The Guardian

Conscience, Nurtured by Truth

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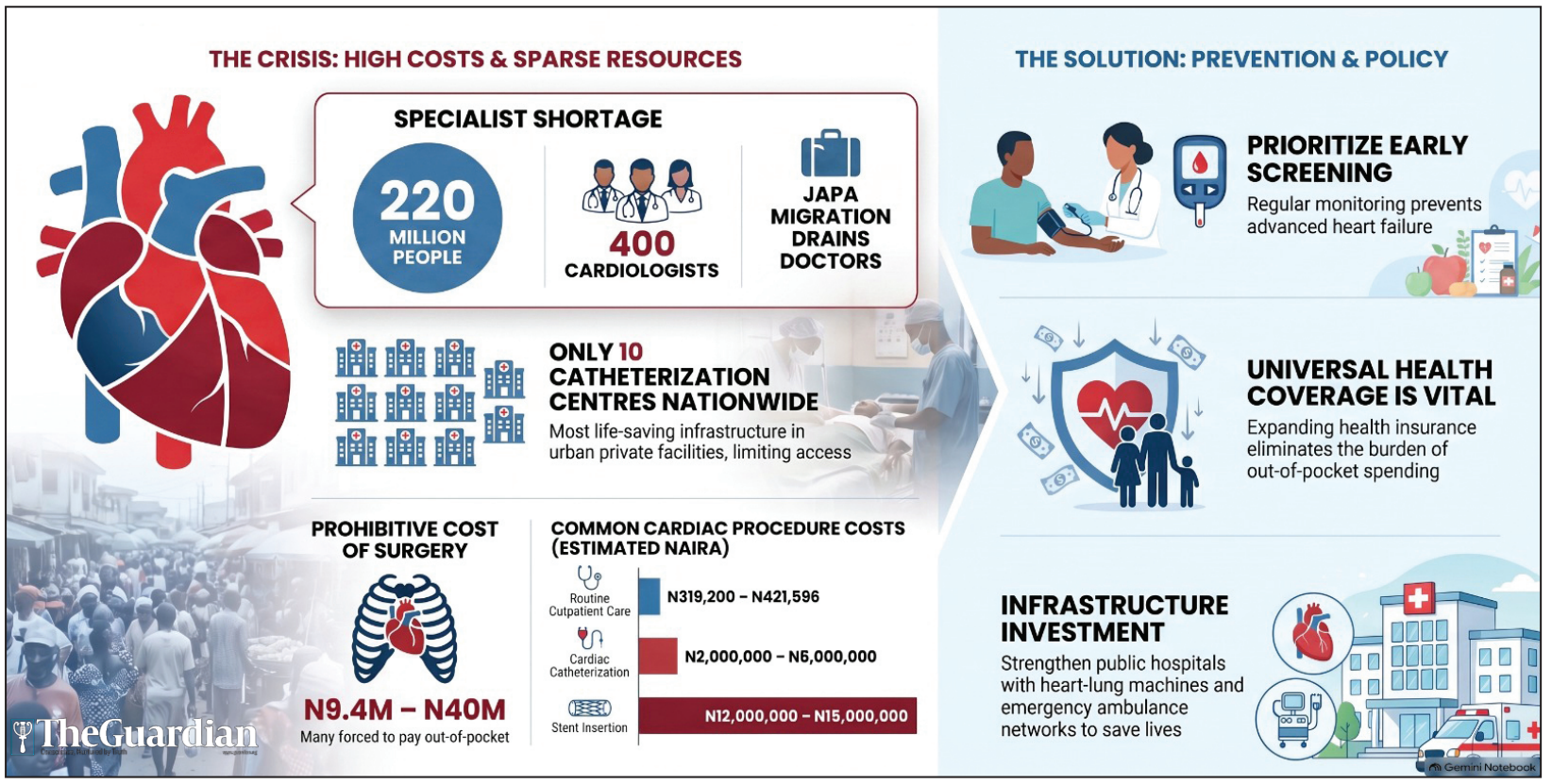
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World Heart Day:

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High cost, specialist shortage, weak infrastructure worsen cardiac care



NASS to translate laws into indigenous languages

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Refiners demand end to fuel imports, seek guaranteed crude supply

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Tinubu's absence: Atiku promises 'present' presidency as AAC heads to court

NEWS PAGE 6



70% of Nigeria's film revenue lost to piracy, says AGF

BUSINESS PAGE 15



Nigeria's budget too meagre for real development, says Bagudu

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Chairman, FirstHoldco Plc, Mr Femi Otedola, CON, with President Bola Ahmed Tinubu, GCFR, in Paris during a working visit by Mr Otedola to the President, yesterday.

Panorama

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SPOTLIGHT

Investor confidence rises as Dangote Refinery targets $36b revenue in 2026

INVESTOR confidence in the Dangote Petroleum Refinery IPO continues to strengthen following projections that Dangote Group is on course to generate approximately $36 billion in revenue in 2026, driven by robust performance across its diversified industrial businesses and ambitious expansion plans across Africa.

The positive market sentiment has been fueled by disclosures from Dangote Group's Chief Strategy Officer, Aliyu Suleiman, who revealed that the Group generated approximately $17 billion in revenue during the first half of 2026 and is on track to achieve a record $36 billion in revenue by year-end, representing a 100 percent increase over the $18 billion recorded in 2025. The outlook has attracted strong interest from investors who see the Dangote Petroleum Refinery as a unique opportunity to participate in one of Africa's most transformative industrial enterprises.

Speaking after subscribing to the refinery's IPO, a Lagos-based institutional investor, Mr Tunde Adebayo, described the investment as a long-term wealth creation opportunity. "The projected growth trajectory of the Dangote Group and the refinery's strategic position in the global energy market gave us strong confidence to invest. The forecast revenue of $36 billion demonstrates the scale of the business and the value creation potential available to shareholders."

Police nab Commissioner, three others over Delta director's death

From **Monday Osayande**, Asaba

DELTA State Police Command yesterday said it has taken into custody the Commissioner for Secondary Education, Dr Kingsley Ashibogwu, and three other suspects over the death of Mr Unity Ekpevbughe Adeda, Deputy Director in the state's Ministry of Secondary Education.

This brings to five the number of persons currently in police custody in connection with the investigation into circumstances surrounding Adeda's death.

In a statement on Monday night by the Police Public Relations Officer, SP Bright Edafe, the Command said it had also intensified efforts to apprehend two persons it described as key suspects in the case.

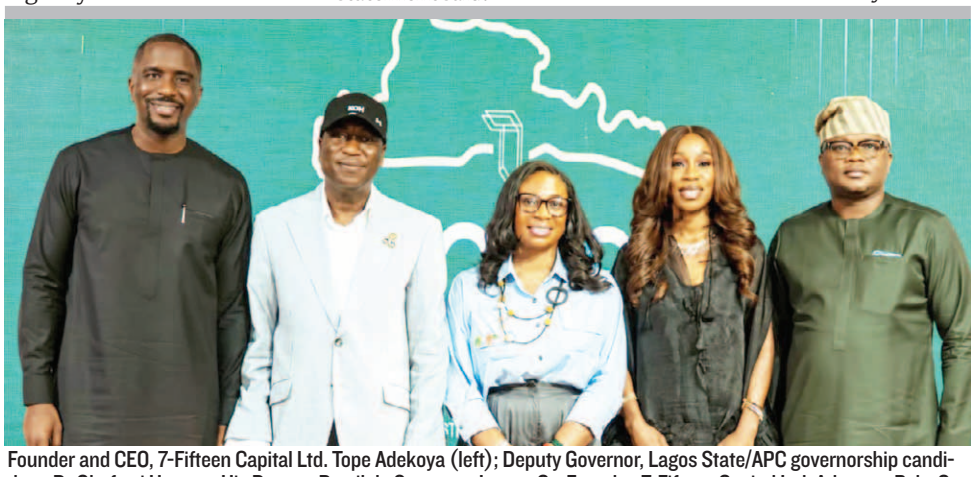
"The Delta State Police Command, in continuation of the investigation into the circumstances surrounding the death of Mr Unity Ekpevbughe Adeda, Deputy Director in the Delta State Ministry of Secondary Education, has taken into custody the Commissioner for Secondary Education, Dr. Kingsley Ashibogwu, alongside three other suspects in connection with the case," the statement said.

"This brings the number of persons currently in Police custody in connection with the investigation to five."

The Command said it had consequently launched a manhunt for Mrs Clemetine Ufuoma, Director of Basic and Secondary Education, and Clement Apia, driver to the Commissioner for Secondary Education.

According to the police, "the presence" of the two persons "is required in furtherance of the investigation."

The Command urged both suspects to make themselves available to investigators without further delay.



Founder and CEO, 7-Fifteen Capital Ltd. Tope Adekoya (left); Deputy Governor, Lagos State/APC governorship candidate, Dr Obafemi Hamzat; His Deputy, Damilola Sonayon-James; Co-Founder, 7-Fifteen Capital Ltd, Adesuwa Belo-Osagie and Managing Partner, Kolban Visions Ltd, Segun Banjoko, at the 7-Fifteen Capital private dinner with Dr Hamzat and young business leaders in Ikoyi, Lagos.

OPay wins two consumer awards, reaffirms nationwide trust

OPAY, a fintech company in Nigeria, has received two major honours at the 5th edition of the Consumers Value Awards (CVA), further highlighting the strong confidence Nigerian consumers place in the fintech brand.

At the awards ceremony held on Wednesday, September 23, 2026, in Ikeja, Lagos, OPay emerged winner of the Most Trusted Brand Award (FinTech) and the Most Consumer Friendly/Innovative FinTech Brand Award.

OPay secured 70.1 per cent of the total valid votes to win the Most Trusted Brand (FinTech) category, while it recorded 70.2 per cent in the Most Consumer Friendly/Innovative FinTech Brand category.

The awards are particularly significant because they are based on a nationwide consumer voting process. According to the Consumers Value Awards, consumers nominate brands they believe have delivered value, after which shortlisted nominees proceed to a public voting exercise. The brand with the highest number of valid votes in each category is declared the winner.

The recognition, therefore, represents more than an industry honour; it reflects the choices of consumers who use and interact with financial technology brands in their

Obi: We'll reinstate subsidy after tackling corruption

PRESIDENTIAL Candidate of the Nigeria Democratic Congress (NDC), Peter Obi, has pledged to reinstate petroleum subsidy after tackling corruption in the country.

Obi made the pledge at a town hall meeting organised for the Obi/Kwankwaso presidential ticket in Sokoto on Monday.

