory community planning and climate-risk assessment.
- Experience in investment planning and development partner-financed projects.
- Experience in the World Bank, EIB, IsDB, AfDB or comparable development-partner projects shall be advantageous.

3. SHORTLISTING / MINIMUM QUALIFICATION CRITERIA
Interested consultants/firms are to submit an Expression of Interest containing below **Mandatory** requirement:

- Evidence of Company's registration with the Corporate Affairs Commission (CAC) or equivalent in the country of incorporation.
- Evidence of the company's current Tax Clearance Certificate for the last three (3) years (2023,2024 and 2025)
- Company's audited account for the last three years (2023, 2024 and 2025) duly stamped.
- Evidence of Registration with State Bureau of Public Procurement (BPP) 2026 or equivalent at national level or in the country of incorporation.
- Well detailed company profile with managerial and technical structure, office address and functional contact details including staff list with functions and years of experience and years with firm.
- For joint ventures, a draft memorandum of understanding must be attached.
- Evidence of experience as required for the qualification criteria for the assignment under consideration inclusive of Client contact details
- The attention of interested consultants(s) is drawn to section I sub-section 1.5 of Guide to procurement for projects financed by EIB September 2024, setting forth the bank's policy on conflict of interest.
- Following the shortlisting of qualified consultants based on the information submitted in response to this REOI, the shortlisted consultants will be invited to submit a technical and financial proposal in the next stage and subsequently evaluated and the successful consultant selected in accordance with the **Consultant Qualification Selection (CQS)** method set out in the applicable procurement regulations.
- Request for proposal will be issued to the shortlisted applicant.
- Interested eligible consulting firms may obtain further information from the State Project Coordinator (SPC) Ogun State NEWMAP-EIB, State Project Implementation Unit (SPIU) during office working days/hours from 0900 to 1600 at the address stated below.

4. SUBMISSION OF EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST
Expressions of Interest should be clearly marked with the title and submitted to:
The State Project Coordinator,
Ogun State NEWMAP-EIB
NEWMAP-EIB Office, 2nd Floor, Moyo House, MTD-Ibara, Abeokuta, Ogun State
Tel: 09137144620
Email: ogunnewmapeibproc@gmail.com, **cc:** ogunnewmapeib@gmail.com
Closing Date: 19thNovember, 2026
Closing Time: 11.00am

Only shortlisted consultants/firms will be invited.

Project Procurement Officer

OGUN STATE NIGERIA CLIMATE ADAPTATION -EROSION AND WATERSHED MANAGEMENT PROJECT (OGUN NEWMAP-EIB)

NEWMAP -EIB

INVITATION TO TENDER

SUPPLY, INSTALLATION AND COMMISSIONING OF ICT/GIS EQUIPMENT, PRINTERS, DRONES AND ACCESSORIES, FIRST AID AND WORK SAFETY EQUIPMENT

1. The Ogun State Government has received financing from the European Investment Bank toward the cost of The Nigeria Erosion and Watershed Management Project (NEWMAP) and intends to apply part of the proceeds toward payments under this contract for Supply, Installation and Commissioning of ICT/GIS Equipment, Printers, Drones and accessories, First Aid and Work Safety Equipment.

2. The **Ogun State Nigeria Climate Adaptation-Erosion and Watershed Project (NEWMAP-EIB)** invites sealed tenders for the supply, Installation and Commissioning of:

Lot	Description	Delivery Location and Period	Bid Security
1	Supply, Installation and Commissioning of ICT/GIS Equipment, Printer, Drone and accessories	Abeokuta 30 days	At least Four Million Five Hundred Thousand Naira (N4,500,000.00) Only
2	Supply, Installation and Commissioning of First Aids and Work Safety Equipment	Abeokuta 30 days	At least Two Million Eight Hundred Thousand Naira (N2,800,000.00) Only

3. Tendering will be conducted under the open competitive method **National Competitive Bidding** using a BPP-EIB standardized Tender Document. Tendering is open to all qualified and interested Tenderers.

4. **Tenderers will be allowed to tender for only one (1) lot.**

5. Qualified and interested Tenderers may obtain further information from Ogun State Nigeria Climate Adaptation-Erosion and Watershed Project (NEWMAP-EIB), 2nd Floor Moyo House, MTD, Ibara Abeokuta and inspect the Tender Documents during office hours: **0900 to 1500 hours, Monday to Friday with the exception of public Holidays.**

6. A complete set of Tender Documents may be purchased or obtained by interested Tenderers upon payment of non-refundable fees of One-Hundred-and Fifty-Naira (N150,000.00) Only Banker's Cheque and payable to Ogun State Nigeria Climate Adaptation-Erosion and Watershed Project (NEWMAP-EIB). Tender Documents may be obtained electronically from the website: https://docs.google.com/document/d/1bkRtjk7nlljsHXi2_Ln0jo_ZVeoMNHz_/edit?usp=sharing&ouid=117694095151813649172&rtpof=true&sd=true Tender Documents obtained electronically will be free of cost.

7. Tender Documents may be viewed and downloaded for free from the website **https://docs.google.com/document/d/1bkRtjk7nlljsHXi2_Ln0jo_ZVeoMNHz_/edit?usp=sharing&ouid=117694095151813649172&rtpof=true&sd=true** Tenderers who download the Tender Document must forward their particulars immediately to ogunnewmapeibproc@gmail.com, **and 2nd Floor Moyo House, MTD, Ibara, Abeokuta, Ogun State** to facilitate any further clarification or addendum.

8. All Tenders must be accompanied by a **Tender Security from a commercial bank as stated in paragraph 2 above.**

9. The Tenderer shall paginate the submitted Tender Documents.

10. Completed Tender Documents must be delivered to the address below on or before 11.00am Thursday 26th November, 2026.

11. Electronic Tenders **will not** be permitted

12. Tenders will be opened immediately after the deadline date on Thursday, 26th November, 2026 by 11am, specified above or any deadline date and time specified later. Tenders will be publicly opened in the presence of the Tenderers' designated representatives who choose to attend at the address below.

13. Late Tenders will be rejected.

14. The addresses referenced above are:
Address for obtaining further information for Tender Documents
- **Ogun State Nigeria Climate Adaptation-Erosion and Watershed Project (NEWMAP-EIB)**
- **2nd Floor, Moyo House, MTD, Ibara, Abeokuta, Ogun State**
  Tel: 09137144620
- ogunnewmapeibproc@gmail.com **cc:** ogunnewmapeib@gmail.com

Address for submission and Opening of Tenders.
- **Ogun State Nigeria Climate Adaptation-Erosion and Watershed Project (NEWMAP-EIB)**
- **2nd Floor, Moyo House, MTD, Ibara, Abeokuta, Ogun State**

The Project Coordinator
OGUN-NEWMAP-EIB
29th October, 2026

UK, FSD Africa invest $355,000 in women-led Nigerian businesses

By **Adeyemi Adepetun**

FSD Africa, with funding from the UK Government through the British High Commission in Nigeria, has committed $335,000 (approximately £247,000) to establish the RiTA Investment Network, a new platform designed to increase investment in women-led businesses in Nigeria.

Established by Rising Tide Africa, a women-led, pan-African network of angel investors, the platform aimed to mobilise $2.7 million (approximately N3.75 billion) from Nigerian investors, including high-net-worth individuals, angel investors and family offices. The investment will target 15 small and growing women-led businesses across Nigeria, helping them access the capital they need to expand.

Nigeria's small and growing businesses are an important part of the economy, but many struggle to access the finance they need to grow. The IFC estimates that Nigeria's small businesses face a financing gap of around N13 trillion, with 19 in 20 unable to access formal finance. The challenge is particularly acute for women entrepreneurs, who own around 40 per cent of Nigeria's small businesses but are rejected for credit at more than three times the rate of men.

For many women, the barrier is not their ability to build successful businesses or repay loans, but a lack of assets, such as land, that banks traditionally require as security.

Speaking while announcing the investment, Head of Green Growth and Private Sector Development at the British High Commission, Paul Healey, noted that this initiative forms part of the UK Government's broader support to expand access to finance for promising small and growing businesses.

He said: "Women entrepreneurs are building successful businesses across Nigeria, but many still face barriers to accessing the investment they need to grow. This partnership between the UK Government, FSD Africa and Rising Tide Africa is changing that.

"Together, we are building stronger connections between women-led businesses and investors, creating opportunities for more businesses to start, grow, and thrive.

"The UK is proud to be part of this partnership, working together with talented entrepreneurs to create jobs and contribute to Nigeria's economy. By building these connections now, we can open the door to even more investment in women-led businesses in the years ahead."



Chief Executive Officer, National Sugar Development Council, Kamar Bakrin(left); Chief Data Analyst, Nigeria Governors' Forum, Razaq Fatai; Minister of State for Industry, Trade and Investment, Senator John Owan Enoh; Director-General of the Presidential Enabling Business Environment Council, (PEBEC), Princess Zahrah Mustapha-Audu; Director-General of the Nigeria Employers' Consultative Association, NECA, Wale-Smatt Oyerinde; Chairperson, MAN Non-Alcoholic Drinks Subsector, Dr Oluwasoromidayo George and Director-General of the Manufacturers Association of Nigeria, Segun Ajayi-Kadir, at the NAD-Sector Industry Session hosted by the Nigerian Bottling Company (NBC) and themed "Nigeria's Industrial Policy: Sector Reforms, Measurable Economic Outcomes" during the Nigerian Economic Summit 32 held in Abuja.

PalmCrest eyes 5% contribution to Nigeria's palm oil production

By **Silver Nwokoro**

PALMCREST, the agro-real estate initiative of Reftop Holdings, is targeting a five per cent contribution to Nigeria's 1.5 million metric tonnes yearly palm oil output as it expands its oil-palm plantation operations across Ogun and Oyo states.

The project, which combines agricultural land ownership with oil-palm cultivation and professionally managed plantation operations, has set a long-term vision of producing 75,000 metric tonnes of palm oil yearly from 30,000 acres of agricultural land.

This was disclosed at a press conference to announce the company's project.

The Chief Executive Officer of Reftop Homes Limited, Dr David Assogba, urged Nigerians to return to farming, stating that agriculture remained critical to achieving food self-sufficiency and reducing dependence on crude oil.

Assogba said Nigeria had neglected its agricultural potential despite the importance of palm oil across West Africa.

"Palm oil is not a new thing to us. In all West African states, palm oil is not a new thing. We have neglected not standing where we are," he said.

He urged Nigerians to change the perception that farming is meant for poor people, noting that agriculture could provide significant economic opportunities, and that farming is the next thing; farming is the next oil.

Explaining the Palmcrest model, he said the company sells land to individuals and assists them with farming, with the yield shared between the company and landowners based on an agreed percentage.

DLM Asset Management earns 'A' rating, posts 269% FUM growth

By **Kehinde Olatunji**

DLM Asset Management, a member of DLM Capital Group, has been assigned an 'a.AMA' Asset Management Assessment Rating by Intelligence Africa, marking another significant milestone in the firm's continued growth and institutional development.

The achievement comes amid significant business growth, with the company's funds under management (FUM) increasing by 269 per cent by September 2026, from FY25. This growth reflects the firm's expanding client base, increasing market penetration, and continued focus on delivering investment offerings tailored to the evolving needs of institutional and individual investors.

According to Intelligence Africa's rating report, "DLM Asset Management has established a relatively sizeable position within Nigeria's asset management industry, supported by rapid FUM growth." The report also noted that the company's cash generation and near-term liquidity improved materially in the nine months to September 2026.

NESG unveils platform for businesses to monitor legislative bills

By **Isaac Chibuife**

BUSINESSES can now monitor proposed legislation that could affect their operations and investment decisions through a digital platform launched by the Nigerian Economic Summit Group (NESG).

The Business Bill Intelligence Portal is designed to help businesses identify relevant bills before the National Assembly, track their progress and prepare for potential changes to the regulatory and business environment.

Developed by the Ernest Shonekan Centre for Legislative Reforms and Economic Development (ESC), the portal was unveiled at the 32nd Nigerian Economic Summit in Abuja, which had the theme, "Growth that Works: Delivering Jobs, Productivity and Shared Prosperity."

Proposed laws can affect how businesses operate, the markets they can access, the regulations they must comply with and the cost of running their operations. However, tracking bills through the legislative process can be difficult for businesses seeking to anticipate policy changes and contribute to discussions on proposed reforms.

The portal provides search and filtering tools to help users identify bills relevant to their interests and follow their progress through the legislature.

Its dashboard groups bills according to their stage in the legislative process, while individual pages provide details of each bill's status, latest recorded action and legislative history.

Speaking at the launch, Chairman of the ESC, Kyari Bukar, said the initiative was intended to improve public participation in legislative reforms and ensure that lawmaking reflected Nigeria's economic development priorities.

He said the centre was working to promote legislation that improves the business environment, encourages investment and expands economic opportunities without compromising the public interest.

The ESC's Executive Director, Uchenna Ogbonna, said the portal was developed for a broad range of users, including businesses, citizens, civil society organisations, journalists, researchers, government agencies, legislators and National Assembly staff.

He explained that businesses could use the platform to follow proposed laws affecting their industries, while citizens could monitor legislation with implications for their daily lives. Legislators and researchers could also access the information to support their work.

The launch builds on the NESG's efforts to strengthen engagement between the private sector and lawmakers on reforms affecting the business environment.

West African regulators seek common fuel standards as exports rise

By **Waliat Musa**

WEST African petroleum regulators have called for harmonised fuel specifications, improved infrastructure and stronger regulatory coordination to facilitate cross-border trade, amid changing petroleum supply patterns and rising refined product exports.

The regulators, from Nigeria, Ghana and The Gambia, made the call at the ongoing 20th OTL Africa Downstream Energy Week in Lagos, warning that differences in fuel standards, inadequate storage facilities and weak testing capacity could constrain regional petroleum trade.

The Authority Chief Executive of the Nigerian Midstream and Downstream Petroleum Regulatory Authority (NMDPRA), Rabiu Umar, said differences in fuel specifications across countries made it difficult to compare products and ensure fair competition.

Umar cited the disparity between diesel specifications of 50 parts per million (ppm) and 1,500 ppm, noting that such inconsistencies complicated efforts to harmonise standards across the region.

He said West African countries needed common product specifications and coordinated production rules to facilitate trade and promote competition.

Umar also advocated the establishment of a West African reference price for petroleum products, saying regional markets needed to strengthen trade among African producers.

The Chief Executive Officer of Ghana's National Petroleum Authority, Godwin Tameklo, identified inadequate infrastructure as another major constraint to regional petroleum trade.

Tameklo explained that Ghana's port and storage facilities could not always accommodate volumes delivered by larger vessels, forcing operators to consider smaller shipments or alternative arrangements.

He said countries needed to address infrastructure gaps, regulatory differences and market constraints to improve the cross-border movement of petroleum products. He also stressed the need for clear implementation timelines to ensure that regional harmonisation initiatives translated into practical results.

Similarly, the Director of Water, Petroleum and Electricity at The Gambia's Public Utilities Regulatory Authority, Musa Njie, highlighted the importance of laboratory facilities in testing petroleum product quality.

Njie identified the absence of a laboratory for petroleum product testing as one of the challenges facing The Gambia, stressing the need to strengthen national quality assurance systems.