He said corruption remained the major challenge confronting Nigeria, adding that his administration, if elected, would tackle corruption across all sectors.

"People are talking about subsidy but what is all about it is corruption. By removing the corruption, I assure you that we will bring back subsidy.

"The problem of Nigeria is corruption, as such, if elected, we will stop all forms of corruption in every sector of the country," he said.

Obi urged Nigerians to use the 2027 general elections to vote for NDC candidates at all levels, saying it is a collective responsibility to address the country's recurring challenges.

He said the party is committed to providing what he described as a "politics of care and service to Nigerians."

... DAY 4538

OUR GIRLS STILL MISSING

Tope Templer Olaiya, News Editor

@TopeTempler

RANDOM FACTS

- In 2017, France passed the 'Right to Disconnect Law,' meaning an employer could not penalize an employee for failing to be reachable outside working hours.
- Nigerian film, *Black Market* has broken the World Record for the Largest Audience at a Film Screening with over 51,000 attendees at Tafawa Balewa Square in Lagos.
- TikTok has been restricted in some states in Northern Nigeria for days. You can only access the platform through VPN.

TODAY'S QUOTE

"Reality is wrong. Dreams are for real.

We must remember tomorrow comes after the dark.

TUPAC SHAKUR

When you live intentionally, your impact will outlive you.

Never respect men merely for their riches, but rather for their philanthropy; we do not value the sun for its height, but for its use.

GAMALIEL ONOSODE

The oppressed are allowed once every few years to decide which particular representatives of the oppressing class are to represent and repress them.

KARL MARX"

TODAY IN HISTORY

• 2025 - Nigeria
Pres. Bola Tinubu cancelled the parade earlier scheduled to mark the 65th Independence on October 1.

• 2023 - USA
Police arrested a man over murder of music star, Tupac Amaru Shakur aka 2Pac, 27 years ago. The rapper was shot dead by a mysterious man in Las Ve-gas on September 13, 1996. Shakur, 25 at the time of his death, was one of the most influential and successful rappers ever. He was among best-selling music artistes, having sold over 75 million records worldwide.

• 2022 - Nigeria
APC presidential candidate Bola Tinubu was conspicuously missing as presidential candidates signed the now-customary peace pact. APC vice presidential candidate, Kashim Shettima, represented Tinubu at the event. Atiku Abubakar of PDP, Peter Obi of LP, and Rabiu Kwankwaso of NNPP among others were present at the signing.

• 2021 - Nigeria
Unknown gunmen killed Dr. Chike Akunyili, husband of late ex-Information Minister, Prof. Dora Akunyili at Umuoji in Anambra State. He had earlier visited the University of Nigeria Nsukka Alumni Association where Dora was honoured and was murdered on his way back to his base.

• 2015 - Nigeria
After battling with bone cancer for 24 months, erudite technocrat, boardroom guru and ex-presidential candidate, Gamaliel Onosode, died in Lagos aged 82.

• 2013 - Nigeria
Boko Haram gunmen attacked the male dormitory in the College of Agriculture, Gujba, Yobe State, at mignight and killed 44 students and teachers.

• 2008 - USA
The stock market crashed after the first United States House of Representatives vote on the Emergency Economic Stabilization Act failed during beginning stages of the Great Recession

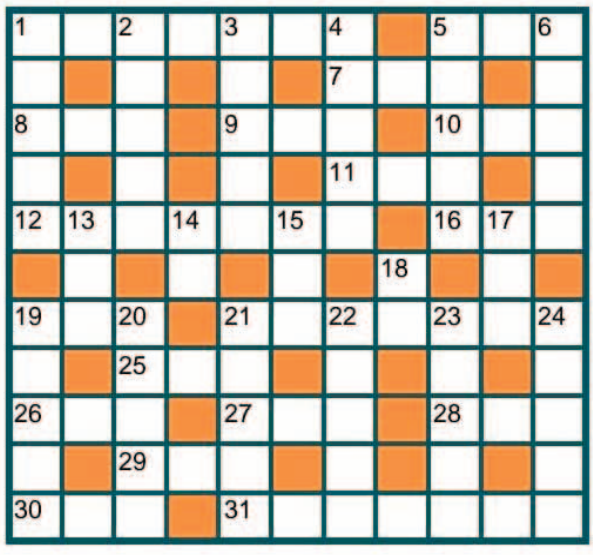
• 2007 - UK
Calder Hall, world's first commercial nuclear power station, was demolished in a controlled explosion.

• 2006 - Brazil
A Boeing 737 and an Embraer 600 collided mid-air killing 154 and triggering a Brazilian aviation crisis.

• 1979 - Giuinea
Equatorial Guinean dictator Francisco Macías Nguema was executed by soldiers from Western Sahara.

• 1957 - Russia
Kyshtym disaster was third-worst nuclear accident ever recorded after the Chernobyl disaster.

CROSS WORD PUZZLE



• ACROSS
I. Nigerian Gospel Musician, (7).
5. Whirlpool bath, (3).
7. Egg of louse, (3).
8. Temp. out of service, abbr., (3).
9. Consume usually, (3).
10. Period of history, (3).
11. Female sheep, (3).
12. Woodland deer, (7).
16. Port of London Authority, abbr.
19.Mineral metal is extracted from, (3)
21. Gov. Solufo's State, (7).
25. Fall behind others, (3).
26. Be financially in debt, (3).
27. Cassava flour paste, (3).
28. A glossy black cuckoo, (3).
29. Farm animal with broad snout, (3)
30. LGA in Lagos State, (3).
31. Nigeria's Ex Health Minister, (7).

• DOWN
I. Communion table, (5).
2. Be a consequence of, (5).
3. City in River State, (5).
4. Type on a computer, (5).
5. Sloping very sharply, (5).
6. LGA in Lagos State, (5).
13. Belonging to us, (3).
14. Decimeter symbol, (2).
15. East by North, abbr., (3).
17. 2nd Republic Plateau Gov., (3)
18. Americium symbol, (2).
19. Lagos scrap metal market, (5).
20. Town in Ikorodu, Lagos, (5).
21. LGA in Lagos State, (5).
22. Long-tailed, small lizard, (5).
23. Norse god of poetry&music, (5)
24. Still in existence, (5).

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Check page 31 for solution to the puzzle

News

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Refiners demand end to fuel imports, seek guaranteed crude supply

Dangote, CORAN, IPPG warn Nigeria must raise exploration, production to sustain refining boom

By **Waliat Musa**

OIL refiners have demanded an end to petroleum-product imports and guaranteed access to local crude, warning that continued fuel imports, alongside under-utilised domestic refining capacity, undermine Nigeria's efforts to retain more value from its black gold.

They warned that the decades-long era of exporting crude oil while importing refined petroleum products is ending, but the emerging domestic refining boom could only be sustained if the country urgently expands crude oil exploration and production and ensures reliable access to feedstock.

Giving the warning at the third Nigeria Oil Refining Summit (NORS) in Lagos, yesterday, Crude Oil Refinery Owners Association of Nigeria (CORAN), Independent Petroleum Producers Group (IPPG) and Dangote Refinery stressed that the next phase of the petroleum-sector transformation must be driven by stronger upstream production to support the expanding domestic refining capacity.

The development came as crude receipts by domestic refineries rose to about 683,000 barrels per day in August 2026, indicating the increasing role of local refineries in meeting the country's petroleum-product requirements.

However, CORAN said the progress was being undermined by continued product imports and difficulties faced by some domestic refineries in securing crude on commercially viable terms.

The Chairman of CORAN, Momoh Oyarekhua, said Nigeria had moved from discussions about becoming a net exporter of petroleum products to a stage where domestic refining was increasingly transforming the country's fuel supply landscape.

He said the next objective should be to ensure that the benefits of refining were retained within the economy through jobs, foreign exchange savings, industrial growth and greater energy security.

"Despite our abundant crude resources, some domestic refineries continue to face difficulties accessing crude oil on commercially viable terms."

Nigeria's budget too meagre for real development, says Bagudu

CISLAC, BudgIT urge NASS to end budget padding, flag 4,508projects worth N434.5b

From **John Akubo**, Abuja

MINISTER of Budget and Economic Planning, Senator Abubakar Bagudu, has challenged Nigerians, lawmakers and the media to rethink the country's approach to budgeting, declaring that the national budget remains too small to deliver the level of development the country desires

This was as the Civil Society Legislative Advocacy Centre (CISLAC) raised fresh concerns over Nigeria's budget process, citing an Independent Corrupt Practices and other related offences Commission (ICPC) analysis, which flagged 4,508 projects worth about N434.5 billion as inserted or padded in the 2022 budget.

CISLAC, at the 2026 Senate Press Corps Workshop in Abuja, yesterday, called for tighter checks on budget proposals and legislative amendments before they become part of the Appropriation Act.

The paper was presented by Ebu Emmanuel on behalf of the Executive Director, CISLAC, Auwal Rafsanjani.

Similarly, the BudgIT Foundation urged the National Assembly to move away from budget insertion and adopt evidence-based scrutiny that links public spending to development plans, previous performance and citizens' needs.

The call was made by the Country Director of BudgIT, Vahyala Kwaga, who represented the organisation's Director, Olusegun Onigbinde, at the 2026 capacity-building workshop with the theme, 'Leveraging Legislative Oversight and Media Collaboration to Safeguard the National Budget from Unlawful Insertions'.