He said harmonisation efforts should protect public health and the environment while improving market efficiency. He also called for stronger coordination between regional frameworks and national regulatory institutions to ensure effective implementation of agreed standards.

SWAN seeks stronger industry collaboration to curb illicit alcohol trade

By **Benjamin Alade**

THE Spirits & Wines Association of Nigeria (SWAN) has called for stronger collaboration among government agencies, industry operators and other stakeholders to tackle illicit alcohol trade, protect consumers and safeguard legitimate businesses.

The association said recent seizures of counterfeit alcoholic products and arrests linked to illicit trade networks highlighted the importance of coordinated enforcement and intelligence sharing among regulatory agencies, industry players and other partners.

In a statement, SWAN's Director General, Tony Okwoju, said sustained collaboration was yielding results in identifying and disrupting illicit trade activities across the country.

He, however, warned that illicit trade remained a significant challenge, with implications for public health, government revenue, legitimate businesses and employment.

According to the association, its member companies continue to invest in brand protection, market surveillance and intelligence gathering to support efforts by regulatory and enforcement agencies to combat counterfeit products.

SWAN also highlighted sustainable initiatives, including glass recovery projects, which it said helped promote environmental responsibility while reducing the circulation of empty bottles that could be used for illicit refilling and counterfeiting.

The association urged the media to exercise caution when reporting enforcement activities, particularly by distinguishing counterfeit products from genuine brands to avoid misleading consumers and undermining confidence in legitimate products.

It also advised consumers to buy alcoholic beverages from trusted and authorised retailers, ensure that product packaging and seals remained intact, and report suspected counterfeit products to the relevant authorities.

SWAN said effective cooperation among government agencies, manufacturers, distributors, retailers, the media and consumers was essential to protecting public health, preserving government revenue and sustaining confidence in established brands.

As part of its efforts to address the challenge, the association said it had organised a workshop on illicit trade in the alcohol industry earlier in the year, bringing together representatives of government, the media and industry to discuss the problem and identify practical solutions.

How OPay is taking financial inclusion closer to more Nigerians

By Ifeanyi Ibeh



FROM drivers receiving payments on their phones to small businesses serving customers without relying only on cash, digital finance is changing how Nigerians manage money. OPay is part of this shift, as new data show progress in financial inclusion and the need to make access more useful.

For a commercial driver, receiving payment quickly can mean having enough money to buy fuel and continue working. For a market trader, a digital transfer can help pay a supplier without leaving the shop. For a family, sending money to a loved one can take seconds instead of a long journey. These everyday moments show what financial inclusion should mean: giving people practical ways to receive, send and manage money, regardless of their income or where they live.

Nigeria is making progress. The 2026 Access to Financial Services in Nigeria survey by Enhancing Financial Innovation and Access (EFInA) found that 79% of adults, about 94.2 million people, used a financial product or service. Formal financial inclusion reached 73%, up from 64% in 2023, while financial exclusion fell from 26% to 21%. Digital financial services reached 64.4% of adults, compared with 45% in 2023.

Yet access alone does not guarantee financial security. EFInA found that three in four Nigerian adults are not financially healthy. Formal credit reaches only 10% of adults, while insurance reaches 5%. These gaps show why the next stage of inclusion must help people do more than open accounts or make payments. It must help them manage risks, build savings and support their livelihoods.

OPay, which began operations in Nigeria in 2018, is helping bring everyday financial services closer to consumers and businesses through mobile payments, transfers, bill payments, savings, debit cards and merchant services. Its model allows customers to carry out many transactions without travelling to a bank branch.

The value is especially clear for people who earn and spend money daily. OPay's technology is designed to work on a range of phones, including entry-level devices, and under unstable network conditions. According to company disclosures, more than 99% of transactions started on its app were completed successfully on the first attempt in the first half of 2026. Reliable service matters when a failed payment could delay a purchase or interrupt a day's earnings.

Small businesses are another important part of this story. OPay reported more than one million merchants and businesses on its network as of June 2026. Digital payments give shops, food sellers, and other businesses another way to collect payments, while eligible merchants that provide financial services can earn commissions. Easier payment collection can save time, support daily trade and help business owners serve more customers.

OPay also contributes to local employment. The company has publicly stated that 99% of its workforce in Nigeria is Nigerian. Its operations require people in customer support, technology, compliance, sales and other roles, while its merchant and agent network creates additional income opportunities. These are meaningful contributions.

Customer service is central to making these benefits last. A customer with a delayed transfer needs clear information. A trader facing a payment problem needs practical help. A first-time user may need guidance on how to protect an account. Listening, giving timely updates and resolving complaints can turn a difficult experience into an opportunity to earn trust.

Policy also has a role to play. The Central Bank of Nigeria's new ATM guidelines require card issuers to deploy at least one ATM for every 7,500 payment cards issued, with full compliance due by 2028. Improving access to cash is important, especially for people and communities that still depend on it. However, card numbers alone may not show how people now access financial services. As more Nigerians use mobile payments and nearby merchants, it is worth considering how ATM access targets can work alongside digital channels rather than diverting attention and resources from them. Cash and digital payments will continue to serve different needs; financial inclusion policy should make both work safely and efficiently.

> "OPay, which began operations in Nigeria in 2018, is helping bring everyday financial services closer to consumers and businesses through mobile payments, transfers, bill payments, savings, debit cards and merchant services. Its model allows customers to carry out many transactions without travelling to a bank branch."

Other gaps deserve attention. CBN policy already recognises the need to simplify customer identity checks, strengthen agent networks and promote digital financial services. The challenge is to keep these measures practical for low-income customers, rural communities and small businesses while maintaining strong safeguards against fraud.

At the launch of Payments System Vision 2028, the CBN set out a goal of a secure, inclusive, and innovative payment system, with collaboration and interoperability as guiding principles. EFInA's CEO, Foyinsolami Akinjayeju, has also called for providers and policymakers to judge progress by what financial access enables people to achieve, not simply by the number of accounts opened.

For OPay, the opportunity has been to keep turning technology into practical value: reliable payments, stronger merchant relationships, local jobs and easier access to financial services. The ultimate measure of inclusion is not how many people can open an account, but how many can use financial services to earn, save, trade and withstand unexpected costs.

When a driver can receive payment, a shop can keep trading, and a family can send money when it matters, financial inclusion becomes real. That is the impact digital finance must continue to deliver: one customer, one business and one transaction at a time.

PUBLIC NOTICE

Interim Forfeiture

IN THE FEDERAL HIGH COURT OF NIGERIA
IN THE LAGOS JUDICIAL DIVISION
HOLDEN AT LAGOS

SUIT NO:FHC/LAG/MISC/1408/2026

IN RE: APPLICATION BY THE ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL CRIMES COMMISSION FOR AN ORDER OF INTERIM FORFEITURE OF DIGITALASSETS CONTAINED IN THE WALLET HIGHLIGHTED IN THE SCHEDULE ATTACHED TO THE APPLICATION WHICH ASSETS ARE REASONABLY SUSPECTED TO BE PROCEEDS OF UNLAWFUL ACTIVITIES PURSUANT TO SECTION 17 OF THE ADVANCE FEE FRAUD AND OTHER FRAUD RELATED OFFENCES ACT NO. 14, 2006 AND SECTION 44 (2) B OF THE 1999 CONSTITUTION OF THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF NIGERIA

ORDER

UPON THIS MOTION EX-PARTE FOR AN ORDER OF INTERIM FORFEITURE dated 28th day of September, 2026 and filed on the 2nd day of October, 2026 coming before the Court and praying as follows:

1. AN INTERIM FORFEITURE ORDER of this Honourable Court forfeiting to the Federal Government of Nigeria digital assets listed in the schedule hereunder, which proceeds were traced and reasonably suspected to be proceeds of unlawful activities.

HON JUSTICE A. O. OWOEYE
PRESIDING JUDGE

CERTIFIED TRUE COPY
Sign..... Date 21/10/26
G.A.AFOLABI (MR)
PRINCIPAL EXECUTIVE OFFICER II
FEDERAL HIGH COURT.
IKOYI, LAGOS

SCHEDULE

S/N	Cryptocurrency Wallet ID number	Balance (USDT)
1.	0x5c329C05A223C16D3Fa3A057c550dE3a837e89BE	11,494.32

2. An Order of this Honourable Court directing the publication in any National Newspaper, the interim order under relief 1 above, for anyone who is interested in the properties sought to be forfeited to appear before this Honourable Court to show cause within 14 days why the final order of forfeiture of the said properties should not be made in favour of the Federal Government of Nigeria.

2. AND for such further or other Orders as this Honourable Court may deem fit to make in the circumstances of this case.

UPON READING through the Affidavit in Support of the Motion Ex-parte with the Exhibits attached therein, deposed to by Usman Ayoola, Male, Nigerian and Investigating Officer of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission, 15A, Awolowo Road, Ikoyi, Lagos State and filed at this Court Registry.

AND AFTER HEARING the submissions of Z. A. Atiku, Esq., Learned Counsel for the Applicant, who moved in terms of the Motion paper.

AND THE COURT after careful consideration of the application and submissions of Counsel.

HON JUSTICE A. O. OWOEYE
PRESIDING JUDGE

CERTIFIED TRUE COPY
Sign..... Date 21/10/26
G.A.AFOLABI (MR)
PRINCIPAL EXECUTIVE OFFICER II
FEDERAL HIGH COURT.
IKOYI, LAGOS

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED AS FOLLOWS:

1. That an Interim Forfeiture Order of this Honourable Court is hereby granted to the Applicant forfeiting

2

to the Federal Government of Nigeria digital assets listed in the schedule hereunder, which proceeds were traced and reasonably suspected to be proceeds of unlawful activities.

SCHEDULE

S/N	Cryptocurrency Wallet ID number	Balance (USDT)
1.	0x5c329C05A223C16D3Fa3A057c550dE3a837e89BE	11,494.32

2. That an Order of this Honourable Court is hereby granted to the Applicant directing the publication in any National Newspaper, the interim order under relief 1 above, for anyone who is interested in the properties sought to be forfeited to appear before this Honourable Court to show cause within 14 days why the final order of forfeiture of the said properties should not be made in favour of the Federal Government of Nigeria.

HON JUSTICE A. O. OWOEYE
PRESIDING JUDGE

CERTIFIED TRUE COPY
Sign..... Date 21/10/26
G.A.AFOLABI (MR)
PRINCIPAL EXECUTIVE OFFICER II
FEDERAL HIGH COURT.
IKOYI, LAGOS

3. That this case is adjourned to 14/10/2026, for report of compliance.

ISSUED AT LAGOS, UNDER THE Seal of this Honourable Court and by the Hands of the Presiding Judge this 13th day of October, 2026.

ALOKPESI C. N.(MRS)
REGISTRAR

Cashier
pls Stamp Official
21/10/26
₦50

FEDERAL HIGH COURT
Cashier's Office
Date
LAGOS

PUBLIC NOTICE

Interim Forfeiture

IN THE FEDERAL HIGH COURT
IN THE LAGOS JUDICIAL DIVISION
HOLDEN AT LAGOS, NIGERIA

SUIT NO: FHC/L/CS/1476/2020

BETWEEN:

ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL CRIMES COMMISSION --- APPLICANT

AND

1. ONI MARVIN AYODELE
2. AVAILNET MULTILINKS LIMITED -------- RESPONDENTS
3. GREEN OCEAONIC VENTURES

AND

MONARCH ALUMINIUM COMPANY LTD.... TO BE JOINED AS PARTY INTERESTED

ORDER

UPON THIS EX- PARTE ORIGINATING SUMMONS dated the 3rd November, 2025 and filed on the 10th day of November, 2025, coming up before this Honourable Court for hearing today the 2nd day of February, 2026, praying for the following orders:

1. **AN INTERIM FORFEITURE ORDER** of this Honourable Court forfeiting to the Federal Government of Nigeria the money domiciled in the accounts listed in Schedule A of the application, the said monies being proceed of criminal activities.
2. **AN ORDER OF THIS HONOURABLE COURT** directing the publication in any National Newspaper, the interim order under prayer 1 above, for anyone interested in the properties/monies sought to be forfeited to appear before this Honourable Court to show cause within 14 days why the final order of forfeiture of the said properties should not be made in favour of the Federal Government of Nigeria.
3. **AND** for such further or other Orders as this Honourable Court may deem fit to make in the circumstances of this case.

SCHEDULE A OF THE BANK ACCOUNTS OF 1ST TO 3RD RESPONDENTS ACCOUNTS AGAINST WHICH ORDERS ARE SOUGHT.

S/N	BANK	ACCOUNT NAME	ACCOUNT NUMBER
1.	GUARANTY TRUST BANK PLC.	MARVIN AYODELE	0019457557 AND 0029569998
2.	GUARANTY TRUST BANK PLC	ONI MARVIN AYODELE	0029569974, 0175759117, 0029569981

CERTIFIED TRUE COPY
Sign.....Date.21/10/26
G.A.AFOLABI (MR)
PRINCIPAL EXECUTIVE OFFICER II
FEDERAL HIGH COURT-
IKOYI, LAGOS

AND UPON READING THE AFFIDAVIT IN SUPPORT OF EX-PARTE ORIGINATING SUMMONS, sworn to by **Armstrong Abang,** Male, Adult, Nigerian Citizen of Economic and Financial Crimes Commission, of 15A, Awolowo Road, Ikoyi, Lagos, Lagos State, and Exhibits attached thereto and a Written Address in support of Ex-parte Originating Summons dated the 3rd day of November, 2025, all filed at the Registry of this Court, on the 10th, November, 2025.

AND AFTER HEARING, E. S, Okongwu, of Counsel for the Applicant,who move the motion paper, urging the Court to grant same.

AND THE COURT HAVING RULED THIS 2ND DAY OF FEBRUARY, 2026.

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED AS FOLLOWS:

1. That I find merit in the said motion, consequently the application succeeds and prayers 1 and 2 are accordingly granted.
2. That an interim forfeiture order is hereby made forfeiting to the Federal Government of Nigeria the money domiciled in the accounts listed in Schedule A of the application, the said monies being proceed of criminal activities.
3. That an order is hereby made directing the publication in any National Newspaper, the interim order under prayer 1 above, for anyone interested in the properties/monies sought to be forfeited to appear before this Honourable Court to show cause within 14 days why the final order of forfeiture of the said properties should not be made in favour of the Federal Government of Nigeria.

SCHEDULE A OF THE BANK ACCOUNTS OF 1ST TO 3RD RESPONDENTS ACCOUNTS AGAINST WHICH ORDERS ARE SOUGHT.

S/N	BANK	ACCOUNT NAME	ACCOUNT NUMBER
1.	GUARANTY TRUST BANK PLC.	MARVIN AYODELE	0019457557 AND 0029569998
2.	GUARANTY TRUST BANK PLC	ONI MARVIN AYODELE	0029569974, 0175759117, 0029569981

4. That this case is adjourned to 18th March, 2026 for report of compliance and for further proceedings.

ISSUED AT LAGOS, under the hand of the presiding Judge and the seal of this Honourable Court, this 2nd day of February, 2026.

HON. JUSTICE D.I. DIPEOLU
PRESIDING JUDGE

Cashier's Office
Date.....
LAGOS

Orakwe Nonye Ossy
Registrar.

CERTIFIED TRUE COPY
Sign.....Date.21/10/26
G.A.AFOLABI (MR)
PRINCIPAL EXECUTIVE OFFICER II
FEDERAL HIGH COURT-
IKOYI, LAGOS

2015-2823-285
Cashier
As collect N120.00
for cert
21/10/26

NUEE threatens to withdraw service over alleged torture of Benue JED staff

By **Gloria Nwafor**

THE National Union of Electricity Employees (NUEE) has threatened to direct its members to withdraw from the Jos Electricity Distribution (JED) Plc office in Makurdi, Benue State, unless management guarantees their safety following allegations by the union that workers were abducted, tortured and intimidated by suspected government house thugs.

The union said the decision would take effect until further notice if management did not provide adequate occupational safety assurances, warning that, in its view, electricity workers could no longer work under threats to their lives and property.

In a statement signed by its Acting General Secretary, Dominic Igwebike, NUEE condemned what it described as the alleged invasion of JED's Benue State office on October 21, 2026, calling it another attack on electricity workers performing their official duties.

According to the union, the assailants allegedly abducted the Benue State Operating Officer, Samson Abah, and an unconfirmed number of other employees before taking them to the River Benue Bridge.

NUEE alleged that the attackers, who it said were armed with weapons suspected to be guns and machetes, invaded the company's district office in Makurdi following the disconnection of electricity supply to the Benue State Government House.

According to NUEE, the attackers allegedly demanded money for the workers' release. They forced them to reconnect electricity supply to the Government House through what the union described as an illegally installed transformer.

The union called on electricity distribution companies to protect their employees while on duty, insisting that workers should not face violence or intimidation for carrying out operational decisions.

It demanded that the affected employees receive adequate medical treatment, that the company replace their seized phones and other personal belongings, and that the Benue State Governor issue a written apology.

It maintained that electricity workers could not be expected to continue working in an environment that the union characterised as involving alleged brutality, intimidation and threats to their lives.

PAU alumni urged to deepen collaboration, empower youths

By **Helen Oji**

THE Vice-Chancellor of Pan-Atlantic University (PAU), Prof. Enase Okonedo, and business leaders have urged alumni to use their professional networks, experience, and resources to build businesses, create opportunities, and contribute to Nigeria's development.

They made the call at the first international conference of the Pan-Atlantic University Alumni Association 2026, held at the Ecobank Pan African Centre, where speakers stressed that alumni networks should go beyond social connections to create partnerships, mentor young professionals, and support business growth.

Speaking at the conference, Okonedo said the university's approximately 15,000 alumni from its business school and university could make a significant contribution to society if they worked together.

She said the university's emphasis on knowledge, values, and responsible leadership aimed to produce graduates who could contribute to national development.

According to her, the university has grown from its beginnings in a living room in Victoria Island 34 years ago to operating across two campuses.

Meanwhile, its alumni have spread across different industries and professions.

The vice-chancellor added that such opportunities would only be realised if alumni engaged with one another, shared experiences and turned conversations into practical collaborations.

In his keynote address, the Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of Coleman Technical Industries Limited, George Onafowokan, urged Nigerians to embrace mentorship, integrity, discipline and patience as essential ingredients for building successful businesses and careers.

The President of the Pan-Atlantic University Alumni Association, Dr Onyebuchi Odianjo, said the association was working to build a more connected and active alumni community that could provide professional support, strengthen industry relationships and create opportunities for students and graduates.

She said her experience at the university gave her practical knowledge and opportunities that helped her career, reinforcing her commitment to giving back to the institution.

AIIG appoints new pioneer CEO to drive impact investment in Africa

By **Bankole Orimisan**

THE Africa Impact Investing Group (AIIG) has appointed Etemore Glover as its pioneer Chief Executive Officer to strengthen investment ecosystems, mobilise capital, and expand funding for enterprises addressing Africa's social and economic challenges.

The appointment marked a new phase for the group, as it transitions from a network of national impact investing organisations to a continental platform with dedicated executive leadership.

Glover, who spent seven years as pioneer chief executive officer of Nigeria's Impact Investors Foundation (IIF), is expected to lead AIIG's strategy, deepen collaboration among member countries and promote policies that direct investment towards measurable social and environmental outcomes.

Her responsibilities will include strengthening investment infrastructure, expanding investor participation, improving deal flow and encouraging the adoption of impact measurement standards across African markets.

AIIG Chairman, Elias Masilela, said Glover's experience in institution-building, capital mobilisation, and policy advocacy aligned with the organisation's strategic priorities.

He expressed confidence that her leadership would help accelerate economic and social transformation across the continent.

Glover said her experience in Nigeria showed that impact investing requires strong institutions, sound policies, and financing mechanisms that connect investment capital with businesses and enterprises.

Before joining AIIG, Glover held corporate and investment banking positions at FBN Merchant Bankers Limited and Zenith Bank Plc.

NGO awards scholarship to six students

By **Ngozi Egenuka**

NON-GOVERNMENTAL Organisation (NGO), Spell Africa International, has awarded scholarship funds to six outstanding schoolchildren following the successful conclusion of its Spelling Leaders Competition.

The competition commenced with preliminary rounds across Nigeria's six geo-political zones, covering 36 states and featuring Primary and Secondary categories. The National Finals/Grand Finale was held at Bloffville School, Ikorodu, Lagos State, bringing together some of the brightest young spellers from across the country.

After a keenly contested competition, six exceptional students emerged as winners in their respective categories.

For the secondary category, Jimoh Jesutofunmi won the competition, and Omotayo Yewande was first runner-up, both of Model Secondary School, Ondo State. Ekewigwe Chimamanda of Ebelechukwu International Group of Schools, Anambra State, was second runner-up.

For the primary category, Greatness Godwin of Treasured Heritage School, Ekiti State, won the competition, with Okwu Okenye Chukwuemelie of St. Albert the Great School, Anambra State, as first runner-up and Morike Adigun of Treasured Heritage School, Ekiti State, as second runner-up.

Founder, Spell Africa International, Gift Akwejevu, congratulated the winners and encouraged them to remain committed to learning and personal development.

"To our brilliant winners, remember that every word you mastered is more than just a spelling; it is a building block of knowledge, confidence, and possibility. Keep reading, keep learning, and keep believing in the power of your dreams. This is just the beginning of the many stages you will one day conquer," the founder said.

ILO supports African small businesses to bridge skills gap

By **Victoria Nwachukwu**

TEN master trainers from four African countries have completed an International Labour Organisation (ILO) programme designed to expand business management training and strengthen the capacity of small enterprises across the continent.

The graduates from Nigeria, Liberia, Uganda and Somalia completed the 10-day ILO Start and Improve Your Business International Training of Master Trainers (SIYB-ITOMT), organised by Mind+ Facilitation Co. Nigeria Ltd in partnership with Masterpeace Resource Development Centre (MRDC).

Held at Peace Deluxe Hotel, Redemption City, along the Lagos-Ibadan Expressway in Ogun State, the programme equips participants to train and certify other business development trainers, who will then provide management training to aspiring and existing entrepreneurs in their communities.

The initiative aimed to expand access to structured business management knowledge by building a network of qualified trainers who can support small businesses across the four participating countries and beyond.

Start and Improve Your Business is an ILO business management training programme for small enterprises. It comprises three core packages: Generate Your Business Idea (GYB), Start Your Business (SYB) and Improve Your Business (IYB).

Master trainers play a critical role in the programme's delivery structure, training and certifying SIYB trainers who transfer business management skills to entrepreneurs.

During the training, participants covered adult learning methodologies; the organisation and delivery of training-of-trainers programmes across the three SIYB packages; and practice facilitation, coaching, assessment, and quality assurance. They also worked with the SIYB Game and SIYB Gateway.

Speaking at the opening ceremony, the Nigeria Employers' Consultative Association (NECA), in a goodwill message delivered on behalf of its Director-General, Adewale-Smatt Oyerinde, described micro, small and medium enterprises as the lifeblood of African economies.

The association stressed the importance of strong management skills and structured guidance to help businesses thrive, noting that entrepreneurial passion alone was insufficient to sustain growth.

Joining virtually from Geneva, ILO SIYB programme representative Cheuk Yu Cheryl Chan congratulated the graduates. It urged them to maintain programme quality standards, strengthen professional networks, and adapt their training approaches to entrepreneurs' changing needs.

Stephen Kyalibulha, an ILO SIYB Master Trainer Developer from Uganda, led the programme, with Noruwa Joseph Edokpolo, Principal Consultant at Mind+ Facilitation and an ILO SIYB Master Trainer Developer Candidate, serving as co-facilitator.

PEARL Awards prioritises corporate governance, names 2026 nominees

By **Helen Oji**

THE Chairman of the PEARL Awards Board of Governors, Tayo Orekoya, said corporate governance, transparency and accountability remained central to the awards' assessment of companies listed on the Nigerian Exchange Limited (NGX), as the board unveiled nominees for the 2026 edition.

Speaking at a press conference in Lagos to announce the nominees and unveil plans for the 2026 awards ceremony, Orekoya said the awards were designed not only to recognise outstanding corporate performance but also to promote sound corporate governance, sustainable business practices and long-term value creation for shareholders and other stakeholders.

He said the initiative has remained committed to fairness, transparency and objectivity since its establishment in 1995.

He explained that the awards use a research-driven, performance-based assessment methodology, distinguishing them from recognition platforms that rely largely on nominations, subjective assessments, or popularity.

According to him, the awards' credibility rests on measurable financial and market performance indicators, using information from companies' published yearly reports and the NGX Daily Official Lists.

Orekoya added that the assessment framework covered 10 financial and market performance indicators: turnover growth, return on equity, earnings yield, share price appreciation, current ratio, return on assets, dividend yield, net asset ratio, dividend growth and profit margin ratio.

He said the indicators provided a basis for assessing corporate growth, profitability, operational efficiency, financial strength, shareholder returns and market performance.

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Forward your application (updated CV and cover letter) to the email address below.
Qualified Candidates will be invited for interview in few days time .
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thierrytechproject@gmail.com

United Capital

STATEMENT TO THE NIGERIAN STOCK EXCHANGE AND SHAREHOLDERS ON THE UNAUDITED RESULTS FOR THE PERIOD ENDED 30 SEPTEMBER, 2026

Consolidated & Separate Statement of Profit or Loss and Other Comprehensive Income For The Period Ended 30 September, 2026	Group		Company	
	30 September 2026	30 September 2025	30 September 2026	30 September 2025
	'=N=' 000	'=N=' 000	'=N=' 000	'=N=' 000
Gross Earnings	**62,466,009**	**41,541,788**	**13,542,455**	**10,775,916**
Investment income	22,030,527	11,318,301	1,929,509	1,407,867
Fee and commission income	20,945,275	16,540,473	3,933,208	4,123,226
Net trading income	12,603,196	9,739,521	1,446,325	-
Net operating income	**55,578,998**	**37,598,295**	**7,309,042**	**5,531,093**
Other income	266,301	1,473,876	(236,967)	(529,172)
Dividend income from subsidiaries	-	-	4,810,000	4,755,000
Net gains/(loss) on financial assets fair valued through profit or loss	6,620,710	5,417,368	1,660,380	1,018,995
Total Revenue	**62,466,009**	**41,541,788**	**13,542,455**	**10,775,916**
Personnel expenses	(6,420,258)	(5,104,143)	(999,455)	(892,315)
Other operating expenses	(15,686,002)	(11,751,542)	(1,704,990)	(1,682,008)
Depreciation of property and equipment	(841,613)	(330,915)	(373,262)	(246,361)
Amortisation of intangible & right of use assets	(195,700)	(269,576)	(122,021)	(245,375)
Impairment writeback/(charge) for credit losses	366,970	(940,650)	(240,973)	26,521
Total Expenses	**(23,510,543)**	**(18,396,826)**	**(3,440,701)**	**(3,039,538)**
Operating profit before income tax	**38,955,466**	**23,144,962**	**10,101,754**	**7,736,378**
Share of accumulated (loss)/profit of associates	2,628,684	1,869,497	-	-
Profit before income tax	**4,1584,150**	**25,014,459**	**10,101,754**	**7,736,378**
Taxation	(6,752,246)	(3,841,466)	(1,527,383)	(434,785)
Profit for the year	**34,831,904**	**21,172,993**	**8,574,371**	**7,301,594**
Other comprehensive income, net of income tax				
Items that will not be reclassified subsequently to profit or loss				
Fair value gain on investments in equity instruments measured at FVTOCI	66,399,608	89,242,724	1,714,891	7,738,325
Actuarial gains on defined benefits net of taxes	(42,301)	-	-	-
Items that may be reclassified subsequently to profit or loss				
Fair value (loss)/gain on investments in debt instruments measured at FVTOCI	147,398	393,719	-	-
Other comprehensive income for the year, net of taxes	**66,504,705**	**89,636,443**	**1,714,891**	**7,738,325**
Total comprehensive income for the year	**101,336,609**	**110,809,435**	**10,289,262**	**15,039,918**
Profit for the year attributable to:				
Equity holders of the Company	**34,831,904**	**21,172,993**	**8,574,371**	**7,301,594**
Total comprehensive income attributable to:				
Equity holders of the Company	**101,336,609**	**110,809,435**	**10,289,262**	**15,039,918**
Earnings per share-basic (kobo)-Annualized	**258**	**157**	**64**	**54**

Consolidated & Separate Statement of Financial Position As at 30 September, 2026	Group		Company	
	30 September 2026	31 December 2025	30 September 2026	31 December 2025
ASSETS	'=N=' 000	'=N=' 000	'=N=' 000	'=N=' 000
Cash and cash equivalents	618,081,196	287,100,799	170,954,709	95,528,228
Investment securities	1,066,062,951	1,343,682,316	175,718,111	309,374,698
Loans and advances	71,607,698	68,775,968	-	-
Trade and other receivables	35,528,201	48,507,565	27,976,856	17,284,827
Dividend receivable from subsidiaries	-	-	578,000	10,927,000
Right of use assets	290,574	290,574	290,574	290,574
Intangible assets	835,597	812,550	501,867	623,888
Investments in subsidiaries	-	-	14,655,133	14,655,133
Investments in associates	12,430,973	9,802,289	4,500,000	4,500,000
Property and equipment	8,690,789	2,365,069	5,979,622	1,664,913
TOTAL ASSETS	**1,813,535,039**	**1,761,337,130**	**401,154,872**	**454,849,261**
LIABILITIES				
Managed funds	1,037,822,764	993,640,397	-	-
Borrowed funds	320,075,220	372,302,220	242,683,454	305,533,380
Other liabilities	186,064,384	217,493,996	113,646,620	99,099,439
Defined benefit obligations	871,404	658,458	609,988	458,418
Current tax liabilities	17,735,642	12,413,406	4,409,015	4,126,600
Deferred tax liabilities	13,886,774	14,831,709	3,509,756	3,509,756
TOTAL LIABILITIES	**1,576,456,188**	**1,611,340,186**	**364,858,833**	**412,727,593**
SHAREHOLDERS FUND				
Share capital	9,000,000	9,000,000	9,000,000	9,000,000
Share Premium	515,241	515,241	515,241	515,241
Retained earnings	73,620,736	53,188,832	19,577,508	25,403,137
Regulatory risk reserve	75,759	75,759	-	-
Statutory reserve	290,596	145,298	-	-
Fair value reserves	153,546,639	86,999,633	7,155,784	7,155,784
Foreign Currency Translation Reserve	(2,840)	(2,840)	-	-
Defined benefit plan reserve	32,720	75,021	47,506	47,506
TOTAL SHAREHOLDERS FUND	**237,078,851**	**149,996,944**	**36,296,039**	**42,121,668**
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND SHAREHOLDERS FUND	**1,813,535,039**	**1,761,337,130**	**401,154,872**	**454,849,261**

The financial statements were approved by the Board of Directors on 23rd October 2026 and signed on its behalf by:

Uche Ike
Chairman
FRC/2023/PRO/ICAN/002/931055

Peter Ashade
Group Chief Executive Ofcer
FRC/2013/PRO/DIR/003/00000002719

Shedrack Onakpoma
Group Chief Finance Officer
FRC/2013/PRO/ICAN/004/00000001643

Science&Health

Ebola: Experts urge vigilance, contact tracing to prevent transmission

From **Nkechi Onyedika-Ugoeze**, Abuja

HEALTH experts have called for sustained contact tracing and surveillance to prevent further transmission of the Bundibugyo strain of Ebola in Nigeria, despite the evacuation of the country's index patient.