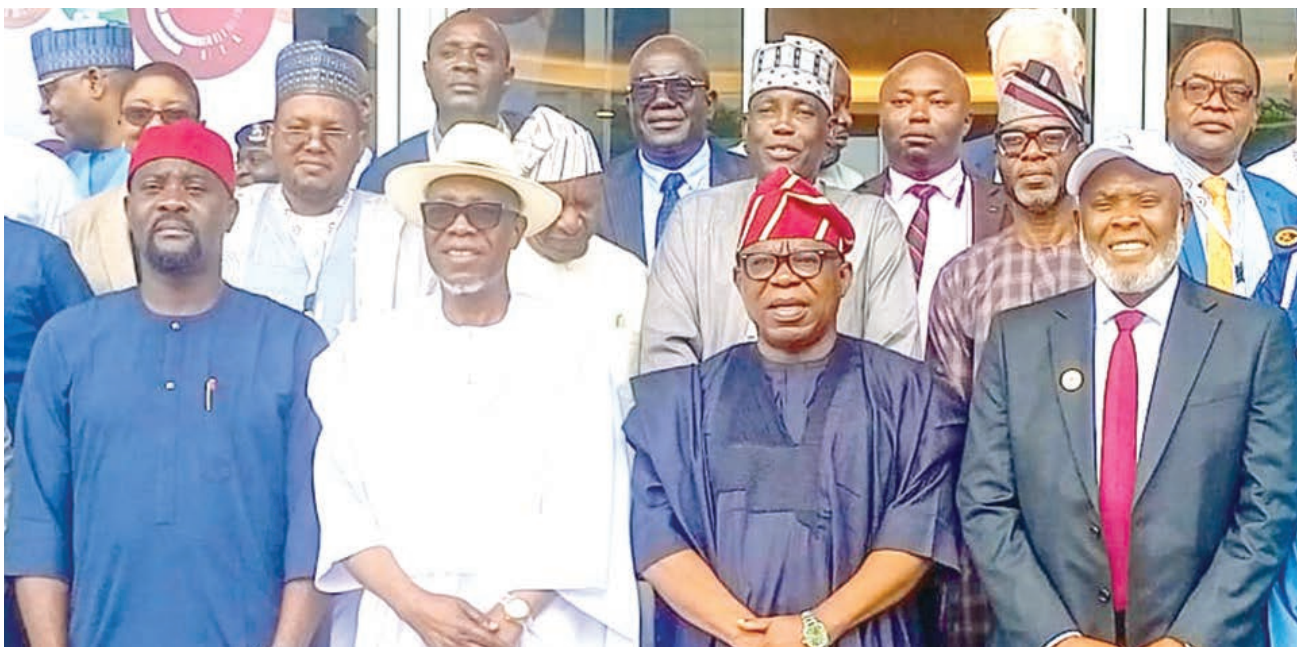
Speaking at the workshop, the minister asserted that Nigeria "has the smallest national budget among the world's 10 most populous countries," warning that the country should not expect to achieve the same development outcomes as nations with significantly larger fiscal capacity.

He said the debate over the national budget should, therefore, go beyond allegations of unlawful insertions and focus on a more fundamental question of what Nigeria's national budget should be, and what level of resources the country requires to achieve its development ambitions.

According to him, Nigeria faces a choice between simply budgeting according to what it can afford and developing the confidence, policies and public support required to mobilise more resources for economic transformation.

Bagudu said the second option would require Nigerians to understand the country's fiscal limitations and support difficult decisions needed to expand government revenue, investment and borrowing capacity.

He said the Federal Government's ambition of building a $1 trillion economy could not be separated from the size and structure of the national budget.



Senator representing Enugu West Senatorial District, Osita Ngwu (left); Majority Leader, House of Representatives, Julius Ihonvbere; Clerk of the National Assembly, Kamaru Ogunlana; Executive Secretary, National Assembly Library, Henry Nwawuba and others during the 2026 National Assembly Library Week in Abuja, yesterday.

Atiku demands accountability for existing debt, $1.5b World Bank loan

FG's securitised Ways and Means debt drops N613b as moratorium ends

By **Kehinde Olatunji**

PRESIDENTIAL candidate of the African Democratic Congress (ADC), Vice President Atiku Abubakar, has urged President Bola Tinubu's administration to account for existing borrowings before securing the proposed $1.5 billion World Bank loan.

Meanwhile, the Federal Government's securitised Ways and Means debt declined by N613.34 billion in the second quarter of 2026, marking its first recorded reduction since the obligation was added to Nigeria's public debt stock in 2023.

Atiku made the call yesterday in a statement by the Director of Strategic Communications, ADC Presidential Campaign Council, Phrank Shaibu, amid concerns over the country's rising debt profile and the impact of government borrowing on Nigerians.

He said Nigerians deserved greater transparency on how previous loans had been spent and the results achieved before the Federal Government incurred additional debt.

The statement cited Nigeria's public debt at N166.79 trillion, arguing that the proposed borrowing would further increase the financial burden on citizens already contending with rising costs of food, fuel and electricity.

"Nigerians were promised that painful policies would free resources for development. They have felt the pain. Where is the development?" Atiku asked.

He said the per capita share of Nigeria's public debt had risen to N716,822 from N383,442 three years earlier, representing 87 per cent increase.

"Tinubu has made today difficult and tomorrow more uncertain. He cannot keep loading debt onto the country and expect Nigerians to applaud programme titles," he said.

He therefore called on the government to publish details of the projects to be financed, the communities and citizens expected to benefit, programme targets, borrowing and disbursement terms, and a timetable for monitoring implementation.

The Federal Government is seeking a fresh World Bank $1.5 billion loan to expand social protection, improve early childhood development and scale up climate-resilient interventions, even as Nigeria's total public debt climbs to N166.79 trillion.

Documents from the World Bank show that the proposed financing comprises three separate $500m International Development Association (IDA) credits, rather than a single $1.5 billion loan.

2027: Onaiyekan, Kukah advise politicians, electorate on peaceful polls

From **Eniola Daniel** (Lagos) and **Sodiq Omolaoye** (Abuja)

CATHOLIC Archbishop Emeritus of Abuja, John Cardinal Onaiyekan, has urged political actors and security agencies to ensure that the 2027 general elections do not turn Nigeria into a war zone.

He stressed that Nigerians should be allowed to freely choose their leaders.

Similarly, Bishop of Sokoto Catholic Diocese, Matthew Hassan Kukah, advised Nigerians to vote to stay alive.

Onaiyekan spoke yesterday in Abuja when the Savannah Centre for Diplomacy, Democracy and Development (SCDDD)'s Council of the Wise, led by former Chief Justice of Nigeria (CJN), Olukayode Ariwoola, visited him as part of its advocacy engagements ahead of the 2027 elections.

The Cardinal also urged the Chairman of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), Prof. Joash Amupitan, not to allow pressure to prevent him from conducting a credible election.

Recalling the Catholic bishops' meeting with President Bola Tinubu at the State House in Abuja, where he was part of a delegation, Onaiyekan said the President had assured them that INEC was free to conduct the 2027 election.

He said that assurance had since been communicated to the INEC Chairman, urging him not to allow pressure to prevent him from doing his job.

"When we raised concerns about level-playing ground for political parties in the coming election, he said, no, INEC is free. So we have been telling Prof. Amupitan, the President says you are free. Don't tie your own hand. Do the right thing. He is not going to put you under undue pressure to do the wrong thing. So everybody must be responsible for what they do", he said.

The Cardinal said there should be no excuse for political actors or electoral officials who fail to abide by the rules governing the process, stressing that a credible election did not require extraordinary measures.

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News Analysis www.guardian.ng

Kabu-Kabu: How unregulated vehicles fill voids created by yellow cabs in Enugu

In Enugu State, commercial taxis bearing official colours are vanishing by the day and creating room for the operation of unpainted or unmarked commercial cabs. As it stands, there are concerns that during the current administration's tenure, commercial cabs with official state colours may go extinct, and the implications for the state would be dire, ***LAWRENCE NJOKU*** *reports.*



Commercial taxi cabs to improve transportation in Enugu State procured during the Sullivan Chime-led administration.

AT about 5.20 p.m. on Thursday, September 3, Okwuoma Ikpe stepped off one of the luxurious buses that returned to the bustling Young Motors terminal located at the Holy Ghost Park axis of Enugu. The vehicle had just arrived from Lagos State.

As he grabbed his travel bag from the vehicle's luggage compartment, he scanned the surroundings for the ever-present, familiar yellow cabs with double black horizontal stripes to continue his journey. But there was no single taxi bearing the official colours of commercial cabs.

Rather, the driveway was lined up with unmarked private cars, with their drivers either asking to render their services to him or waiting to pick up commuters who had booked them in advance.

Aside from the unmarked private cars, various tricycle operators beckoned to him, asking whether they could be of assistance.

Almost confused by the entire scenario in a city whose transport system had suddenly gone invisible, he walked to a nearby newly built bus shelter to wait for the arrival of a marked commercial cab to continue his homeward journey.

The last time Ikpe was in Enugu was 10 years ago, when there were a multitude of yellow-and-black commercial taxis, which are the official colour of commercial taxis in the state.

Indeed, over the last decade or thereabouts, a lot has changed in the state's commercial taxi milieu, with taxis bearing the state's official colours vanishing from the streets and being replaced with private cars operating as taxi cabs illegally despite heightened insecurity in the land.

Mired in the confusion and pondering what could have happened, Okwuoma took a short walk away from the bus shelter to a short distance away, where a yellow faded commercial taxi was waiting.

Once there, the rickety condition of the commercial taxi discouraged him from soliciting the taxi driver's services. After what felt like an endless wait, Okwuoma eventually hired a private taxi to complete the final stretch of his journey.

Several years ago, the yellow-and-black coloured commercial cab was a trusted fixture of Coal City life. These vehicles were everywhere on the streets of Enugu. In fact, the Sullivan Chime-led administration, which was in office from May 2007 to May 2015, infused over 700 taxi cabs, comprising Nissan Sunny and Suzuki Alto models, popularly known as "Sullivan Taxi" or Coal City Cabs, to boost the taxi scheme in the state.

These commercial cabs were operated by indigenes of the state, who earned their daily bread from the endeavour. Today, these taxi cabs have since disappeared to the point that finding any of them on the streets of Enugu amounts to a miracle. In their stead, many private car owners are doing brisk business in what is usually described in local parlance as *kabu-kabu*.

Ikenna Egwu, a civil servant who works at the Federal Neuropsychiatric Hospital, Enugu, deploys his private car – a Toyota Corolla to commercial use after 6 pm each day.

After the close of work each day, he fixes a detachable reflective taxi sign atop the car and combs for passengers until far into the night.

At the popular Otigba Junction, in the New Haven axis, where he was waiting for passengers, Egwu told *The Guardian* that cabs bearing official commercial colours are disappearing in Enugu because "commuters often prefer tricycles and mini-buses due to lower fares."

According to him, "It is no longer easy to see commercial taxis in Enugu because even the routes that were not meant for buses before now are open to all manner of operators. So, what you now see are the few commercial taxis that are still operating at night, when there are no tricycles or minibuses on the streets. Remember that the state government has tried to regulate the operation of buses and tricycles. The maximum time frame allowed for their operation is 9 pm. When they are off the streets, the taxis will take over."

On why the *kabu-kabu* operators like him have refused to brand their vehicles in the official taxi colours, Egwu said: "We hardly break even. I do this to support my salary, nothing more. At times, I come out, and there are no passengers to ferry anywhere. Nightlife in Enugu is still very poor. The majority of those who come out at night do so with their own private cars. Only a few do so without their cars and want to charter a cab.

"Again, I am not a full commercial taxi driver. The way things are in the state cannot encourage anyone to be a taxi driver because tricycle operators are just everywhere, and struggling with them for a share of the market is quite a challenge," he added.