Already, the Nigeria Centre for Disease Control and Prevention (NCDC) is monitoring 54 primary contacts linked to the case, including healthcare workers, domestic staff and others who may have been exposed during medical care, sample collection or related interactions.

Deputy Director and Head of Health Emergency Preparedness at the NCDC, Dr Abiodun Ogunniyi, told The Guardian that evacuating the index patient did not automatically end the outbreak or eliminate the possibility of further transmission. He said investigations were continuing to identify everyone who might have been exposed, including an e-hailing driver identified during follow-up inquiries.

According to him, all relevant contacts must be monitored for 21 days after their last possible exposure, with anyone developing compatible symptoms promptly assessed.

Ogunniyi urged identified contacts to cooperate with public health teams and provide accurate information about their movements and possible exposure.

He called for heightened preparedness in Lagos and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), citing their international connections, population movements and extensive healthcare networks. However, he stressed that all states must be capable of detecting unusual illnesses, investigating alerts and responding quickly to suspected cases.

He said effective surveillance required coordination among public and private hospitals, laboratories, community surveillance networks and port health services.

Although Nigeria had no known Ebola patient remaining in the country following the evacuation, Ogunniyi said the outbreak's status must be determined by epidemiological evidence, not the physical presence or absence of the index patient.

The critical questions, he explained, were whether all potential contacts had been identified, whether new suspected cases emerged and whether investigations revealed secondary transmission.

Ogunniyi said Ebola was not spread simply by living in the same city, sharing public spaces or being near an infected person. Transmission generally occurs through direct contact with the blood or other body fluids of an infected person who has developed symptoms, or through contaminated materials.

He urged Nigerians to rely on verified information rather than speculation, warning that misinformation could fuel panic and stigmatise patients, their families and affected communities.

The Federal Government has indicated December 7, 2026, as a provisional date for declaring the outbreak over. Ogunniyi, however, said the date remained subject to the epidemiological situation and fulfilment of the applicable outbreak-ending criteria.

Under World Health Organisation (WHO) guidance, an Ebola outbreak is generally declared over after 42 days without a new confirmed case, calculated from the last relevant event specified in the criteria. This commonly involves the last confirmed patient's second consecutive negative test, where required, rather than simply the date of evacuation.

He added that early symptoms of Bundibugyo virus disease, including fever, headache, muscle pain, fatigue and sore throat, could resemble malaria and typhoid fever. Diarrhoea and vomiting may develop later, making clinical assessment, laboratory testing and exposure history essential for diagnosis.

Ogunniyi urged healthcare facilities to maintain a high index of suspicion, promptly report suspected cases and implement infection prevention measures before laboratory confirmation where exposure history warrants concern.

With no approved vaccine or established specific antiviral treatment for Bundibugyo virus disease, he said early detection, isolation, expert clinical management and supportive care remained essential.

He advised Nigerians to practise regular hand hygiene, avoid contact with the blood and other body fluids of suspected patients, and refrain from caring for them without appropriate protective equipment and professional guidance.

An alert from a private health facility in the current incident led to an investigation and laboratory confirmation by the NCDC National Reference Laboratory, highlighting the importance of prompt reporting.

WHO links extreme heat to health risk in pregnant women, children

By **Ijeoma Nwanosike**

THE World Health Organisation (WHO) has identified extreme heat as a growing health risk for pregnant women, newborns and children, with rising global temperatures linked to premature births and increased childhood illnesses.

The WHO, World Meteorological Organisation (WMO), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) have introduced the first set of priority indicators to help countries monitor the health effects of heat exposure on these vulnerable groups as extreme temperatures intensify worldwide.

According to WHO, studies have shown that exposure to extreme heat increases the odds of preterm birth by 26 per cent, while an estimated 1.5 billion children globally are exposed to heatwaves that are becoming more frequent, longer or more severe.

The report also revealed that babies under one year of age experienced 389 per cent more heatwave days in 2024 compared with the baseline period of 1986 to 2005, highlighting the growing exposure of newborns to potentially harmful environmental conditions.

Speaking on the development, the Acting Director of WHO's Department of Environment, Climate Change, One Health and Migration, Bruce Gordon, said extreme heat was creating new health risks, particularly for populations with limited ability to protect themselves from rising temperatures.

"As our world continues to heat up, it creates new risks for health, and older people, pregnant women, newborns and children are among those least able to escape them," he said.

Gordon said health systems needed reliable data to recognise the scale of the threat and respond effectively, including protecting people during heatwaves and incorporating climate risks into routine health services.

To help countries identify and respond to these risks, the new framework recommends monitoring a range of health outcomes, including preterm births, stillbirths, low birthweight, hypertension during pregnancy, child deaths and visits to health facilities during periods of extreme heat.

It also recommends monitoring school attendance, which can provide insight into how rising temperatures disrupt children's education and daily activities.

The Director of WHO's Department of Sexual, Reproductive, Maternal, Child and Adolescent Health and Ageing, Dr Pascale Allotey, said health systems needed to systematically track the effects of extreme heat to identify emerging threats and protect vulnerable populations.

"Heat is already affecting our most vulnerable populations, including pregnant women, newborns and children. But what health systems do not count, they cannot respond to," she said.

Allotey explained that tracking outcomes such as preterm births, child deaths, illnesses and health facility visits alongside heat exposure would help countries identify potential health impacts and take appropriate action.

Foundation seeks collective action to bridge healthcare gap

By **Ijeoma Nwanosike** and **Glory Sunday**

PISTIS Foundation has advocated collective action by governments, religious institutions, businesses and other stakeholders to bridge the healthcare access gap in the country.

The UBOMI Medical and Surgical Outreach, held at Lifepointe Church, Lekki, provided free consultations, specialist care, surgeries, eye and dental services, laboratory investigations, diagnostic tests and medications to underserved individuals and families.

The five-day initiative delivered 11,297 clinical and support interventions to 4,135 beneficiaries in Lagos, and comes amid rising healthcare costs that have made medical services increasingly difficult for many Nigerians to afford.

Speaking at a press conference, the Global Lead Pastor of The Elevation Church and Founder and Board Chair of Pistis Foundation, Godman Akinlabi, said addressing the country's healthcare challenges required shared responsibility rather than reliance on government alone.

He said The Elevation Church was positioned to establish a dedicated legacy organisation and fund to mobilise resources within and outside the church for high-impact projects, citing the UBOMI outreach as an example.

The Executive Director of Pistis Foundation, Leonard Thomas, said the scale of the interventions demonstrated what could be achieved when compassion was combined with clinical expertise.

He explained that the programme sought not only to address immediate medical needs but also to alleviate suffering and restore dignity to people who might otherwise have gone without treatment.

"Every beneficiary represents a life that matters. No one should be left to endure pain, live with an untreated condition or forgo essential healthcare simply because they cannot afford it," Thomas said.

He added that the initiative reflected the foundation's commitment to making quality healthcare accessible beyond those who could afford it.

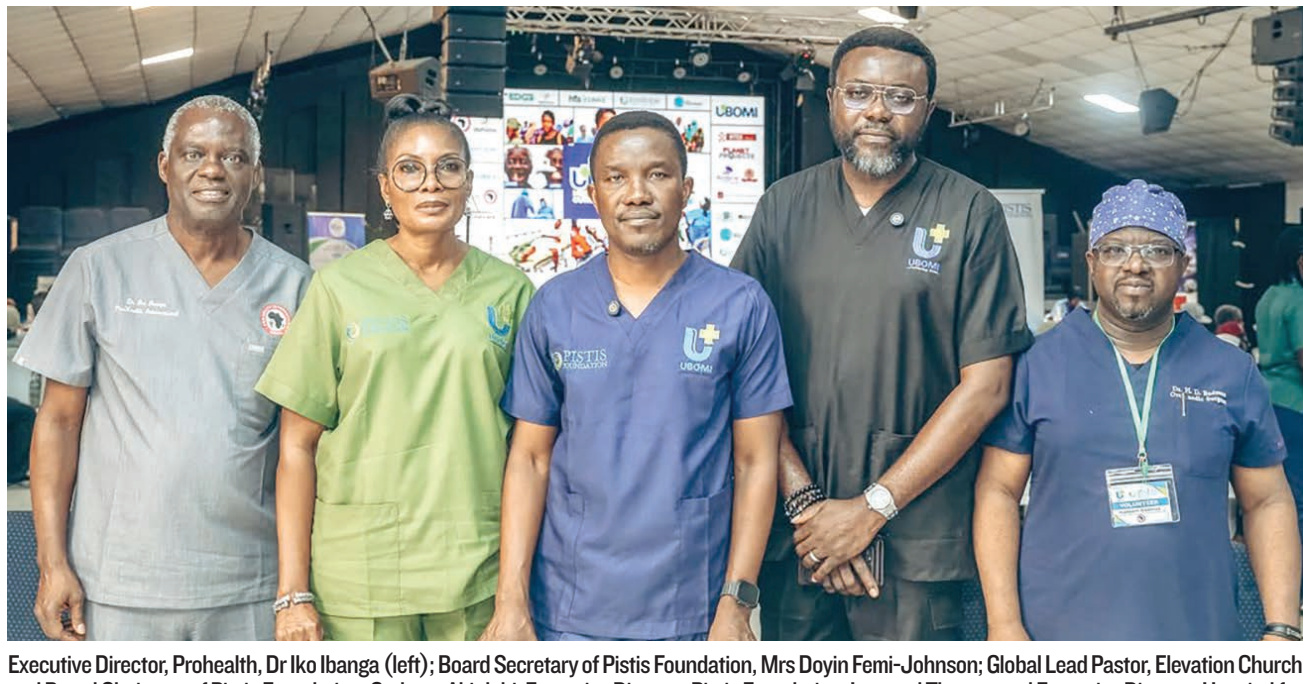
The outreach was implemented with technical support from Prohealth International, led by Dr Iko Ibanga, and the Hospital for Trauma and Surgery, led by its Medical Director, Dr Hakeem Badmus.

The foundation also acknowledged corporate organisations, donors and individuals who contributed funds, medical equipment, supplies, meals, medicines and diagnostic resources to support the programme.

According to the foundation, the contributions demonstrated the importance of partnerships in extending essential healthcare services to underserved communities.

The Lagos edition followed an earlier outreach in Ibadan, where organisers reported that more than 3,000 people received treatment and over 10,000 medical interventions were delivered. These included more than 100 general and gynaecological surgeries and over 100 eye surgeries.

Pistis Foundation said the initiative formed part of its broader commitment to improving lives and strengthening communities through healthcare, education, shelter and other social impact programmes.



Executive Director, Prohealth, Dr Iko Ibanga (left); Board Secretary of Pistis Foundation, Mrs Doyin Femi-Johnson; Global Lead Pastor, Elevation Church and Board Chairman of Pistis Foundation, Godman Akinlabi; Executive Director, Pistis Foundation, Leonard Thomas and Executive Director, Hospital for Trauma and Surgery (HTS), Dr Hakeem Badmus, during the Foundation's five-day medical outreach and surgical interventions in Lagos.

Cancer centre raises concern over deaths of Nigerians under 50

By Solomon Azu, Calabar

THE Medical Director of Asi Ukpo Comprehensive Cancer Centre, Calabar, Dr Kajogbola Gbenga, has expressed concern over cases of sudden collapse and death among Nigerians below 50, attributing the trend to unhealthy lifestyles, stress and poor health-seeking habits.

He said the pressure on young people to achieve quick success had contributed to inadequate rest, drug abuse, excessive alcohol consumption, smoking and energy drink consumption, increasing their vulnerability to serious health complications.

Gbenga noted that stroke was increasingly affecting younger people, while unhealthy diets and elevated cholesterol levels were contributing to heart attacks and kidney damage.

He advised Nigerians to undergo regular medical examinations, manage stress and make time for recreation to reduce the risk of premature death.

He also urged people to avoid excessive alcohol, energy drinks, smoking and caffeine consumption, stressing the importance of annual comprehensive health checks to detect potential health problems early.

The medical director encouraged Nigerians to pay attention to their family medical history, noting that some hereditary conditions could cause severe complications or death before age 50 if left undetected.

He recommended annual medical screening, particularly for people above 30, and urged those experiencing symptoms of ill health to seek prompt medical attention.

Gbenga also lamented Nigeria's poor death registration system, saying the lack of reliable records made it difficult to determine the number of people below 50 dying from these conditions.

Lagos raises health equity fund to N3b, targets 500,000 vulnerable residents

By Ijeoma Nwanosike

THE Lagos State Government has increased its Health Equity Fund from N1 billion to N3 billion, targeting 500,000 vulnerable residents for subsidised healthcare as it expands mandatory health insurance coverage.

Governor Babajide Sanwo-Olu announced the initiative at the launch of the Lagos Private Health Plan (LPHP) Partnership, setting December 31, 2026, as the deadline for residents, employers and workers to secure health insurance before enforcement begins on January 1, 2027. The event also featured the unveiling of 21 participating Health Maintenance Organisations (HMOs).

Sanwo-Olu said the programme was anchored on Executive Order EO/BOS/01/2024, signed on July 16, 2024, which requires public and private employers to provide health insurance for their workers.

He explained that the existing IleraEko scheme primarily supports vulnerable populations and informal-sector workers, while the LPHP provides complementary options for salaried employees and corporate organisations. Actuarial analysis of about two million claims and enrolment records informed its development.

The governor said the initiative would improve healthcare financing, ensure more predictable payments to providers, ease pressure on public hospitals and generate contributions for the Health Equity Fund and public healthcare infrastructure.

Commissioner for Health, Prof. Akin Abayomi, said the scheme would reduce households' dependence on out-of-pocket payments, which often expose families to financial hardship. He said Lagos was targeting an increase in insured residents from about two million to at least 10 million, adding that participating HMOs were accredited by the National Health Insurance Authority.