> "It is no longer easy to see commercial taxis in Enugu because even the routes that were not meant for buses before are now open to all manner of operators. So, what you now see are the few commercial taxis that are still operating at night, when there are no tricycles or minibuses on the streets. Remember that the state government has tried to regulate the operation of buses and tricycles through an app-based electronic system."

Daniel Ugwu operated his branded commercial taxi – a Peugeot 504 until last year, when he sold it and purchased a mini-bus. He blamed the step he took on the low patronage of taxi cabs and the increasing cost of maintenance.

Insisting that it was becoming very challenging for the few branded taxi cabs left in the state to survive in business, he stated: "More than 70 per cent of commuters in the state either patronise mini-buses or the tricycle operators, especially in the daytime. When they are off the streets from 9 pm, private cab operators will take over. To make a living from driving branded commercial cabs in this state is not easy. I doubt if the commercial taxi scheme will continue to survive when nightlife in Enugu is at its lowest point."

He added that the introduction of modern CNG–powered Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) buses in the state has further compounded the woes of taxi cab operators, stressing that, "these buses still ply the same routes with other commercial cabs."

As in other major locations in the country, the entry of app-based ride-hailing services into the state's transport sector has also ensured that commercial taxi drivers are competing with other service providers as commuters leverage local ride-hailing apps for their travel.

When the state government commissioned the modernised terminals in August last year, it also rolled out 100 Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) transit buses, which were aimed at boosting the state's economy.

However, the Enugu State Road Transport Law and sundry regulations prohibit unregistered and unpainted commercial cabs from operating, but mandate commercial vehicle registration, driver profiling, and strict adherence to the state colour scheme to check illegal operators.



A Compliance Officer in the state Ministry of Transport, James Agbo, told *The Guardian* that the law remains intact and covers all commercial cab, bus, and tricycle operators in the state.

"The law is in force. We have commercial colours and registration for operators. The operators are aware. That is why commercial bus and tricycle operators still adhere to the colour scheme in the state," he stated.

He, however, attributed the vanishing traditional yellow and black cabs in Enugu State to the shift in economic pressures, technological changes, as well as improvement in the transport policy that has allowed the state to introduce more buses into its scheme.

"The point is that commercial tricycle operators are everywhere at the moment. If you notice, the state government did not restrict tricycles from operating anywhere in the state. The fact that they can enter anywhere to pick up and drop off passengers, even where taxi cabs cannot enter, is an added advantage. That is the situation," he added.

The state Commissioner for Transport, Dr Obi Ozor, informed *The Guardian* that the desire of the government was to build a multi-modal transport ecosystem that could open up the state and integrate the entire South-East region.

He added that reliable, predictable transportation networks attract investment, stressing that when expansion occurs across multiple sectors simultaneously, GDP growth follows.

Governor Peter Mbah had vowed to move the state's $4.4 billion economy to a $30 billion economy by 2030. The state's Internally Generated Revenue (IGR) surged from N37.4 billion in 2023 to N180 billion in 2024, reaching N406 billion in 2025. It is believed that contributions from the road transport sector contributed to the surge.

On the implications of operating unbranded commercial taxis in the state, a resident of the state, PraiseGod Eze, expressed worries that unpainted vehicles used for transportation could be vectors for kidnappings and robbery activities.

He stated that branded vehicles with codes and numbers could be easily identified in situations where they are deployed for sinister purposes.

Another resident, Mrs Joyce Onah, a private sector operative, who also frowned at the proliferation of unbranded taxi cabs in the state, said their continuous operation also leads to loss of revenue for the state government.

"There are monies that certified or officially recognised taxi cab operators pay here and there for their operations. But because a good number of them don't operate in the day, or are not licensed to operate, the state government is losing such revenue because without official colours, it is not easy to identify vehicles that are being used for private initiatives and those for commercial services," she stated.

National Assembly to translate laws into indigenous languages

From **Adamu Abuh** and **John Akubo**, Abuja

NATIONAL Assembly Library Trust Fund is to translate Nigerian laws into Hausa, Yoruba, Igbo and other local languages, as part of a fresh drive to make legislation more accessible to citizens and preserve the country's democratic memory.

The Executive Secretary of the Trust Fund, Henry Nwawuba, disclosed this yesterday in Abuja at the opening of the 2026 National Assembly Library Week, with the theme, "Parliamentary Memory: Connecting Records, Legislation and the People."

Nwawuba said the three-day event was designed as a yearly platform for promoting legislative research, access to information, and the effective use of the resources of the National Assembly Library.

Nwawuba disclosed that the institution was investing in electronic repositories and its E-Library, while developing a National Assembly Library mobile application to make parliamentary information readily available to lawmakers, aides, staff, researchers and citizens.

Don't judge parliament by motions, budget proposals, Adaramodu cautions

Representing the Senate President, Godswill Akpabio, Senator Osita Ngwu urged lawmakers to make greater use of the library, particularly in an era of misinformation, disinformation and artificial intelligence.

Ngwu said the library should not be regarded merely as a room containing books, but as an institution connecting evidence, knowledge, and legislative decision-making.

Speaker of the House of Representatives, Tajudeen Abbas, in a goodwill message, said legislative records were vital to understanding Nigeria's legislative history and strengthening democratic governance.

Abbas, who was represented by the House Leader, Prof. Julius Ihonvbere, said the strength of a legislature should be measured not only by the laws it enacts but also by how effectively it documents its activities, preserves institutional experience, and makes that knowledge available to future generations.

The Clerk of the National Assembly, Kamoru Ogunlana, warned against the circulation of incomplete, outdated, altered or unauthorised bills, Acts and other parliamentary documents.

Ogunlana said the digital age had made it easier for documents to be scanned, manipulated and widely circulated, making proper preservation, authentication and accessibility of parliamentary records increasingly important.

Ogunlana's warning came against the background of concerns over the circulation of purported parliamentary documents that may not reflect the authentic position of the National Assembly.

The President of the Nigerian Library Association, Dr Lawal Umar, called for sustained investment in libraries and modern information technology to improve access to legislative information.

Atiku, ADC to amend suit challenging Tinubu's eligibility for polls

From **Ameh Ochojila**, Abuja

FEDERAL High Court sitting in Abuja yesterday adjourned till October 13, 2026, for the hearing of a motion to amend the originating summons in the suit filed by former Vice President, Atiku Abubakar, and the African Democratic Congress against President Bola Tinubu, the All Progressives Congress, and the Independent National Electoral Commission.

The suit marked FHC/ABJ/CS/1888/2026 was slated for further mention before Justice Inyang Ekwo. When the case was called, counsel for the plaintiffs, Joseph Silas, told the court that processes had been served on all the defendants within the stipulated period and that the plaintiffs had received and responded to their processes.

Recall that an earlier dispute over the service of the processes on the first defendant had stalled proceedings in the case.

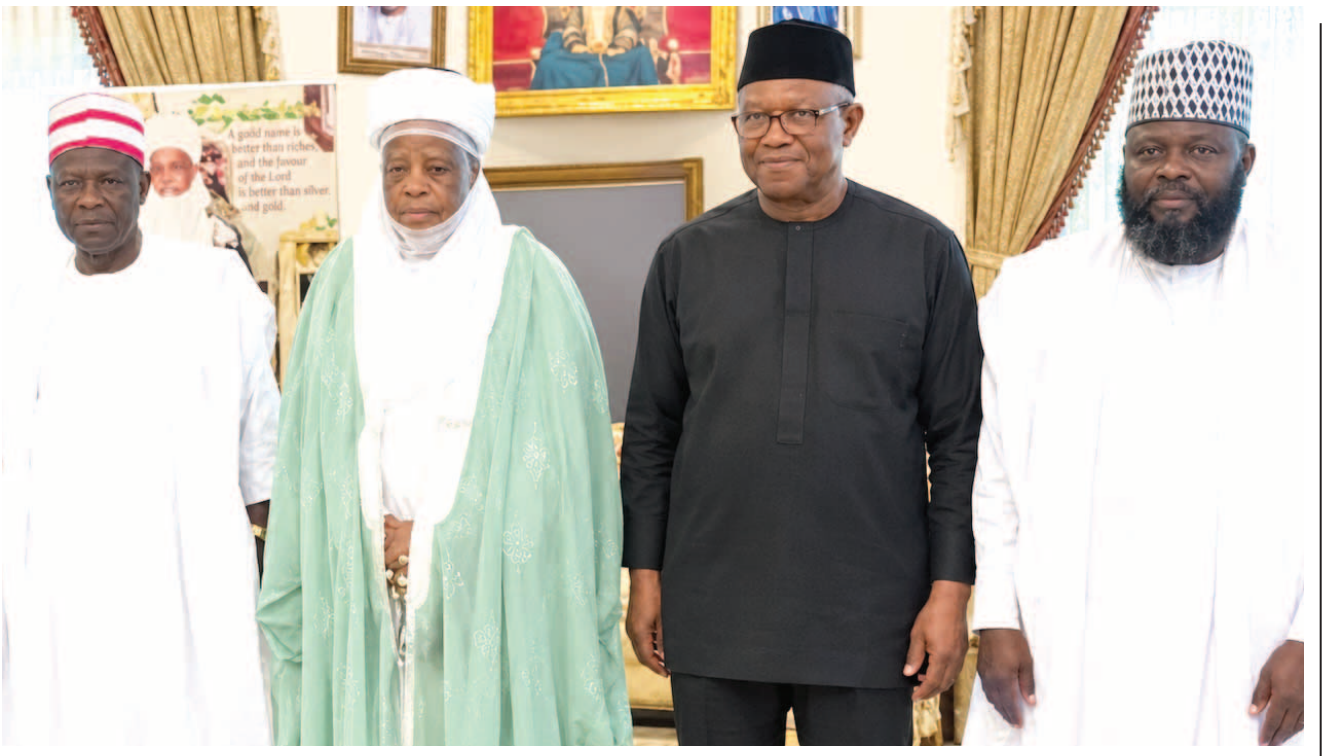
ITU, WMO seek radio spectrum protection for weather, climate, water services

By **Adeyemi Adepetun**

UNITED Nations arm in charge of global communications, the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) and the World Meteorological Organisation (WMO) call on governments, regulators, and meteorologists to safeguard access to radio frequency spectrum essential for weather forecasts, early warnings, climate monitoring and water management.

The appeal came yesterday with the release of a new joint handbook, the Use of Radio Spectrum for Meteorology: Weather, Climate, Water and Related Environmental Applications.

The new publication offers updated guidance on the use and protection of radio frequencies supporting critical meteorological systems. These systems enable observations of the atmosphere, oceans, and land, and the transmission of data that supports life-saving early warnings, reliable weather forecasting, and long-term climate monitoring.



Vice Presidential Candidate of Nigeria Democratic Congress (NDC), Rabiu Musa Kwankwaso (left); Sultan of Sokoto, Saad Abubakar; Presidential Candidate of the party, Peter Obi, and other guests during their homage to the Sultan's palace in Sokoto, yesterday.

Shettima returns, lauds Nigeria's campaign for UN Security Council seat

From **Terhemba Daka**, Abuja

VICE President Kashim Shettima has returned to Nigeria after the 81st United Nations General Assembly, which renewed Nigeria's demand for permanent African representation on the UN Security Council.

Shettima returned to Abuja on Sunday after spending eight days in New York, having left Nigeria on September 20 at the directive of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu to represent him at the yearly gathering of world leaders.

At the General Debate of the 81st UNGA, Shettima delivered Nigeria's national statement on behalf of President Tinubu, using the global platform to push the country's longstanding position that the structure of the UN Security Council must be reformed to reflect present-day geopolitical realities.

Nigeria specifically called for permanent African representation on the Council, alongside broader reforms to make the global governance system more representative, equitable, and responsive.

The renewed push came against the backdrop of Nigeria's longstanding advocacy for an expanded Security Council, with African countries arguing that the continent remains underrepresented in the UN's most powerful decision-making organ despite its demographic, economic and strategic importance.

Beyond the Security Council question, Shettima used his engagements in New York to advance Nigeria's interests in development financing, education, climate action, regional integration, economic cooperation and peace and security.

Meanwhile, Nigeria has said it would be guided by equity, justice, fairness and Africa's aspirations in determining its position on the next United Nations Secretary-General, Vice President Shettima has said.

Reps seek FRC's position on CBN audited accounts, Obazee's concerns

From **Sodiq Omolaoye**, Abuja

HOUSE of Representatives Committee on Delegated Legislation has formally requested the Financial Reporting Council of Nigeria (FRC) to provide its review of the Central Bank of Nigeria's (CBN) 2025 audited accounts, as well as its position on concerns raised by President Bola Tinubu's special investigator, Jim Obazee.

The committee's request, detailed in a letter signed by its Chairman, Olufemi Richard Bamisile, asks the FRC to submit the full CBN 2025 audited accounts it reviewed, the council's own review of those accounts, and its official response to the issues highlighted by Obazee. The deadline for compliance is October 6, 2025.

As the apex regulator for financial reporting in Nigeria, the FRC is mandated, under the FRC Act 2011, to supervise and scrutinise the financial statements of both public and private sector organisations, including the CBN.

"In view of your role as the supreme regulator in the country, as enshrined in sections 7(2a), 8(1a, b, d, e, f, g, h, and n), and 59 of the FRC Act 2011, empowering you to supervise the CBN and scrutinise the apex bank's accounts and those of others, our committee is requesting you to provide us with copies of the audited accounts, the approvals given to the government banker on the audited accounts, and your views on the remarks by Mr. Obazee," the letter stated.

Bamisile noted that the committee is concerned by the ongoing controversies and widespread media reports regarding the CBN's 2024 and 2025 audited financials, following Obazee's claim that both the National Assembly and President Tinubu were misled by the apex bank's documentation.

He added that the alleged irregularities, which the FRC is expected to have reviewed, raise doubts about the Council's competence as a regulator.

"The news report, credited to the speech by Mr Obazee and distributed at your event, revealed several alleged irregularities in the CBN's audited financials. These touch on the integrity of the document, the bank, and its board, and cast doubt on whether these audited accounts can be relied upon for policy decisions," he wrote.

African leaders seek higher education reforms for economic growth

By **Tobi Awodipe**

AFRICAN leaders, higher education institutions, governments, industry and development partners have called for far-reaching reforms in the continent's higher education system, saying stronger links between universities, industry, research and investment are critical to unlocking Africa's human capital and economic potential.

The call was made in Accra, Ghana, during the inaugural Higher Education Transformation Convening hosted by the Mastercard Foundation, which brought together representatives of higher education institutions, the African Union, government ministries, financial institutions, industry and young people.

The gathering, held under the theme, "Reimagining Higher Education for Africa's Human Capital Development," also featured the inaugural Africa Higher Education for Transformation (AHEFT) Prize award ceremony, which recognised institutions implementing sustained, institution-wide transformation.

Participants said African universities must evolve beyond their traditional roles to become stronger drivers of research, innovation, employment and economic development.

They identified curriculum reform, stronger private-sector partnerships, development of skills for emerging technologies, improved research capacity and greater mobility of students and academics across borders as some of the changes required.

President and Chief Executive Officer of the Mastercard Foundation, Sewit Ahderom, said that higher education transformation should be measured by its broader impact on young people and the economy. "Transformation is not just a better university.

World Heart Day:

High cost, specialist shortage, weak infrastructure worsen cardiac care

From **Nkechi Onyedika-Ugoeze** (Abuja) and **Ijeoma Nwanosike** (Lagos)

- About 400 cardiologists serve over 220 million Nigerians
- Open-heart surgery costs N9.4m to over N40m
- Only 10 catheterisation centres available nationwide
- 40 per cent of Nigerian adults are hypertensive
- Fewer than 5% have controlled blood pressure
- High out-of-pocket costs limit access to treatment
- Experts seek wider insurance coverage, stronger cardiac care

AS Nigerians join the rest of the world to mark World Heart Day today, experts have identified the high cost of care, out-of-pocket spending, dearth of equipment, severe shortage of specialists and poor emergency services as major obstacles to the management and treatment of the increasing burden of heart disease in the country.

They warned that Nigeria is undergoing an epidemiological shift, with the burden moving from predominantly infectious heart diseases towards a rising mix of cardiovascular and metabolic conditions.

The World Heart Federation (WHF) says heart disease and stroke are the world's leading causes of death, killing more than 20.5 million people yearly. Developing countries account for about 80 per cent of the fatalities and up to 80 per cent of premature cardiovascular disease (CVD) deaths.

According to the Nigeria Heart Foundation (NHF), the burden of heart disease in Nigeria is rising, with hypertension, diabetes, coronary artery disease and changing lifestyles increasingly putting Nigerians at risk.

Recent studies indicate that about 40 per cent of Nigerian adults are hypertensive, while fewer than five per cent have their condition properly controlled.

The crisis is exacerbated by poor awareness, limited health insurance coverage, and the migration of skilled healthcare workers, among other factors.

According to the Nigerian Cardiac Society (NCS), the country has only about 400 cardiologists catering to a population of more than 220 million.

While the cost of care varies according to the condition, hospital, investigations and whether treatment involves medicines or procedures such as coronary angiography, angioplasty, stenting, pacemaker implantation or cardiac surgery, patients paying out of pocket could face substantial cumulative costs for consultations, blood tests, ECGs, echocardiography, imaging, drugs, hospital admissions and interventions.

The Guardian findings showed that the cost of diagnosing and treating worsening heart disease in Nigeria is high, especially in private facilities, averaging over N319,200 and N421,596 for routine outpatient care, while advanced care, such as open-heart surgery, ranges from N9.4 million to over N40 million, depending on the facility and procedural complexity.

Also, diagnostic and routine initial tests, such as ECG, echocardiograms and blood panels, range from N10,000 to N1.7 million per screening session, depending on the hospital and procedure.

The financial burden is further compounded by gaps in cardiac infrastructure, particularly the limited availability of catheterisation laboratories in public hospitals. Investigations revealed that catheterisation services are available in only 10 centres across the country, with most concentrated in urban areas.

Mrs Chika Emenike, who lost her 75-year-old mother to heart disease, lamented that despite spending millions of naira on her diagnosis and treatment, her mother did not survive due to uncontrolled hypertension.

Emenike told *The Guardian* that treating heart disease was financially draining, adding that her mother's condition was complicated by blood pressure that remained excessively high for several months.

She said, "My mother really suffered due to this heart problem. We spent over N28 million in the course of trying to save her life. We planned to organise a befitting birthday for her this coming December. We wanted to celebrate her while she was alive, but it is heartbreaking that she died last week."

PRESIDENT of the Nigeria Heart Foundation (NHF), Prof. Osaretin Odia, said the growing burden of heart disease, including hypertension and coronary artery disease, coupled with poor access to care and high treatment costs, threatens millions of Nigerians.

He observed that the country is witnessing an epidemiological transition from predominantly infectious diseases affecting the heart to a growing combination of cardiovascular and metabolic diseases.

He identified hypertension as one of the country's major drivers of heart disease, warning that many Nigerians live with elevated blood pressure for years without knowing it because the condition often produces no obvious symptoms.

"Hypertension is a major problem in detection and diagnosis," Odia said.

Available estimates suggest that about 35 to 40 per cent of Nigerian adults have elevated blood pressure, although reliable nationwide figures for several other forms of heart disease remain limited.

The country's changing diet, reduced physical activity, increasing obesity, diabetes,

CONTINUED ON PAGE 25



Chief economist, Dangote Group, Hassan Mahmud (left); Vice Chairman, Crude Oil Refinery-owners Association of Nigeria (CORAN), Duchess Okulaja-Kotun; Lagos State Commissioner for Energy and Mineral Resources, Biodun Ogunleye, representing the governor and Chairman, CORAN, Momoh Oyarekhua, at the opening ceremony of the 3rd edition of Nigeria Oil Refining Summit 2026 hosted by CORAN, in Lagos, yesterday.

Tinubu's absence: Atiku promises 'present' presidency as AAC heads to court

From **Seye Olumide** (Lagos), **Leo Sobechi, Terhemba Daka, Ameh Ochojila** and **Andrew Oota** (Abuja)

- Ex-VP will offer accessible, responsive presidency, says ADC
- AAC asks court to determine legality of Tinubu's extended vacation
- Presidency says Tinubu hale, hearty, directs govt from Europe
- Onanuga cites technology, says physical presence in Abuja unnecessary

THE prolonged absence of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu from Nigeria has emerged as a campaign issue ahead of the 2027 presidential election, with the African Democratic Congress (ADC) Presidential Campaign Council (PCC) promising that its candidate, former Vice President Atiku Abubakar, would provide a "physically present" and responsive presidency if elected.

The development came as the Presidency maintained that Tinubu was hale and hearty and continued to direct the affairs of government from Europe, while the African Action Congress (AAC) approached the Federal High Court, Abuja, over the constitutional implications of the President's extended absence.