Special Adviser to the Governor on Health, Dr Kemi Ogunyemi, said the scheme would allow individuals and families to choose accredited plans suited to their needs. She urged employers, insurers and healthcare providers to collaborate in expanding coverage and improving service quality.

Gavi, UNICEF cut malaria vaccine price by 40%, save $50m

From Nkechi Onyedika-Ugoeze, Abuja

GAVI, the Vaccine Alliance, and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) have agreed to cut the price of the RTS, S/AS01 malaria vaccine by about 40 per cent, saving an estimated $50 million between 2027 and 2029 and potentially extending immunisation to more African children.

The agreement will reduce the price to €5.50 per dose from early 2027, subject to regulatory and manufacturing milestones, including World Health Organisation (WHO) prequalification of a new production facility.

The savings could fund the complete four-dose vaccination course for up to one million additional children or expand access to other childhood vaccines in countries facing constrained health budgets.

UNICEF negotiated the deal, backed financially by Gavi, with an advance payment facilitated by the International Finance Facility for Immunisation (IFFIm).

UNICEF's Director of Supply Division, Leila Pakkala, described the agreement as an important step towards expanding access to life-saving malaria vaccines. She said it would also support continued innovation and the development of next-generation vaccines to reduce the disease burden.

Gavi's Chief Vaccine Programmes and Markets Officer, An Vermeersch, said the agreement demonstrated how financing, technical expertise and strategic partnerships could improve vaccine affordability and access.

The price reduction comes as demand for malaria vaccines exceeds initial projections following the start of their rollout in 2024, while declining international aid funding puts additional pressure on health budgets.

UNICEF has procured and delivered more than 74 million malaria vaccine doses, while Gavi-funded vaccination programmes have been integrated into routine immunisation in 25 African countries, accounting for more than 70 per cent of the global malaria burden.

Gavi aims to vaccinate an additional 50 million children against malaria by 2030.

Malaria remains a major public health threat, particularly in Africa, which accounts for up to 95 per cent of global cases and deaths. Global estimates for 2024 put infections at 282 million and deaths at 610,000, with children under five accounting for about 74 per cent of fatalities.

The burden underscores the need to expand access to prevention, diagnosis and treatment, alongside vaccination.



Govt seeks regional cooperation to curb health workers' migration

From Nkechi Onyedika-Ugoeze, Abuja

THE Federal Government has called for stronger regional cooperation and practical measures to tackle the migration of health workers and improve healthcare delivery across West Africa.

Minister of State for Health, Dr Adekunle Salako, made the call at a workshop organised by the West African Health Organisation (WAHO) in Abuja to finalise a regional work plan for motivating and retaining health workers in Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) member countries.

Salako, represented by the Director and Head of the Department of Health Planning, Research and Statistics, Dr Ovuoraye John, said the initiative should complement continental efforts to address workforce shortages, including a programme targeting two million community health workers across Africa by 2028.

He said the simultaneous hosting of regional health workforce discussions, activities marking the 50th anniversary of the West African College of Physicians and preparations for a high-level African Union forum presented an opportunity to align priorities.

"We now know that we cannot do it alone in silos. We need every resource available to us as a country to get it right. The health workforce is the challenge that we are facing on our continent," he said.

On public health security, Salako urged participants to observe Nigeria's Ebola prevention protocols, noting that the country had continued to allow public gatherings despite recording a confirmed case.

He said no additional cases had been recorded since the initial confirmation, while contact tracing had been expanded to 53 people. All contacts had been monitored, and those considered at risk had tested negative, he added. The index patient was recovering after being evacuated to Switzerland.

Also speaking, the representative of the West African College of Surgeons, Prof. Foluso Owoeye, urged governments to address health workers' migration by improving working conditions, strengthening healthcare infrastructure and providing better opportunities for career advancement.

He warned that the continued loss of trained professionals threatened the sustainability, quality and accessibility of healthcare across the sub-region. Owoeye said it was unacceptable for West African countries to invest substantial resources in training medical personnel only for their expertise to benefit other countries while local communities remained underserved.

"We cannot continue to train healthcare professionals for the benefit of the rest of the world while our own communities remain underserved," he said.

He identified modern medical equipment, specialist training, mentorship, research opportunities and professional advancement as key measures for retaining health workers. He also called for realistic, measurable policies with clear targets, timelines and institutional accountability.

According to him, retention policies must involve healthcare workers and reflect their aspirations and workplace experiences. He reaffirmed the college's commitment to working with WAHO and national governments on training, mentorship, research and policy advocacy.

Firm urges Nigerians to prioritise safety in paint selection

By Ijeoma Nwanosike

CHEMICAL and Allied Products (CAP) PLC has urged Nigerians to prioritise safety when choosing paint, stressing the need to prevent exposure to lead, a toxic metal that can damage health, particularly in children.

The company made the call through its "Look Beyond the Colour" campaign, which promotes informed consumer choices, responsible manufacturing and professional training to prevent lead exposure in homes, schools and workplaces.

The campaign coincided with the 2026 International Lead Poisoning Prevention Week, themed "From Detection to Prevention", which highlights the need to identify sources of lead exposure and strengthen preventive measures.

According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), there is no known safe level of lead exposure. The toxic metal can damage multiple body systems, with children particularly vulnerable to its effects on brain development, learning and behaviour.

The company noted that exposure could occur when lead-containing paint deteriorates or is disturbed during renovation and repairs.

Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of CAP PLC, Olalekan Aluk, said consumers should consider safety alongside colour, finish and cost when selecting paint.

He said the company's commitment to paint products formulated without added lead came with a responsibility to promote safer practices across the industry.

Aluk called for collective action by manufacturers, regulators, retailers, painters, building professionals and consumers to ensure product safety, provide reliable information and encourage informed purchasing decisions.

The firm is investing in training to improve painters' knowledge of product safety and responsible paint selection. Through its Painters Academy, the company has trained more than 8,000 painters across 17 states to make informed recommendations and promote safer painting practices.

Employers fault varsity curricula, decry skills gap among graduates

By Iyabo Lawal

EMPLOYERS of labour have decried the quality of graduates being produced by Nigerian tertiary institutions, faulting university curricula for failing to meet current workplace expectations.

The concerns were raised at a panel session themed: 'Talents, values and impact: Reimagining the university-industry nexus to drive ethical, skilled and globally competitive graduates', which was held as part of the 2026 International Week of the University of Lagos (UNILAG).

The session was moderated by the Chairman of UNILAG Consult Limited Management Board, Prof. Ismail Ibraheem.

Panellists included the Chief Operating Officer of KPMG Nigeria and West Africa, Mrs Toyin Gbagi; the Executive Director, Operations, Stanbic IBTC, Mrs Funke Amobi; and the Governor, Teaching and Learning, Banana Island International School, Mrs Moulinsade Marriott.

Others were the Vice-President, International Engagement and Service, King's College London, Prof. Funmi Olonisakin; Charles Wales of the University of Birmingham, United Kingdom; and the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academics and Research), UNILAG, Prof. Matthew Ilori.

The panellists were unanimous in their view that there is an urgent need to bridge the widening gap between what is taught in the classroom and what is demanded in the workplace.

They stressed that theoretical instruction must be combined with practical exposure, sustained industry collaboration and deliberate opportunities for students to apply classroom knowledge to real-world problems.

Speaking on recruitment experiences, Gbagi lamented a noticeable decline in the quality of graduates seeking employment.

She said it had become a major struggle for employers to identify competent candidates during recruitment exercises.

According to her, it is common to struggle to get 10 competent hires out of 100 applicants who present themselves for employment tests and interviews.

She explained that because of the quality gap, companies are compelled to invest heavily in intensive post-employment training to bring new hires up to speed with contemporary workplace realities.

Gbagi questioned the relevance of several courses and curricula currently being run in Nigerian universities.

She noted that in other countries, academic programmes are subject to frequent evaluation, and those with zero employer demand are revoked or phased out.

She therefore called for regular and rigorous evaluation of courses offered in tertiary institutions, arguing that curriculum review has become even more urgent in light of the way artificial intelligence is reshaping the nature of work, skills, and job functions.

"There is a decline in the quality of graduates from our tertiary institutions. The problem is always about the quality of hires, not the available quantity. As a result, there is a lot of rigour that we put into the training of those that we hire. Universities must look beyond just sending their students on internships. There is a big question about curriculum relevance.

"How frequently do we evaluate courses? Sometimes, for some of these courses, the demand is zero. Courses are being revoked in countries that regularly embark on the evaluation of courses," Gbagi added.

She urged universities to take employability more seriously as a core principle in curriculum design.

On her part, Amobi said the gap between academia and industry must be closed, insisting that employers want graduates who can hit the ground running upon employment.

"There has to be a bridge between academia and industry. We want graduates who would hit the ground running upon their employment. We need graduates that can process data; we need them to be smart, visionaries with the use of technology," she said.

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Rector, Auchi Polytechnic and Chairman COFER, Dr Salisu Umar (left); Chief Executive Officer,Iwemi, Ejimofor Akah; Executive Secretary, National Board for Technical Education, Prof Idris Bugaje; National Coordinator for the Committee of States Commissioners of Education in Nigeria (COSCEN), Dr. Leo; Deputy Director, NBTE. Dr Rabiat Bello, Regional Head, Wema Alat, Mr Adesanya Ogunyemi, and Interswitch boss,Ikay Aiyegbusi during the visit of the Iwemi team to NBTE.

NB honours 2025 Maltina Teacher of the Year with digital centre

By Iyabo Lawal

NIGERIAN Breweries Plc-Felix Ohiwerei Education Trust Fund has inaugurated a state-of-the-art digital learning centre at Wisdom International School of Excellence, Sauka, Lugbe, Abuja, in honour of the 2025 winner of the Maltina Teacher of the Year Competition.

The inauguration of the centre marked a significant milestone in the trust fund's sustained intervention in Nigeria's education sector and reinforces the core philosophy of the Maltina Teacher of the Year initiative, that celebrating an outstanding teacher must translate into lasting institutional benefits for the school and community that produced such excellence.

The project, fully built and equipped by the Nigerian Breweries-Felix Ohiwerei Education Trust Fund, is designed as a comprehensive digital learning ecosystem.

The centre is equipped with modern desktop computers, high-speed internet connectivity, an interactive smart screen for collaborative teaching and learning, a fully functional computer-based testing facility for examinations and assessments, digital learning and assessment software and tools, as well as a 10KVA solar-powered inverter system to guarantee uninterrupted power supply and ensure sustainability of learning activities.

Speaking at the inauguration ceremony held within the school premises in Lugbe, Abuja, the Head of Public, External and Government Affairs, Nigerian Breweries Plc, Mr Chukwuemeka Aniukwu, said the project exemplifies the trust fund's deliberate commitment to ensuring that the impact of the competition goes far beyond the individual recognition of exemplary educators.

According to Aniukwu, while the competition identifies, honours and rewards outstanding teachers across the country, the accompanying school project ensures that the celebration leaves behind tangible infrastructure that expands access to quality, technology-enabled education.

"Through this project, we are extending the impact of the Maltina Teacher of the Year award beyond recognising outstanding teachers. We want to ensure that their achievements translate into lasting benefits for their schools and communities. By investing in digital learning, we are creating more opportunities for students to access technology-enabled education," he said.

Aniukwu noted that the choice of a digital learning centre aligns with the evolving demands of teaching and learning in the 21st century, particularly the need to prepare Nigerian students for computer-based examinations and digital literacy, which have become prerequisites for academic progression and global competitiveness.

Deputy Director at the Federal Ministry of Education, Dr Iyabode Alli, commended the fund for its consistent and impactful contributions to the development of education in Nigeria.

Alli emphasised the critical importance of digital learning infrastructure in improving teaching and learning outcomes, particularly at a time when the Federal Government is driving reforms under the Nigeria Education Sector Renewal Initiative and the transition of national examinations to computer-based testing.

She noted that public-private partnerships such as the one demonstrated by Nigerian Breweries remain vital to bridging the infrastructure gap in schools and accelerating Nigeria's journey towards technology-driven education.

Also speaking, the Head of Academics at Wisdom International School of Excellence, Mrs Adesuwa Ogwu, expressed appreciation to Nigerian Breweries-Felix Ohiwerei Education Trust Fund for citing the project in the school in recognition of Yusuf's achievement.

Read the remaining story on www.guardian.ng

NBTE, Iwemi explore partnership to digitise polytechnic research for innovation

By Iyabo Lawal

THE National Board for Technical Education (NBTE) has held talks with Iwemi, an academic publishing and research platform owned by Retail Development and Investment Company (RDIC Africa), on how to preserve and convert the research output of Nigeria's polytechnics and technical colleges into innovation, enterprises and employable skills.

The meeting took place at the NBTE headquarters in Abuja when a delegation from Iwemi paid a courtesy visit to the Executive Secretary and Chief Executive Officer of the Board, Prof. Idris Bugaje.

The delegation was led by the Founder and Chief Executive Officer of Iwemi, Mr Ejimofor Akah. He was received by Bugaje alongside the Rector of Auchi Polytechnic and Chairman of the Committee of Federal Rectors, Dr Salisu Umar, the National Coordinator of the Committee of States Commissioners of Education in Nigeria under the Nigeria Governors' Forum, Dr Leo, and Deputy Director at NBTE, Dr Rabiat Bello.

Also on the Iwemi team were the Regional Head of Wema Bank's ALAT, Mr Adesanya Ogunyemi, and Interswitch boss, Ikay Aiyegbusi, who are payment and banking partners to the platform.

During the engagement, Akah presented the Iwemi Academic Publishing and Research Platform as a system designed to archive, publish and distribute academic work originating from polytechnics and technical institutions. He said the platform is currently live in five tertiary institutions, including Edo State Polytechnic, Usen, and hosts over 500,000 titles.

He disclosed that the platform provides a hosted, institution-branded digital repository for National Diploma and Higher National Diploma projects, theses and academic records, intended to ensure that student research is preserved and accessible rather than stored physically and eventually discarded.

Akah said the platform also allows lecturers to publish technical and vocational education and training e-textbooks with digital rights management protection, with a royalty payment structure that pays within 48 hours.

According to him, the system includes research indexing intended to make institutional research searchable internationally, which could affect institutional visibility and web ranking.

He added that the ecosystem includes a distance-learning component for the delivery of short courses and learning content, and that Iwemi provides training for librarians and information and communications technology officers, while bearing the cost of deployment at participating institutions.

Akah also informed the meeting that students and staff of polytechnics can participate in the Iwemi National Academic Research Impact Challenge (INARIC2026), which has a prize pool of N25 million, with its grand award ceremony scheduled for December 11, 2026, in Abuja.

Umar commended the platform, saying it offers polytechnics a locally developed channel for archiving and publishing their academic work, with implications for visibility and internally generated revenue.

Responding, Bugaje said the board's priority is to move technical and vocational research from research to innovation, and not stop at publication.

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Foundation supports 461 indigent students with educational materials

By **Adelowo Adebumiti**

A NON-GOVERNMENTAL organisation, the Felix Ebenezer Opata Foundation, has supported 461 indigent students drawn from 59 public secondary schools in Lagos State with educational materials at its maiden outreach programme.