The ADC PCC assured Nigerians that Atiku would provide a physically present and responsive presidency if elected on May 29, 2027.

The council said Atiku would not be an "absentee President" who is unavailable when challenges confronting Nigerians require presidential attention.

Director of Media and Publicity of the ADC PCC, Kola Ologbondiyan, gave the assurance yesterday in Abuja while receiving the leadership of the Atiku Unity Movement (AUM), led by Francis Eburuwe.

Ologbondiyan said Atiku had consistently demonstrated an understanding of Nigeria's economic and social challenges and proposed policy interventions to address them.

He recalled that during the 2023 presidential campaign, Atiku advocated a phased approach to the withdrawal of fuel subsidy, arguing that the process should not impose excessive pressure on Nigerians.

According to him, the experience of the past three years has reinforced the need for a presidency that is accessible, responsive and capable of taking timely decisions in the national interest.

"The country needs a President who understands the challenges confronting Nigerians and is physically available to respond to the demands of governance.

"Nigeria cannot afford a situation in which there is uncertainty over who is effectively directing the affairs of government at critical moments. The country requires firm and focused leadership," he said.

Ologbondiyan said Atiku's commitment to governance would focus on addressing the nation's economic difficulties, improving citizens' welfare and restoring confidence in public institutions.

He added that the ADC presidential candidate's recent economic proposals were focused on reducing the burden of rising energy and living costs.

Atiku has publicly proposed a production-based intervention for petroleum products refined in Nigeria, with a fixed spending limit, National Assembly approval and independent audits.

Earlier, the leader of the AUM delegation, Francis Eburuwe, said the group was fully committed to Atiku's candidacy and determined to mobilise Nigerians around what he described as the need for a change in the country's political direction.

AAC asks court to determine constitutionality of Tinubu's extended vacation

THE African Action Congress has approached the Federal High Court in Abuja to determine whether Tinubu was constitutionally required to transmit a written declaration to the National Assembly before extending his vacation outside the country.

The suit, filed yesterday by the party's National Legal Adviser and human rights lawyer, Inibehe Effiong, also challenges the failure of the National Assembly to pass a resolution authorising Vice President Kashim Shettima to perform the functions of Acting President after the period specified under Section 145(1) of the 1999 Constitution.

In the suit, marked FHC/ABJ/CS/2353/2026, the AAC is seeking a declaration that the President's alleged failure or refusal to transmit the required written declaration to the Senate President and Speaker of the House of Representatives is unlawful and unconstitutional.

The party is also asking the court to declare that the National Assembly's failure to pass a resolution enabling Shettima to assume the functions of Acting President after Tinubu's vacation exceeded 21 days is contrary to the Constitution.

Joined as defendants are President Tinubu, the Attorney-General of the Federation and Minister of Justice, Lateef Fagbemi; Senate President Godswill Akpabio; Speaker of the House of Representatives, Tajudeen Abbas; and the National Assembly.

In a 30-paragraph affidavit filed in support of the suit, AAC National Secretary, Oshiokhue Philip Ikpeminoghena, stated that Tinubu travelled out of Nigeria on August 30, 2026, and subsequently announced an extension of his vacation on September 21.

The party is asking the court to issue a perpetual injunction restraining Tinubu and future presidents from proceeding on vacation without complying with the provisions of Section 145(1) of the Constitution.

The AAC is also seeking an order directing the relevant constitutional authorities to comply with the provisions governing the transfer of presidential functions whenever the President is unable to perform his duties.

The suit places before the court a constitutional question over the operation of Section 145(1), particularly the circumstances under which the Vice President assumes the functions of Acting President when the President is away from the country for an extended period.

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

High cost of aviation puts Nigerian airlines under pressure, say operators

By **Olusegun Koiki**

DESPITE the availability of Jet A1 in the country, the soaring cost of the product is putting increasing pressure on Nigerian airlines.

An airline source told *The Guardian* yesterday that a litre of Jet A1 currently sells for about N2,130 in Lagos and Abuja, while the price ranges between N2,180 and N2,230 per litre at airports outside the two major aviation hubs, depending on the location.

The source said that although aviation fuel was available, the major challenge confronting airlines was the high cost of procuring the product, which he said had continued to drive up their operating expenses.

The source also noted that the situation was particularly difficult for indigenous carriers because most of their revenues were generated in naira while a substantial portion of their operating costs was either dollar-denominated or linked to foreign exchange.

He called on the government to intervene in the situation to prevent total collapse of the operating carriers.

Also, Managing Director of Aero Contractors, Ado Sanusi, confirmed that the product was available in the country, dismissing the allegation of its scarcity.

He, however, agreed that the cost of the product remained a major concern for operators.

Dangote Cement Transport wins TCAN award for championing transport industry devt

Dedicates honour to drivers, safety professionals, industry stakeholders

DANGOTE Cement Transport has been honoured with the Champion of Transport Industry Development Award by the Transport Correspondents Association of Nigeria (TCAN) in recognition of the company's contributions to advancing road transport operations, safety standards and logistics efficiency in Nigeria.

The prestigious award was presented during the third transport summit organised by TCAN in Lagos, bringing together key stakeholders, policymakers, regulators and industry leaders to discuss strategies for transforming Nigeria's transport sector and driving sustainable growth.

Leader of the Dangote Cement delegation to the summit, Murilo Silva, who is the Head of Dangote Cement Transport, received the award on behalf of the transport management and reaffirmed Dangote Cement's commitment to promoting safety, innovation and excellence across the transport value chain.

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

FG seeks private sector-led strategy to tackle youth unemployment

By **Gloria Nwafor**

THE Federal Government has moved to place the private sector at the centre of its strategy for tackling unemployment, seeking stronger collaboration with businesses to create sustainable jobs and address the skills gaps confronting young Nigerians.

Ministry of Youth Development said the approach became necessary following lessons from the National Youth Employment Action Plan (NIYEAP) 2021–2024 and other interventions, which showed that government could not address the youth employment challenge alone.

Minister of Youth Development, Ayodele Olawande, who spoke during the opening of a two-day private sector strategy on youth employment workshop in Lagos, said the private sector must play a central role because of its capacity to drive enterprise growth, investment, productivity and job creation.

He said the shared interest provided a basis for a stronger government-private sector partnership on youth employment and Nigeria's broader economic development agenda.

Olawande said that the workshop, attended by representatives of the private sector, International Labour Organisation (ILO), GIZ, MacArthur Foundation, Nigerian Economic Summit Group (NESG), development partners, government institutions and youth-focused organisations, aimed at developing a coordinated private-sector strategy for youth job creation.

According to him, one of the major gaps in previous frameworks was the absence of a sufficiently developed and coordinated private-sector strategy specifically focused on youth employment.

The minister, represented by the ministry's Deputy Director, Ebiho Agun, said the strategy would examine the constraints limiting businesses from employing more young people, including policy and regulatory barriers, infrastructure, financing, skills shortages and other factors affecting investment and business growth.

He said the government would also seek private-sector input on future labour market demand, the skills employers are likely to require over the next five to 10 years, and investment opportunities capable of generating employment at scale.

Olawande said gender and inclusion would form part of the strategy, stressing the need to ensure that jobs created are accessible to young women, persons with disabilities and other groups facing barriers to entering and remaining in the labour market.

He further disclosed that the Private Sector Technical Working Group, launched in 2024, would serve as a platform for sustaining government-business engagement beyond the workshop.

Olawande said the objective was to move beyond identifying challenges to establishing practical actions, clear responsibilities and mechanisms for measuring results.



Bad portion of Oshodi bypass by NAFDAC office in Lagos, yesterday. PHOTO: AYODELE ADENIRAN

SGF tasks MDAs on accountability, public trust, transparency, others

From **Andrew Oota**, Abuja

SECRETARY to the Government of the Federation (SGF), George Akume, has charged Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) to translate the findings of the 2026 Transparency and Integrity Index (TII) into concrete improvements in their operations to strengthen accountability and public trust.

The SGF gave the charge yesterday, in his keynote address during the presentation of the 2026 Transparency and Integrity Index held at the auditorium of the Federal Ministry of Finance in Abuja.

Akume said that the administration of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu remains committed to open, accountable and responsible governance, stressing that public institutions must ensure that their policies, programmes and actions are transparent, visible and understandable to Nigerians.

According to him, the Index has become a vital instrument for assessing accountability, openness and ethical standards across government institutions, while providing MDAs with clear benchmarks to identify areas of strength and gaps requiring improvement.

He, therefore, urged heads of MDAs to integrate the findings and indicators of the Index into strategic planning, performance management, budget priorities, procurement processes, staff training and digital disclosure rather than allow the report to become another document left unused.

"The report should not sit on the shelf and should inform management decisions, budget priorities, procurement processes, staff training, digital disclosure, and how you communicate with the public," he said.

The SGF emphasised that transparency should be viewed as an institutional asset rather than an administrative burden, noting that integrity must be embedded in the procedures and culture of public institutions through clear policies, proper record-keeping, effective oversight, ethical leadership and consequences for wrongdoing.

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

Obasanjo, Sanusi, others seek reforms, sustained anti-graft drive

By **Yetunde Ayobami Ojo**

FORMER President Olusegun Obasanjo, the 15th Emir of Kano, Muhammadu Sanusi II; former Vice President Yemi Osinbajo, and other stakeholders have called for sustained anti-corruption efforts and far-reaching institutional reforms to address unexplained wealth in Nigeria.

They spoke in Lagos at the public presentation of a three-volume book, "Unexplained Wealth: A Trilogy of Nigerian Financial Law," authored by Dr Wahab Shittu (SAN).

The event brought together legal practitioners, policymakers and stakeholders, who collectively underscored the need for stronger institutions, consistent enforcement of laws and sustained commitment to transparency and accountability in Nigeria.

Obasanjo, in his remarks, described corruption as one of the greatest impediments to national development, warning that no country can make meaningful progress if graft is allowed to thrive.

The former President said his commitment deepened through collaboration with German activist, Peter Eigen, with whom he co-founded Transparency International in Germany.

According to him, the organisation was established to confront "grand corruption," particularly in international financial transactions, adding that initial efforts included seeking support from global figures, such as former World Bank President Robert McNamara, who was initially sceptical about the initiative.

He said the organisation later gained global credibility after pushing members of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) to abolish policies that allowed companies to claim tax deductions on bribes paid abroad.

Obasanjo disclosed that his administration drew from Transparency International's model laws to establish the Independent Corrupt Practices and other related Commission (ICPC), noting that the bill faced resistance in the National Assembly.

Sanusi, who emphasised that legal reforms alone were insufficient to tackle unexplained wealth without strong political will and an independent judiciary, warned that laws would have limited impact if investigators, prosecutors and judges failed to act fairly and transparently.

The Emir decried what he described as selective enforcement of anti-corruption laws.

Osinbajo, represented by his former Chief of Staff, Ade Ipaye, said Nigeria requires a constitutionally sound framework for recovering stolen assets without criminalising legitimate wealth.

The former Vice President stressed the need for fairness in enforcement, noting that anti-corruption measures must distinguish between illicit enrichment and lawfully acquired assets.

LASG commits to safer mega city, ease of doing business

Hamzat clarifies 'Lagos traffic as lifestyle' comment amid backlash

By **Victor Gbonegun**

LAGOS State Government has assured young business leaders that it will prioritise making the state the safest mega city in Africa for the business community.

The Deputy Governor, Dr Obafemi Hamzat, gave the assurance during an evening with young business leaders organised by 7-Fifteen Capital, a luxury real estate development firm in Lagos.

Hamzat stated that the ambition of the government is to make Lagos a place where people and businesses can thrive and systems of government work more efficiently.

The deputy governor and the All Progressives Congress (APC) governorship candidate for the 2027 election, said his vision and priorities for Lagos State would focus on creating an environment that supports businesses, attracts investment and improves the quality of life for residents.

Meanwhile, Hamzat has defended his description of traffic congestion in the state as a "lifestyle", saying the remark was taken out of context and misinterpreted on social media.

Hamzat made the clarification in a video shared on Sunday via the X account of the Senior Special Assistant to Lagos State Governor on Media, Wale Ajetunmobi, following criticism of his remarks at Podfest Naija 2026.

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

King's College concession: Committee postpones sitting till tomorrow, may seek extension

From **Owede Agbajileke**, Abuja

THE seven-member committee set up to review the controversial concession of the 117-year-old King's College, Lagos, is yet to sit.

The panel is likely to seek an extension after its inaugural meeting was postponed from yesterday to tomorrow.

The delay comes just days before the expiration of the two-week window agreed by the Federal Government, the labour unions and King's College Old Boys' Association (KCOBA) to resolve the dispute, raising questions over whether the panel will have sufficient time to examine the contentious agreement and submit its recommendations.

A member of the committee, who spoke with *The Guardian*, revealed that the inaugural meeting was earlier slated for 10:00 a.m. on Monday, shifted to 2:00 p.m. before it was postponed to Wednesday.

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20-year-old narrates how he allegedly crushed police sergeant to death in Lagos

By **Eniola Daniel**

A 20-year-old phone seller, Olusola Olumide, has narrated how he allegedly crushed a police sergeant to death during a stop-and-search operation in Lagos.

The incident occurred on September 26, 2026, at about 2:20 p.m., along Olugbede Street, Egbeda, Lagos State, when police officers on stop-and-search duty signalled a Lexus ES 350, with registration number FKJ 223 KX, driven by Olumide, to stop.

According to a police source, the driver initially stopped but suddenly sped off as Sergeant Johnson Okediji approached the driver's side of the vehicle.

The officer was reportedly knocked down and dragged underneath the vehicle for several metres despite repeated attempts by police officers and passers-by to make the driver stop. The driver was eventually chased and arrested.

The sergeant sustained multiple fractures and head injuries. He was taken to a nearby hospital and later referred to the Lagos State University Teaching Hospital (LASUTH), where he was pronounced dead on arrival.

Olumide, while narrating his account of the incident, said the vehicle's brake failed and that he accidentally ran over the officer.

He said: "My car brake failed and I accidentally ran over the officer. I was about to park, but there was a slip and I hit a car in front of me. He was in front, and I couldn't stop the car. I have been using the vehicle for a month. I took the car to the mechanic to change the brake pad, and he told me that he had changed it. The next day, I went to buy fuel before I saw the officers. The police officers know me, and they know I didn't do it deliberately. I regret hitting an officer of the law. I'm pained that he's dead."



Paraded exhibits yesterday. PHOTO: ENIOLA DANIEL

The incident was among cases recorded by the Lagos State Police Command in September as part of its enforcement operations against armed robbery, cultism, unlawful possession of firearms and other violent crimes.

The command said the operations resulted in the recovery of firearms, ammunition, stolen items and other incriminating exhibits.

According to the command, 43 vehicles and two vehicle keys, vandalised electrical wires, N2.5 million cash, five pump-action guns and five locally made pistols were recovered.

23-year-old woman dies after giving birth to twins at Benue IDP camp

From **Samson Kukwa-Yanor**, Makurdi

A 23-year-old woman, Mrs Seember Rochas, has died after giving birth to twin boys at the Ortese Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) camp in Benue State.

The woman's husband, 27-year-old Mr Mende Rochas, told *The Guardian* that his wife delivered the twins successfully but died about two hours later.

According to him, his wife went into labour at about 7:00 p.m. on September 9, when staff at the camp's makeshift health post had closed for the day.

He said she eventually delivered the babies inside the camp without medical assistance but developed complications afterwards and died at about 9:00 p.m.

Rochas said his wife had received antenatal care at the health post during her pregnancy, but there was no medical personnel available when she went into labour.



Late Seember Rochas

"There is a makeshift health stand at the camp where pregnant women receive antenatal care. But my wife went into labour around 7:00 p.m., when the staff had already closed for the day," he said.

He added that there was no one available to provide the medical attention she urgently needed after the delivery.

The newborns, both boys, are still at the camp, where some elderly women have been assisting their father in caring for them.

The bereaved husband said camp officials initially provided some baby food for the newborns, but the supplies had since been exhausted.

Man arrested after 42-year-old stabbed to death in Cross River

From **Solomon Azu**, Calabar

THE Cross River State Police Command has arrested a murder suspect in connection with the alleged killing of a 42-year-old man at Kekoti, Ajere, in Yakurr Local Council.

The command also launched a manhunt for persons who allegedly attacked the Ekori Police Division following the arrest.

In a statement signed by the spokesperson, ASP Eitokpah Sunday Akata, the command said the incident occurred at about 1:00 a.m. on September 27, 2026, following an alleged dispute over N500.

According to the police, the victim, Ayei Ekpe Ibor, 42, of Okonobngha, Ajere, was allegedly stabbed during an altercation with Ebino Mbang Ikpi, a resident of Kekoti, Ajere.

The disagreement reportedly arose over the money said to have been given as a gift to both men.

Ibor was confirmed dead following the stabbing, while the suspect reportedly fled the scene.

The police said operatives immediately commenced a search for the suspect and the recovery of the deceased's remains for medical certification.

At about 8:40 a.m. the same day, operatives reportedly tracked and arrested Ikpi at his hideout in the Ajere-Ekori area. He was subsequently taken to the Yakurr Police Division for detention and further investigation.

However, shortly after the arrest, tension reportedly escalated as sympathisers and other persons mobilised and attacked the Ekori Police Division, demanding the release of the suspect.

Police raid suspected criminal camps in Abia, recover 28 skulls, bones

By **Bertram Nwannekanma**

THE Abia State Police Command has raided suspected criminal camps in the forests of Umuaku and Nneato in Isuochi, Umunneochi Local Council, recovering 28 human skulls and bones.

The command said the remains were suspected to be those of victims of kidnapping.

The operation was part of the ongoing intelligence-led raids under the command's 'Operation No Hideout for Criminal Elements in the state.'

According to a statement issued yesterday by the Police Public Relations Officer, DSP Maureen Chioma Chinaka, operatives of the Violent Crime Response Unit, Anti-Kidnapping Unit, Anti-Cultism Unit, Intelligence Response Unit, Rapid Response Squad and Isuochi Divisional Police Station participated in the operation.

Chimamanda Adichie: Court fixes Oct 12 to rule on challenge to coroner's inquest

By **Oludare Richards**

THE Lagos State High Court sitting in Ikoyi has fixed October 12, 2026, to rule on an application seeking to halt the coroner's inquest into the circumstances surrounding the death of Nkanu, son of celebrated Nigerian author, Chimamanda Adichie.

Justice Aishat Opesanwo fixed the date after hearing arguments on the application filed by Eurapharma Care Services Nigeria Limited, operators of Euracare Multi-Specialist Hospital, where Nkanu allegedly died during medical procedures on January 7, 2026.

The hospital is seeking, among other reliefs, orders of certiorari to quash decisions already made in relation to the inquest and a prohibition restraining the coroner, Magistrate Atinuke Adetunji, from proceeding with the investigation.

The hospital, through its counsel, Prof Taiwo Osipitan, raised concerns over fair hearing, the order in which witnesses would testify, and the jurisdiction of the coroner following the cremation of the deceased's body.

Osipitan argued that the hospital and its personnel, against whom allegations of medical negligence had been made, were being required to open their case before the family that made the allegations had presented its own case.

He contended that although a coroner's inquest was inquisitorial in form, it was "accusatorial in substance" in the circumstances of the case because the deceased's family had alleged that his death resulted from acts or omissions amounting to medical incompetence.

NDLEA, Army destroy cannabis farms, arrest two suspects in Edo

From **Joseph Kanjo**, Benin

THE National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA), in collaboration with the Nigerian Army, has destroyed two cannabis plantations and arrested two suspects at Eko Camp, Illushi, in the Esan South East Local Government Area of Edo State.

The NDLEA Edo State Commander, Mitchell Ofoyeju, disclosed this yesterday in a statement in Benin.

Ofoyeju said the plantations measured 0.544092 hectares, with an estimated yield of 1,360.23kg of cannabis. He added that 107kg of processed cannabis, including seeds, was also recovered.

The commander identified the suspects as 43-year-old Ajeh Egwuda, who is married with two children, and Nonso Ajodhe, who is married with five children.

According to him, both suspects are indigenes of Esan South East Local Government Area and claimed they took to cannabis cultivation because of poverty and the negative influence of friends.

Ofoyeju said Egwuda was found cultivating a cannabis farm measuring 0.068011 hectares, with an estimated yield of 170.03kg, while Ajodhe was found with a larger plantation measuring 0.476081 hectares.

Fire destroys multi-million-naira property at Customs Western Marine Command

By **Adaku Onyenucheya**

A fire outbreak at the Nigeria Customs Service (NCS) Western Marine Command office in Ibafon, Apapa, Lagos, yesterday destroyed property worth millions of naira.

The fire started at about 10:20 a.m. in the command's conference room, reportedly following an electrical surge, before spreading rapidly through the building.

The Guardian learnt that Customs officers on duty attempted to contain the fire before personnel of the Lagos State Fire and Rescue Service arrived at about 10:43 a.m. and put out the blaze.