According to the organisers, the foundation was established in response to the widening education gap, with a focus on identifying and supporting brilliant but indigent children who have the potential to excel, but lack the financial and structural support to do so.

The Chairman of the foundation, Mrs Catherine Opata, said education remains one of the most powerful investments that can be made in the future of young people, and ultimately in the future of society.

She added that every child deserves the opportunity to learn, develop their talents and build a meaningful future, regardless of circumstances.

Opata explained that the outreach was not simply about providing material support, but also sending a clear message to every student that their future is worth investing in.

While urging beneficiaries to make good use of the opportunity, Opata said: "I encourage you to receive this support, with determination, making good use of every opportunity placed before you. Study diligently, respect your teachers, believe in yourselves and remember that the circumstances of today do not have to determine the possibilities of tomorrow."

In his remarks, the Head of Operations, Mr Frederick Opata, said the current intervention is deliberately focused and location-specific, beginning in the Alimosho local government area of Lagos State, one of the most densely populated areas with a significant number of children from low-income and rural communities facing barriers to education.

He disclosed that the foundation's three-year plan, following a successful pilot, includes expansion beyond Alimosho into additional local government areas, increasing its reach to over 5,000 students yearly, strengthening government and institutional partnerships, and introducing digital and vocational learning components, with funding priorities clearly mapped out in the first year.

In his address, Felix Opata, in whose name his children established the foundation, said his children had taken what began as a personal commitment more than 40 years ago, and given it an organised platform through which countless more lives can be touched.

Opata said, "To the 461 students, please do not allow your present circumstances to determine your future. Work hard, remain disciplined, respect your teachers and make the best use of every opportunity available to you."

He stated that the vision is to see a Nigeria where every child, regardless of socio-economic background or location, has access to quality education, can fulfil their potential, and contribute meaningfully to national development.

According to him, financial contributions, educational resources, scholarships and other forms of support can help the Foundation reach more children and transform more lives.

Beneficiaries received school bags, textbooks, exercise books, mathematical sets, calculators, biros, and other learning materials.



Principal, Chrisland High School, Lekki, Kolawole Cole Bewaji (left); Head Girl, Chrisland High School, Lekki/Captain, Division C, Oluwanifemi Okungbure; Student of Chrisland High School, Lekki/Captain, Division B, Rachael Faka; and Chairperson, Chrisland High School, Lekki PTA, Joy Kosowe, during the presentation of awards to students who emerged winners of Division B and C of Science Olympiad National Tournament, held at the school hall in Lekki, Lagos, recently.

Chrisland Lekki wins National Science Olympiad in junior, senior categories

By **Omowunmi Sanni**

CHRISLAND High School, Lekki, has emerged national champion in both the junior and senior secondary school categories of the 2026 Science Olympiad Nigeria, after representing Lagos State and securing top honours at the national competition held at Anchor University, Ayobo, Lagos State.

The school was honoured for the outstanding performance of its Division B and Division C teams.

The national tournament featured 10 schools from different states in each category, with Chrisland High School, Lekki, emerging overall champion in both categories.

The achievement highlighted the importance of science education that extends beyond classroom instruction and examination performance, equipping students with critical thinking, practical knowledge and problem-solving skills needed to develop innovative solutions to real-world challenges.

Speaking at the awards ceremony, the National Director of Science Olympiad Nigeria, Mr Adewumi Odunnaike, described the double victory as the outcome of preparation, persistence and commitment to learning.

"Behind every award is preparation that the audience may never see, a difficult question revisited, an idea tested, a mistake corrected, and the patience to try again," Odunnaike said.

He urged the students to remain curious, approach scientific challenges with honesty and use their knowledge to address societal problems, including unreliable electricity, poor water quality, waste management and the safety of everyday technology.

According to him, the habits developed through scientific learning would serve the students beyond the competition, preparing them to become responsible scientists, engineers, innovators and problem-solvers in the future.

Odunnaike called on professional bodies, engineering practitioners, companies, foundations, alumni and other supporters of education to partner with Science Olympiad Nigeria to expand opportunities for young people to participate in science and technology programmes.

He explained that such partnerships could provide learning materials and equipment, practical workshops, laboratory access, coaching opportunities, support for tournament participation, and mentorship for students.

Science Olympiad Nigeria, organised by Science Spot Services, seeks to promote applicable, home-grown science and technology by encouraging students to investigate problems, develop solutions, and work collaboratively.

Odunnaike encouraged potential partners to support schools and teams through clearly defined programmes that identify beneficiaries, the resources required, and mechanisms for reporting progress and the use of support.

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Restore Geography in secondary school curriculum, don urges govt

By **Sunday Aikulola**

AS part of efforts to encourage national development, a Professor of Geography at the University of Lagos (UNILAG), Mayowa Fasona, has urged the Federal Government to restore Geography as an elective subject for both science and humanities students across the country's secondary schools.

Fasona said the restriction of Geography to science students under the revised Senior Secondary School Curriculum has contributed to declining enrolment in the subject at the Senior School Certificate Examination level, and subsequently affected admission into Geography programmes in Nigerian universities.

He made the call in an article titled 'Bring back Geography for national development,' in which he highlighted the importance of the subject in addressing Nigeria's development challenges.

According to him, the declining number of secondary school students taking Geography poses a serious threat to the discipline's future, as many departments are experiencing a drop in undergraduate enrolment.

He explained that the exclusion of Humanities and Business students from offering Geography has significantly reduced the pool of candidates eligible to study the subject at university, where a credit pass in Geography is traditionally a requirement for admission into B.Sc. Geography programmes.

Fasona also identified the introduction of additional compulsory subjects under the revised curriculum as another factor contributing to the decline, noting that science students now have limited room to choose Geography as an elective.

He argued that the curriculum changes have failed to adequately consider the interdisciplinary nature of Geography, which spans the sciences, social sciences, environmental studies, and economic planning.

He further warned that the declining interest in Geography could have far-reaching consequences for national development, given the subject's contributions to land management, environmental protection, national security, urban planning, transportation, agriculture, public health and disaster management.

The don further identified poor teaching capacity, shortage of qualified teachers and inadequate practical instruction in map reading and other technical aspects of the subject as additional challenges affecting students' interest in Geography.

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GCI Old Boys seek support for teachers, academic standards

From **Rotimi Agboluaje**, Ibadan

GOVERNMENT College Ibadan Old Boys' Association (GCIOBA) has appealed for increased financial support to sustain teachers' welfare and strengthen academic standards at the institution.

The association's President, Dr Bolanle Babalakin (SAN), made the appeal at the 2026 reunion of the old boys, held alongside the commissioning of some infrastructural projects.

Babalakin said the association needed to expand its teachers' support fund to cover at least 70 tutors to meet the college's academic requirements.

He said the association had pursued a comprehensive programme of academic and infrastructural improvements since taking responsibility for the school's development, management and operation under a concession granted by the Oyo State government.

According to him, the association initially underwent a two-year assessment period to demonstrate its capacity before securing the full concession to manage the school.

Babalakin recalled that the school faced inadequate infrastructure and low morale among teachers and students when the association began its intervention.

He said students' enrolment had increased from about 600 to 700 before the introduction of free education in 1979 to more than 3,000, putting additional pressure on existing facilities.

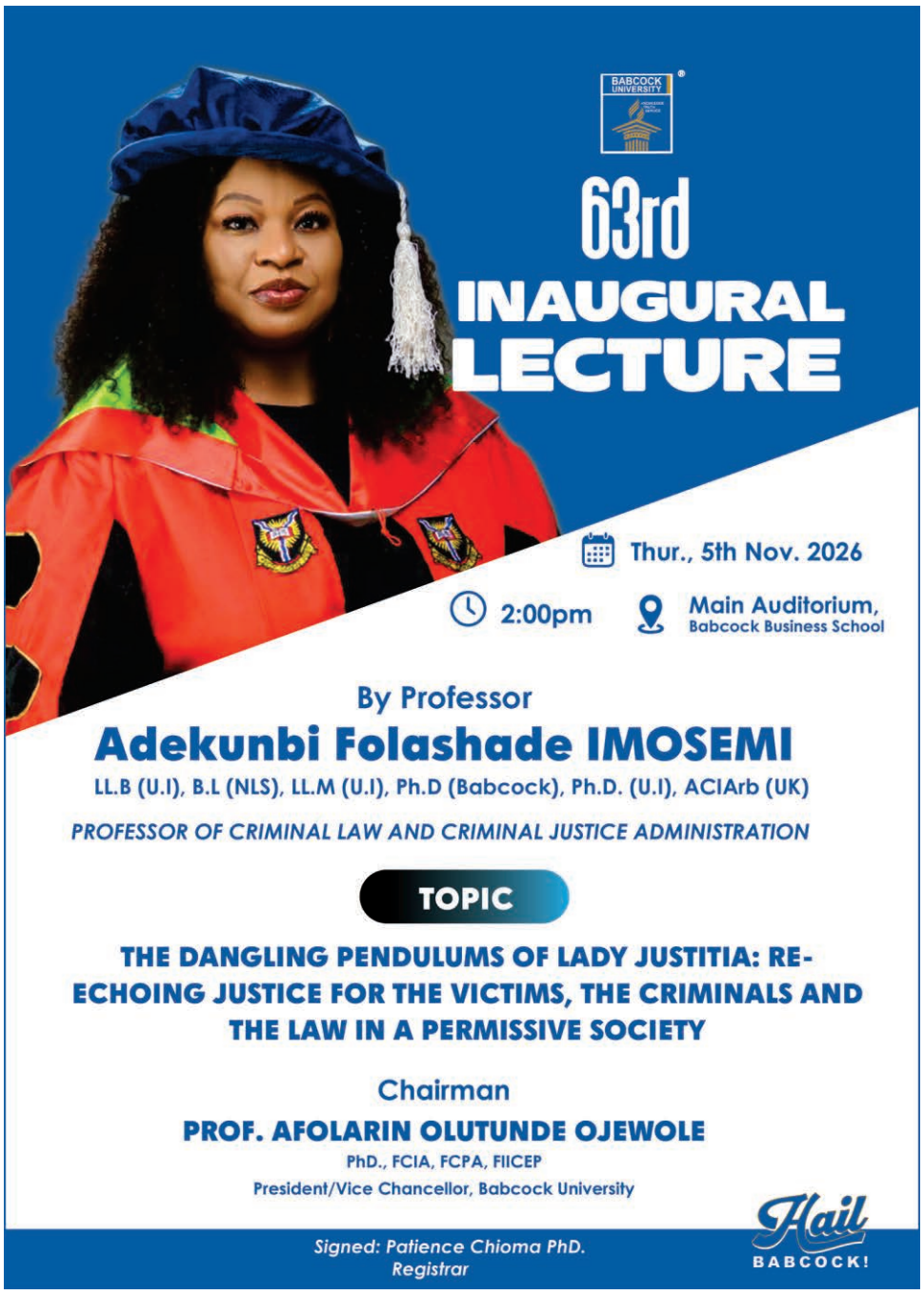
To improve academic standards, the association engaged PricewaterhouseCoopers to assess the school and develop a master plan, while scholars from the University of Ibadan (UI) were brought in to evaluate teachers' capacity.

It also engaged renowned educationist Prof. Peter Okebukola to support teachers' professional development and partnered with Loyola Jesuit College, Abuja, to benchmark academic and administrative practices.

Babalakin said alumni had also invested in road rehabilitation, boarding houses, laboratories, a medical centre and ambulance, security systems, sporting facilities and digital infrastructure.

He expressed appreciation to the state government for giving the association the opportunity to develop, manage and operate the school.

Read the remaining story on www.guardian.ng



Committee to question commission over logistics, security, technology

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

INEC maintained that the preliminary register was not the final certified version, stressing that the display exercise was designed to allow citizens to scrutinise voter records, identify inaccuracies and irregularities, and seek corrections before certification.

"The Commission is also examining the circumstances surrounding the suspicious photographs, including possible technical or procedural lapses, and will take appropriate action based on verified findings," Haruna said.

The Commission thanked citizens and stakeholders who raised concerns, describing public scrutiny as an important part of efforts to improve the accuracy and integrity of the register.

It assured Nigerians that verification, adjudication, and data-cleanup processes would be completed before the final Register of Voters is certified on December 15, 2026.

The controversy gained traction after screenshots circulated on social media purportedly showing questionable photographs attached to voter records in Ward 11, Etsako West Local Government Area, and Udomi in Esan Central Local Government Area of Edo State.

CSOs demand proof of preparedness, cite 2023 failures

AS The voters' register controversy fuels wider concerns about electoral credibility, CSOs have called on INEC to demonstrate its readiness through transparent, verifiable evidence rather than assurances alone.

ActionAid Nigeria, Centre LSD, Abuja School of Social and Political Thoughts, MOTION and partner organisations made the demand during a press briefing yesterday in Abuja.

The organisations said the shortcomings recorded during the 2023 general elections, including late arrival of materials, Bimodal Voter Accreditation System (BVAS) malfunctions and controversy over results transmission, remained fresh in the public's memory.

The Country Director of ActionAid Nigeria, Andrew Mamedu, who read the joint statement, said credible elections were built long before election day through timely distribution of materials, impartial recruitment and practical training of personnel, reliable technology, clear results-management procedures and effective security arrangements.

He said weaknesses in any of these areas could disrupt voting, undermine public confidence and create opportunities for manipulation.

Mamedu acknowledged that INEC had announced measures to improve logistics, procure additional BVAS devices, secure election materials and recruit personnel, but stressed that such announcements did not establish operational readiness.

"The question is whether these plans will translate into timely, transparent, inclusive and credible elections in every part of Nigeria, from riverine communities of the Niger Delta to banditry-affected areas of the North West and difficult terrains of the North East," he said.

The organisations expressed concern about the delivery of ballot papers, result sheets, BVAS devices and voters' registers to the correct polling units in sufficient quantities and on time, given poor roads, insecurity, flooding and difficult terrain.

They said the critical question was whether materials would reach their designated polling units before 7:00 a.m. on election day, rather than whether they had been procured and stored in Abuja.

They identified the risks of late delivery of sensitive materials, inadequate vehicles, poor coordination among state, local government and ward centres, incomplete inventories and insufficient contingency arrangements for breakdowns.

The groups therefore urged INEC to publish a comprehensive logistics plan detailing distribution timeline, deadlines for each stage, arrangements for difficult areas and mechanisms for correcting shortages before voting begins.

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

DPO pay by network
RC:1422696

THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF NIGERIA
COMPANIES AND ALLIED MATTERS ACT, 2020

COMPANY LIMITED BY SHARES

SPECIAL RESOLUTION OF THE MEMBERS OF ONE PAYMENT LIMITED (RC 1422696) (IN LIQUIDATION)PURSUANT TO SECTION 620 OF THE COMPANIES AND ALLIED MATTERS ACT 2020

At the extraordinary general meeting of One Payment Limited ("the Company") held on 21 of October 2026 on the 9th Floor, St. Nicholas House, Catholic Mission Street, Lagos Island, Lagos State/Microsoft Teams, the following resolutions were proposed and duly passed:

1. *"That the Company be wound up voluntarily in accordance with the Companies and Allied Matters Act, 2020."*

2. *"That Olanipekun Orewale FBR, FICA, of Ground Floor, Marble House, 1, Kingsway Road, Falomo Ikoyi, Lagos State, be and is hereby appointed as liquidator for the purpose of the winding up."*

3. *"That the directors be and are hereby authorised to sign the extract of the meeting on behalf of the shareholders of the Company."*

4. *"That the notice of the resolutions made herein be filed at the Corporate Affairs Commission, in accordance with Section 621 of the Companies and Allied Matters Act 2020."*

Dated this 21 day of October 2026

WARUIRU JUDY WANJIRU
DIRECTOR

SAMEER JONEJA
DIRECTOR

One Payment Limited trading as "DPO Pay"
Block 2, Plot C1C, 5th Avenue, Banana Island, Ikoyi, Lagos, NigeriaT +234 1 460 52712E
info@network.global; www.network.global
Classification - Public

DIRECTORS: WARUIRU JUDY (KENYAN) SAMEER JONEJA (INDIAN)

THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF NIGERIA
COMPANIES AND ALLIED MATTERS ACT 2020
PRIVATE COMPANY LIMITED BY SHARES

MEMBERS' VOLUNTARY WINDING UP
NOTICE OF APPOINTMENT OF LIQUIDATOR OF
ONE PAYMENT LIMITED (IN LIQUIDATION)

PURSUANT TO SECTION 654 OF THE COMPANIES AND ALLIED MATTERS ACT, 2020

I, Olanipekun Orewale FBR, FICA of ÆLEX Legal Practitioners and Arbitrators, a law firm having its office at Ground Floor, Marble House, 1 Kingsway Road, Falomo, Ikoyi Lagos hereby give notice that by (i) a special resolution of One Payment Limited (In Liquidation) (the "Company") dated 21st October 2026 and (ii) the approval of the members of the Company given at the members' general meeting held on 21st October 2026, I have been appointed as the liquidator to conduct the members' voluntary winding-up of the Company.

Dated 21st day of October 2026

OLANIPEKUN OREWALE, FBR, FICA

World Report

About 64 people killed as trains collide in Spain

NOT less than 64 people have been killed, officials have said, after a Spanish high-speed train collided with another train south of the country's Capital, Madrid.

The accident has been described as the worst since 2013, when 80 people died after a train derailed in north-western Spain.

More than 500 passengers were travelling yesterday in a Renfe train and another of the Iryo company, which covers the Madrid to Seville route, said the spokesperson for the regional government said.

Spain's Prime Minister, Pedro Sánchez, said he was shocked by the serious train accident and is in constant contact with the transport minister.

Transport Minister, Oscar Puente, said the accident was truly unbelievable.According to him, computer failure led to the initial halt of six moving trains, including the two trains that subsequently collided.

"In the event of a system failure, the control centre takes over. It was the control centre which decided to allow the trains to move again without any speed restrictions", Puente said.

Puente said the decision was made "under inexplicable circumstances", resulting in the Renfe train crashing into the Iryo train, which was stationary on the tracks further ahead.

Iryo train was said to be carrying 147 passengers, three crew members, one barista and one driver.

Meanwhile, the two rail operators are working towards clarifying the causes of the crash.

For most Spanish political leaders, the devastating scenes emerging on the high-speed rail line south of Toledo mean that the campaign ahead of the November 29 general election is for the moment on hold.

The conservative People's Party leader, Alberto Núñez Feijóo, who is seen as the front-runner in the election race said the priority is to attend to the victims, stressing thatthe party has suspended all its campaign activity.

Prime MinisterSánchez's Socialist PSOE also cancelled its events for yesterday, and has given all his affection, solidarity and support to anyone caught up in the tragedy.

However, there is no such suspension of political activities for Spain's far-right Vox party, which is seen as a possible coalition partner for Feijóo's conservatives after next month's vote.

Spanish politician and President of far-right Vox party, Santiago Abascal, has gone on TV to condemn the deterioration of infrastructure and institutions in Spain, which he said is totally unbearable and has blamed it on the current government, complaining of the neglect, ruin and betrayal suffered by the Spanish people.

There has been no confirmation, yet of what led to the accident, but Abascal also refused to halt campaigning ahead of a regional vote in January in the aftermath of the Adamuz rail disaster, which claimed 46 lives on the same high-speed line.

Sánchez is travelling to Urda, the area of the train crash.

Cruise ship residents left stranded in Cambodia after fuel prices soar

HUNDREDS of people permanently living aboard a touring cruise ship were forced to disembark in Cambodia this week after the vessel's operator said fuel price increase from the Iran war had made operations prohibitively expensive.

The Villa Vie Odyssey had been cruising the world for at least, 755 days as one of a handful of ships that offered passengers the opportunity to rent or buy long-term or even permanent residences on board.

The ship's owner, Villa Vie Residences, had announced on Tuesday that it was suspending operations and disembarking those passengers in Cambodia while working to find them temporary accommodation.

Monthly fuel expenses that historically averaged approximately $1,800 per cabin have recently reached an estimated $6,000 to $8,000 in parts of Asia, Villa Vie Residences said in a statement.

"The company cannot simply pass increases of that scale on to residents, and the resulting shortfall has placed its current operating model under unsustainable financial pressure."

Villa Vie Residences did not immediately respond to questions. The Odyssey can house 650 people but its rooms, including villa suites that cost $440,000, were still being filled.

Tanzania celebrates a decade of first natural gas discovery

TANZANIA has announced a significant discovery of natural gas in the Mnazi Bay area in the south of the country, the first of such findings in a decade.

Energy Minister, Juma Homera, attended a ceremony at the Kasa-1X ST2 well, which is jointly owned by state-owned Tanzania Petroleum Development Corporation (TPDC) and French oil firm, Maurel & Prom, to mark the occasion.

He said the estimated 223 billion cubic feet (6.3 billion cubic metres) discovery was a major milestone in the development of the small oil and gas sector in the East African nation.

The new well is expected to begin production early next month and is intended to boost domestic supplies.

Netanyahu survives another day with unexpected backing of Israeli Jews

ISRAEL Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, won the support of an unexpectedly clear majority of Israeli Jews in an election billed as a major turning point in his nation's history, indicating that he will survive as Prime Minister at least, in a caretaker role.

With nearly 86 per cent of votes tallied yesterday morning, Israel's three main broadcasters reported Netanyahu's bloc of right-wing, far right and ultra-Orthodox parties on course to win 53 seats in parliament, well ahead of the 48 for the opposition bloc of rival Gadi Eisenkot.

Parties representing Israelis of Arab descent would win an unprecedented 19 seats, following high turnout from passionately motivated voters.

The results could still change as counting continued, but a victory for Eisenkot appeared increasingly out of reach, as his bloc of anti-Netanyahu parties from centre-left to hard-right underperformed pre-election polls that forecast a tight race.

While Netanyahu lost his bloc's narrow majority in the 120-seat Knesset, his opponents were left with scant hope of unseating him without an unlikely deal to accept broad backing from Arab parties, which many Jewish leaders reject.

Even then, he would remain as caretaker during any coalition negotiations, or until a new election next year.

Netanyahu, addressing his Likud party's faithful after 3 a.m. (0100 GMT) at the party's election headquarters in Jerusalem, called for the formation of "a strong, right-wing national government."

He also highlighted Israel's military successes and raised the prospect of renewed joint military action against Iran alongside his ally, United States President, Donald Trump.

He said: "Israel faces a singular historical opportunity together with our partner, President Trump, to remove the existential threat of Iran once and for all. But ulterior motives must not divert us from this sacred mission."

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Women, youth critical to Nigeria's $1tr economy, says Shettima

By **Bertram Nwannekanma**

Marwa warns aspiring exporters against illicit drug shipments

VICE President Kashim Shettima has stressed the need for women and young people to play a central role in Nigeria's quest to achieve its $1 trillion economy ambition.

Speaking at the Aspire Women Forum Masterclass at the Presidential Villa in Abuja yesterday, he insisted that sustainable national prosperity depends on productive enterprise, investment, innovation, and Nigerians' capacity to create value.

Shettima, represented by the Special Assistant to the President on Humanitarian Affairs and Development Partners, Inna Binta Audu, emphasised that Nigeria needs an enabling environment where businesses could emerge, grow, compete and contribute to national development.

The event, themed "From Survival to Thriving: Empowering Women and Youth for Export Readiness, Global Market Access and Prosperity under the Renewed Hope Agenda," focused on equipping women and young people with the necessary skills and knowledge to grow their businesses and access international markets.

Shettima described the transition from survival to thriving as not merely a personal aspiration but an economic imperative and a national development priority, stating that President Bola Tinubu's Renewed Hope Agenda was anchored on the conviction that sustainable prosperity must be driven by productive enterprise, investment, innovation and value creation.

Therefore, "women and young people must occupy a central place in that ecosystem. Their economic participation expands our productive capacity, strengthens household incomes, creates employment and widens the opportunities available to future generations," he said.

The vice president stressed that economic inclusion must go beyond training programmes and empowerment announcements to provide entrepreneurs with the tools, institutions and market access needed to turn their skills into sustainable income.

According to Shettima, the success of the masterclass should be measured not by the number of participants but by the businesses strengthened, new markets accessed and livelihoods improved through the knowledge acquired.

Meanwhile, the Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA), Brig.-Gen. Mohammed Marwa (rtd), has urged aspiring exporters to protect the integrity of their businesses against drug trafficking.

Warning that a shipment contaminated with illicit drugs could cost them their freedom and damage Nigeria's international reputation, Marwa cautioned participants against allowing traffickers to exploit their businesses for criminal activities but to verify their business partners, transactions and consignments before shipping goods across borders.



Special Assistant to the President on Humanitarian Affairs and Development Partners, Inna Binta-Audu, representing the Vice President (left); Chairman/Chief Executive Officer of the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA), Brig.-Gen. Mohamed Marwa (rtd), and Founder/President of Aspire Women Forum (AWF), Dr Zainab Marwa, during the AWF master class for women and youths in Abuja yesterday.

Olaopa lists next level of Civil Service reforms

THE next level in civil service reform is to transform the institution from a reactive bureaucracy into a high-performing execution engine with redoubled capacity to do things and drive a new national productivity paradigm in the economy.

Chatting this path yesterday in Abuja was the Chairman of the Federal Civil Service Commission (FCSC), Prof. Tunji Olaopa, who spoke during a colloquium organised by the Council of Retired Federal Permanent Secretaries (CORFEPS) and the unveiling of its journal.

He explained that this would require beefing up the institutional IQ and policy intelligence with reinforced data-driven infrastructure to ensure that policy decisions were backed by real-time analytics rather than intuition and commonsense permutations.

According to him, "a policy is only as effective as the workforce tasked with its implementation.

Professionalising the civil service is, therefore, not rhetoric; it involves deep talent management reforms and investment in capacity development, training and retraining."

NNPCL to commence oil exploration in Borno

• Zulum hails solar plant project

From **Njadvara Musa**, Maiduguri

THE Nigerian National Petroleum Company Limited (NNPCL) has reaffirmed its commitment to commence oil exploration in Borno State's Lake Chad Basin, pledging to work with the state government and the communities in the oil exploration activities in the basin, which comprises seven local councils.

NNPCL Group Chief Executive Officer, Bashir Ojulari, gave the assurance when the board of directors, led by Non-Executive Chairman, Ahmadu Kida, paid a courtesy visit to Borno State Governor, Babagana Zulum, at the Government House in Maiduguri yesterday.

The meeting discussed the company's proposed oil exploration projects in the state and a solar power initiative in the basin.

NELFUND unveils digital wallets, plans portal to check fees diversion

From **Owede Agbajileke**, Abuja

Releases N218m for 3,575 students in Zaria, Ibadan

THE Nigerian Education Loan Fund (NELFUND) said a verification portal designed to prevent students from collecting school fees from their families after benefiting from the loan scheme is underway.

Disclosing this to newsmen yesterday in Abuja, the fund's Managing Director and Chief Executive, Akintunde Sawyerr, explained that parents would be able to verify their children's payment status by simply entering their matriculation numbers in the portal.

The platform would then display whether the fees have been paid or are outstanding, Sawyerr said, adding that the initiative was part of efforts to strengthen transparency and prevent students from receiving financial support from both the fund and their parents for the same tuition fees.

In the meantime, NELFUND has disbursed N218.2 million to 3,575 students of the Federal College of Agriculture, Moor Plantation, Ibadan, Oyo State, and the Federal University of Education, Zaria, Kaduna State, to cover institutional fees for various academic sessions.

According to Sawyerr, the parents' portal was in response to concerns that some students whose tuition had been covered by NELFUND continued to collect money from their parents without disclosing their funding status.

The development comes as the fund introduces a digital wallet system that will enable beneficiaries to authorise the payment of approved tuition fees directly to their institutions, in a move to end duplicate payments and the difficulties associated with obtaining refunds from schools.

Under the arrangement, approved fees would be credited to a digital wallet linked to the beneficiary's institution. Students can then authorise payment directly to their schools without receiving the money in cash or having it transferred into their personal bank accounts.

Sawyerr said the system would prevent the diversion of tuition funds, as each digital token would be tied to a specific institution and can only be used for the designated school.

Yilwatda, Mutfwang, Tompolo rally for Tinubu's re-election

By **Seye Olumide**

THE All Progressives Congress (APC) campaign train yesterday rallied the support of Plateau people for President Bola Tinubu's re-election, urging residents to back his administration in 2027 for his response to insecurity in the state.

APC National Chairman, Prof. Nentawe Yilwatda, Plateau State Governor, Caleb Mutfwang, and oil pipeline security contractor, Government Ekpemupolo, popularly known as Tompolo, spoke in Jos during the inauguration of the state and local council structures of the PBAT Door-to-Door Movement.

They also unveiled 25 campaign vehicles and other mobilisation materials. Yilwatda, who described Tinubu as a friend of Plateau State, cited the federal government's security interventions and ongoing road projects as evidence of its commitment to the state, and for which the residents should support the APC candidates in the 2027 elections.

Civil society seeks dismissal, prosecution of NSCDC officers

From **Owede Agbajileke**, Abuja

Agency's official arrested over live bullets in Abuja market

FOLLOWING the release of the investigation report, the National Civil Society Council of Nigeria (NCSCN) has called for the dismissal and prosecution of culpable officers of the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC) over the deaths of 37 suspected illegal miners in a detention facility in Minna, Niger State.

It also urged the federal government to declare a national emergency on detention facilities and correctional centres, citing deplorable conditions, overcrowding and inadequate ventilation in custodial facilities across the country.

Meanwhile, the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) Police Command has arrested an NSCDC official, Onoja Samuel, for allegedly possessing a pistol and 17 live bullets at Kubwa Market in Bwari Area Council, Abuja.

The FCT Commissioner of Police, Ahmed Sanusi, disclosed this to journalists yesterday, saying that the Kubwa Police Division received a distress call about a man armed with a pistol and firing sporadically into the air at a market in Kubwa.

Citing the panel's report on the facility where the miners died as unhealthy, inhumane, severely overcrowded and unfit for human habitation, the NCSCN Executive Director, Amb. Blessing Akinlosotu, told newsmen in Abuja yesterday that the suspension of 21 personnel connected with the incident was welcome.

However, he attributed the tragedy not only to alleged recklessness and negligence but also to the systemic underfunding of security agencies that were expected to perform extensive duties without adequate infrastructure and resources.

The council argued that the NSCDC and other security agencies have responsibilities ranging from protecting lives and property, safeguarding solid minerals and preventing illegal mining, to securing critical national assets, supporting the Safe School Initiative and managing disasters.

Consequently, the government cannot expect modern security operations from agencies operating inadequate detention facilities, Akinlosotu said.

He further urged the federal government to increase budgetary allocations for security agencies and provide a special intervention fund to construct standard, humane and well-ventilated detention facilities across the 36 states and the Federal Capital Territory.

ADC-PCC accuses APC, Sokoto govt of attacking members, blocking campaign flag-off

From **Andrew Oota** (Abuja) and **Tunde Omolehin** (Sokoto)

THE African Democratic Congress Presidential Campaign Council (ADC-PCC) has accused the All Progressives Congress (APC) and the Sokoto State Government of complicity in an attack on its female members in the metropolis, during which its branded campaign truck was seized.

In a statement yesterday, the ADC-PCC Director of Media and Publicity, Kola Ologbondiyan, said thugs allegedly armed with dangerous weapons ambushed and harassed the women during a peaceful campaign activity, and seized their campaign vehicle.

Similarly, the ADC accused the Sokoto State Government of directing hotels in the state capital to deny accommodation to its delegates expected to attend the party's presidential campaign flag-off on Saturday.

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Morocco 2026 FIFA U-17 Women's World Cup

Nigeria battles Mexico for quarterfinal ticket

By **Christian Okpara**

THE battle for the quarterfinal tickets at the ongoing FIFA U-17 Women's World Cup is raging, with Nigeria entering the fray against Mexico today.

The game is one of the star matches of the day as both sides have proved that they can rise to the occasion when the situation demands extraordinary prowess.

This pair rallied during the opening round by recovering from opening-day defeats to advance. Nigeria fell to Poland, but defeated Puerto Rico before pulling off a seismic upset by sinking DPR Korea 3-1 to take second spot in Group B.

Mexico, meanwhile, fell to Spain and were a goal down to Chile in their second match, but dug deep to win that tussle 3-1 before edging Australia thanks to a goal from inspirational captain Citlalli Reyes.

Today's game at the Mohammed VI Football Complex - Pitch 2, Rabat, against the 2025 bronze medallists has been described as a game of two elastic sides capable of beating any side at this championship.

But the Flamingos will approach the contest with renewed confidence after producing one of their most impressive performances of the tournament against North Korea, who arrived in Morocco as two-time defending champions.

With a quarter-final place at stake, the Hakeem Busari-led technical crew will be expected to assess Mexico's strengths and weaknesses while preparing the players for the tactical and physical demands of the knockout encounter.

Unlike the group stage, the Round of 16 offers little room for mistakes, as defeat would bring Nigeria's World Cup campaign to an end.

Ahead of the meeting for a quarterfinal spot, those in the Mexico camp recognise that there is likely to be little to choose between the teams: "We play with real intensity, but so do they. We're hoping our technical ability will give us the edge," explained Coach Miguel Gamero.

As for record-breaking Reyes, she believes that the sky is the limit for the North Americans and highlighted the team's togetherness as being key to their chances: "I don't know how far we're capable of going, but the one thing I will say is that if we keep doing the right things as a group, we've got what it takes to do something really special."

Mexico's record in recent FIFA U-17 Women's World Cup championships is impressive, but Nigeria's Head Coach, Hakeem Busari, said pedigree would be of no consequence today.

He assured Nigerians that his technical crew had developed a strategy to give the Flamingos the best possible chance of progressing.



Flamingos

NSC backs Legends Football Game

By **Gowon Akpodonor**

THE National Sports Commission (NSC) has endorsed the forthcoming Legends Football Game, a historic exhibition match that will bring together some of Nigeria's finest football icons and celebrated African football greats in Lagos.

Scheduled for November 8, 2026, at the Onikan Stadium, the match will feature 15 Super Eagles legends from Nigeria's celebrated 1994 and 1996 squads against 13 African football legends in a contest designed to celebrate the enduring legacy of the continent's football heroes.

Director General of the NSC, Bukola Olopade, described the initiative as a laudable effort to honour the players whose achievements brought immense pride to Nigeria and helped shape the country's football history.

Olopade said the Commission was pleased to support an event that recognises the contributions of the legends while providing an opportunity for a new generation of football fans to appreciate the players who laid the foundation for Nigeria's success on the international stage.

"We cannot celebrate our football legends enough. The global recognition and positive image they brought to our country through their achievements cannot be quantified. They inspired generations of young Nigerians and continue to serve as role models for aspiring footballers."

Team Nigeria's 19 athletes depart for Dakar 2026 Youth Olympics

NSC urges stars to be worthy ambassadors

By **Gowon Akpodonor**

NIGERIA will be represented by 19 athletes, made up of 12 boys and seven girls, at the fourth Summer Youth Olympic Games, which will begin on October 31 in Dakar, Senegal. It is the first time an Olympic sporting event will be hosted on African soil.

Team Nigeria, which is expected to depart Abuja today, will compete across six sports: athletics, boxing, road cycling, swimming, table tennis and beach volleyball.

The Dakar 2026 Youth Olympics will run until November 13, and is expected to draw a large crowd of over 2,700 athletes from various countries across the globe.

Nigerian athletes and their officials had their last preparatory outing in Abuja yesterday, a day after the National Sports Commission (NSC) officially handed the team over to the Nigeria Olympic Committee (NOC).

The Games will take place across three host zones, Dakar, Diamniadio and Saly in Senegal.

African youth champion Kuti targets Dakar 2026 glory

NIGERIA'S 2026 Africa Youth Cup champion, Matthew Kuti, has set his sights on making an impact at the Youth Olympic Games in Dakar, Senegal, as he prepares to compete against the world's best young table tennis players at the historic event.

Kuti will be one of 32 male players contesting the table tennis event at Dakar 2026, which will mark the first time the Youth Olympic Games are held on African soil.

The young Nigerian is brimming with confidence ahead of the Games and believes he can challenge for top honours despite the quality of opposition expected from around the globe.

"My target is to go there and take a gold medal for Nigeria," Kuti said. "There is mixed doubles in Dakar and singles. I want to win the two."

While acknowledging the strength of the field, the African youth champion remains determined to give his best in pursuit of his ambitious goal.



Kuti

Arsenal youth team beat EFL side 25 places above Fleetwood

ARSENAL'S Under-21s showed the first-team how to see off EFL opposition on the same night as their Carabao Cup exit, reports *talksport.com*.

The Gunners were dumped out on penalties in the fourth round on Tuesday as they lost to League Two outfit Fleetwood Town.

Mikel Arteta's side were beaten 5-3 on spot-kicks following a 1-1 draw at Highbury Stadium, with Max Dowman sent off late on.

However, his fellow Arsenal youngsters enjoyed a more positive outcome against a side ranked 25 places above Fleetwood in the EFL pyramid.

The Dons are currently 17th in League One, whilst Fleetwood sit 18th in the League Two table.

Malignaggi: 'Fury can hurt Joshua badly'



Fury

TYSON Fury has been backed to take advantage of Anthony Joshua's weakening punch resistance and stop his rival, reports *mirror.co.uk*.

Fury and Joshua will clash in Cardiff on December 11 as they look to settle their decade-long rivalry. The British heavyweights will also fight for the right to be a three-time world champion after the WBA decided to put their 'Super' title on the line.

Joshua and Fury warmed up for their clash with respective victories over Kristian Prenga and Mariusz Wach in July. And while Fury eased to a stoppage victory, Joshua was twice floored by the unknown Prenga before roaring back to stop the Albanian. And former world champion Paulie Malignaggi believes Joshua will be in trouble if his punch resistance is exposed against Fury.

"AJ's punch resistance is concerning. He seems to be getting hurt by guys he shouldn't be getting hurt by now," he told *Parimatch*. "Fury isn't the biggest puncher, but he punches hard enough. He's a heavyweight, and AJ's chin was already a question mark before. It would be a concern for anybody on AJ's side. I think Fury will land. He's the quicker, more fluid guy."



Joshua

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Thursday, October 29, 2026



Morocco 2026 FIFA U-17 Women's World Cup

Nigeria battles Mexico for quarterfinals ticket

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Slim hopes for int'l games as national stadiums rot away

On paper, Nigeria has two of the best national stadiums in Africa – the National Stadium, Lagos, and the Moshood Abiola National Stadium, Abuja. ***GOWON AKPODONOR*** *and* ***ERNEST NZOR*** *report that despite acclaimed interventions, both monuments are sorry sights and a national embarrassment.*



Some of the buses under repairs at the National Stadium, Lagos.

MUSIBAU is one of the most popular mechanics in Lagos' Surulere area. The former bus driver is known for his expertise in repairing minibuses, commonly called *danfo*. His popularity stems from his knowledge of his job, as well as the air of security his mechanic workshop gives his customers. But there is a problem with the location.

Musibau's workshop is under one of the staircases at the National Stadium, which is supposed to be home to sportsmen and women.

For over a decade, the National Stadium, popularly known as the Sports City and once the pride of the nation, has been left to rot by successive governments.

Built in 1972 ahead of the 1973 All Africa Games, the edifice has been turned into a home for all sorts of trades. It is also a large car park, where civil servants and traders working on the Island park their cars before boarding BRT buses to the Island.

People prefer to pay N1000 to park their vehicles inside the stadium because they feel the facility provides cheap security for their cars.

Apart from the Indoor Sports Hall, which still hosts basketball games, the knock-up hall, which hosts table tennis events, and the tennis courts, the stadium is now primarily used by keep-fit groups, churches that organise crusades in some of the facilities, and various artisans.

The Indoor Sports Hall of the National Stadium was recently renovated by the Lagos State government ahead of the now postponed First National Intermediate Games.

In the early days of the Muhammadu Buhari-led administration's second tenure, then Sports Minister, Sunday Dare, attempted to revive the stadium with the support of popular businessman, Sir Kessington Adebutu.

The project, under the adopt-a-facility programme, which invited wealthy Nigerians to help fix some of the sports facilities across the country, could not revive the stadium even after gulping over $1 million.

It succeeded in fixing the playing pitch of the main bowl, while the stands, which lost their seats over 20 years ago, and the dressing rooms were untouched. He promised that the stadium would be reopened for sports activities in August 2021. But that did not happen.

Dare later claimed that it would take over N20 billion to bring the facility back to life, given the enormous amount of work required.

Dare's successor under the Bola Tinubu administration, John Owan Enoh, upon assuming office in 2023, promised to revitalise the facility, even if it meant bringing down the structure to build a new one. But after that promise, he did not set foot at the stadium until he was removed after the Paris 2024 Olympic Games.

Like his predecessors, the current chairman of the National Sports Commission (NSC), Shehu Dikko, upon assuming office in October 2024, promised to do everything within his power to revive all existing structures, including the National Stadium, Lagos, once seen as Africa's best sporting facility.

But the former Nigeria Football Federation (NFF) vice president has not set foot on the facility since he told the world that President Tinubu had given him enough funds to rebuild the stadium and build more stadiums across the country.

A visit to the stadium last week showed how far the facility has been left to rot, with some of the structures distorted by "illegal" occupants, who have carved out some portions for their needs.

The roof of the VIP stand has been completely blown off, while the playing pitch repaired by the Dare administration has returned to square one.

All the plastic seats inside the National Stadium are weathered due to years of abandonment and neglect, just as all the scoreboards around the main bowl have since been brought down after one of them was blown off by heavy rainfall during the Sunday Dare's tenure.

Some of the parts of the facilities that the Dare leadership pulled down to pave the way for the stadium's renovation are still littering the stadium.

If the Lagos National Stadium has been left to rot because it is too far from the seat of power, the MKO Abiola National Stadium in Abuja, the country's political headquarters, is not faring any better.

It has become home to all manner of people, with Package B, made up mainly of indoor halls and the cricket oval, as the only functional parts of the stadium.

Keep-fit enthusiasts, gamblers of all sorts, and car owners who see the facility as the ideal place to park their cars have taken over the facility. The MKO Abiola Stadium has become a haven for miscreants, so the Nigerian Police recently closed it to safeguard the lives of genuine users.

In late 2025, the Federal Government introduced access charges at the Moshood Abiola National Stadium, officials said, as a practical response to years of underfunding and deteriorating infrastructure.

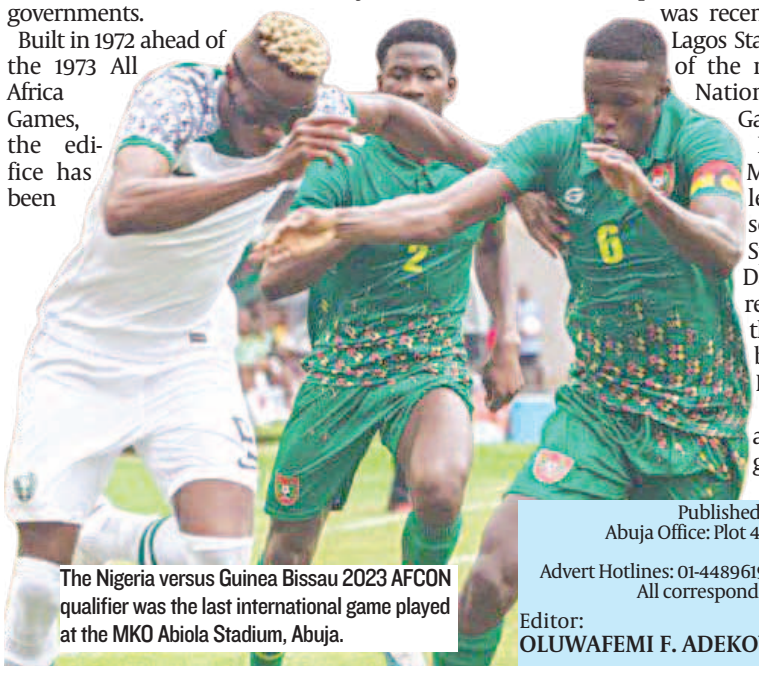
The tolls, ranging from N300 to N1,000 depending on vehicle category, were intended to regulate access, improve security and generate internally generated revenue (IGR) for the maintenance of the sprawling sports complex.

But over a year after the policy was introduced, the conversation has evolved into something much bigger than the cost of entering the facility.

For many Abuja residents, the National Stadium is no longer a venue for football matches and athletics competitions. It is now one of the few public spaces in the Federal Capital Territory where people from different social and economic backgrounds exercise, socialise, network, train and earn a living.

Every morning and evening, the stadium comes alive with joggers, cyclists, amateur footballers, martial arts clubs, aerobics groups, churches, fitness circles, coaches and youth academies. For thousands of residents, it has long functioned as an urban commons, a safe environment where fitness, recreation and community life intersect.

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



The Nigeria versus Guinea Bissau 2023 AFCON qualifier was the last international game played at the MKO Abiola Stadium, Abuja.

"Keep-fit enthusiasts, gamblers of all sorts, and car owners who see the facility as the ideal place to park their cars have taken over the facility. The MKO Abiola Stadium has become a haven for miscreants, so the Nigerian Police recently closed it to safeguard the lives of genuine users."

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