The Deputy Comptroller of Customs, Timothy Jonah, who had just resumed at the command to take over from his predecessor, Comptroller Patrick Ntadi, expressed shock over the incident.

Describing the fire as unfortunate, Jonah said, "I just resumed duty to take over, only to witness this fire outbreak. Every challenge, though negative, is an opportunity to strengthen our operations.



Scene of the fire incident yesterday.

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TheMetroSection

Housewife arrested for alleged killing of co-wife in Bauchi

From **Rauf Oyewole,** Bauchi

THE Bauchi State Police Command has arrested a 33-year-old housewife, Hauwa'u Haruna, for allegedly hitting her co-wife, Jamila Adamu, 43, with a pestle, resulting in her death at Tafawa Balewa Housing Estate, Bauchi metropolis.

The incident was reported on Sunday, September 27, 2026, at the C-Division Police Station, Bauchi, according to the Police Public Relations Officer, SP Nafiu Habib.

Habib said preliminary investigations indicated that a domestic incident occurred between the two co-wives, who lived in the same household with their husband.

"Our preliminary investigation revealed that the second wife, one Hauwa'u Haruna, 33 years old, allegedly acting under hallucinations, armed herself with a pestle and struck the first wife, one Jamila Adamu, 43 years old, on the forehead. Consequently, the victim fell unconscious," he said.



The police spokesperson said officers documented the scene before the victim was rushed to the Specialist Hospital, Bauchi, where she was certified dead.

"Her corpse has been deposited at the hospital mortuary for autopsy," he added.

Habib said the suspect had been arrested, adding that the Commissioner of Police, Aliyu Sani-Omolori, had directed that the case be transferred to the State Criminal Investigation Department (SCID) for discreet investigation and prosecution.

Group urges DSS, police to investigate cleric over alleged inflammatory remarks

By **Eniola Daniel**

THE Patrick Anum Advocacy Group has petitioned the Department of State Services (DSS), the Plateau State Police Command and the state Attorney-General, seeking an investigation into public remarks attributed to the National Chairman of the Council of Ulama, Jama'atu Izalatul Bid'ah Wa'Ikamatis Sunnah (JIBWIS), Sheikh Sani Yahaya Jingir.

The group said the remarks, particularly recent comments on the religious and demographic composition of Plateau State, had the potential to heighten existing inter-communal and inter-religious tensions.

According to the group, Jingir, on Saturday, September 26, 2026, asserted that Muslims constitute a majority in Plateau State compared with Christians but were being marginalised.

The advocacy group said the claim was concerning, particularly given Plateau State's history of communal and religious conflicts.

The petition also referenced remarks allegedly made by Jingir a few weeks earlier, in which he reportedly said Nigeria was a Muslim country and that anyone unwilling to accept a Muslim-Muslim presidential ticket should leave the country.

The group further alleged that on August 9, 2026, while addressing supporters at the "Abba Go Again" campaign event for the Kano State governor in Kano, Jingir referred to non-Muslims as "infidels."

It said such remarks were particularly troubling against the backdrop of recent attacks and displacement of communities in parts of Plateau State, alleging that inflammatory rhetoric could be used to justify violence.

Founder of the Patrick Anum Advocacy Group, Patrick Anum, said the assertion about the religious and demographic balance of Plateau State could deepen existing tensions if interpreted as a justification for altering the state's political or demographic structure.

Anum said the group was also concerned that similar remarks attributed to Jingir over the years suggested what it described as a pattern of inflammatory rhetoric.

"We note that these remarks have already attracted public condemnation," Anum said, adding that the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), on August 11, 2026, publicly described the earlier statements as hate speech and incitement to religious hatred and potential violence.

According to him, the NHRC had called on the Inspector-General of Police, the Director-General of the DSS and other relevant authorities to arrest and prosecute Jingir.

"We join the NHRC in calling for his arrest. To our knowledge, no arrest had been announced nor public charges filed as at the date of this petition," he said.



Mamza urges northerners to take greater role in tackling insecurity

From **Joy Dennis,** Yola

THE Catholic Bishop of Yola Diocese, Stephen Dami Mamza, has urged people of Northern Nigeria to take greater responsibility for addressing the insecurity and mass displacement ravaging the region.

Mamza said the crisis could not be resolved by government action alone, stressing the need for communities and citizens to play an active role in confronting its root causes.

He spoke during a Mass to mark the World Day of Migrants and Refugees at Christ the King Catholic Church, Sangere Numan Road, Yola.

Speaking on the theme, "Even Just One of These Children," the bishop said communities must complement government efforts by promoting peace and addressing factors contributing to insecurity and displacement.

He noted that many of the factors driving insecurity and displacement in Nigeria were concentrated in the northern region, making it imperative for its people to take a leading role in finding lasting solutions.

Mamza also urged Christians to translate their faith into practical acts of compassion, stressing that genuine commitment to humanity must go beyond words and religious declarations.

Citing a 2025 report by the United Nations refugee agency, he said about 117.8 million people had been forcibly displaced worldwide, with millions affected across sub-Saharan Africa.

According to him, Nigeria accounts for about 3.7 million displaced people, with the North-East, North-West and North-Central regions bearing a significant share of the burden.

The bishop lamented that persistent insecurity had destroyed communities, separated families and forced thousands of people from their homes, particularly across northern Nigeria.

He called for stronger cooperation among citizens, government institutions, religious organisations and traditional authorities, saying collective action was essential to restoring peace and creating conditions for displaced persons to return home.

Mamza particularly appealed to political, religious and traditional leaders in the North-East to set aside political and other interests and prioritise peace, justice, security and the resettlement of displaced persons.

Senior citizens laud church for prioritising elders' welfare

From **Ann Godwin**, Port Harcourt

SENIOR citizens across Rivers State and the Niger Delta have commended Gateway International Church, Port Harcourt, for organising a comprehensive support programme aimed at promoting their wellbeing and improving their quality of life.

The initiative, which featured recreation, social interaction, health education, physical exercise, counselling, free medical care and the distribution of food and gift items, brought together hundreds of senior citizens from different ethnic and social backgrounds.

The two-day programme was organised as part of the church's annual Elders Day of Honour, an initiative now in its fourth year, designed to promote the physical, social and financial wellbeing of senior citizens.

Health experts were also on hand to provide health education, conduct medical checks and offer guidance on healthy ageing.

An 81-year-old participant, Festus Akpelu, commended the initiative, particularly the health education, physical exercise sessions and free medical care.

Akpelu said the programme had made participants more conscious of their health and could contribute to healthier ageing.

"This programme is very fine and fantastic. If it can be sustained, I believe many elderly people will benefit. There are some people who do not have money to treat themselves when they are sick, but from the sensitisation and the exercise, we have been strengthened," he said.

He added that regular exercise could help senior citizens maintain their strength and reduce the risk of health-related complications.



Some senior citizens at the programme

The Lead Pastor of Gateway International Church, Pastor George Izunwa, said the initiative was designed to address some of the gaps in society and promote healthier and longer lives for senior citizens.

Izunwa said the programme was also intended to encourage individuals and organisations to complement government efforts in addressing the challenges confronting ageing people.

According to him, the initiative was driven by the desire to give back to society and respond to areas where support was lacking.

He said senior citizens remained important contributors to families and communities, particularly in preserving culture, traditions, language and history.

"Elders have a lot to add, starting from the family. One of the things that elders can give to the children is a little bit of acculturation, bringing them to understand the traditions, the cultures, the language and history of any community. Without them, you can't have that," he said.

Izunwa said healthy ageing should go beyond longevity to encompass good health, strength, quality of life, prosperity, peace and the ability to leave a lasting legacy.

He urged members of society not to sideline elderly people, stressing that many senior citizens remained healthy, productive and capable of making meaningful contributions to their families and communities.

Also speaking, the Directorate Head, Community Impact, Dr Onyeije Ebere Chinecherem, said the initiative provided holistic support for senior citizens through recreation, social interaction, health education and material assistance.

CAN urges FG to rescue 78 abducted Borno schoolchildren

From **Njadvara Musa,** Maiduguri

THE Borno State chapter of the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) has urged the Federal Government to intensify efforts to rescue 78 schoolchildren abducted from communities in Askira-Uba Local Government Area of the state.

The association said the children were abducted from schools in Mussa and Lassa communities and had remained in captivity since May and June 2026.

The state CAN Chairman, Most Rev. John Bakeni, made the call on Sunday during a prayer session organised in Maiduguri to mark CAN's 50th anniversary.

Bakeni, who is also the Auxiliary Bishop of the Catholic Diocese of Maiduguri, described the anniversary celebration in Borno as a sober one, given the insecurity and economic hardship confronting residents.

"As you know, CAN is 50. Nationwide, there are lots of events and activities that have been lined up, of which all the state chapters have been invited and asked to key into, so that we can thank God for bringing us together under one umbrella as a body of Christ."

Sokoto earmarks N1.59b for 30 Hilux vans to boost security

By **Bertram Nwannekanma**

THE Sokoto State Government has approved N1.59 billion for the procurement of 30 Toyota Hilux vans to strengthen the operational capacity of security agencies in the fight against banditry and other criminal activities.

The vehicles, according to the Director General, Media and Publicity, Government House, Sokoto, Abubakar Bawa, will complement more than 200 Hilux vans and 62 armoured vehicles previously procured and distributed to security agencies across the state.

Bawa disclosed this in a statement issued yesterday at the end of the eighth regular meeting of the Sokoto State Executive Council, presided over by Governor Ahmed Aliyu Sokoto.

He said the Council awarded the contract for the 30 Toyota Hilux vans at N1,592,250,000 as part of efforts to further enhance security operations across the state.

The Council also approved a bill for a law to enact the Sokoto State Banditry Special Prohibition Law, 2026, aimed at strengthening legal measures against the activities of armed bandits.

In addition, the Council approved N776.34 million for the procurement of 10 Mitsubishi Canter vans and N122 million for two Toyota Hilux vans.

On infrastructure and education, Bawa said the Council approved N118.14 million for the completion of 30 lock-up shops at the Sokoto State Transport Authority terminal.

PUBLIC NOTICE

IN RESPECT OF THE GRANT OF A SPECIAL CONCESSION TO PROCESS "DOUBLE CONSENT" APPLICATIONS OVER A LAND TRANSACTION

We, **PINERIDGE MEADOWS LIMITED**, a limited liability company duly registered under the laws of the Federal Republic of Nigeria with its address for business at Plot 1049, Abagbon Close, Victoria Island, Lagos, HEREBY NOTIFY THE GENERAL PUBLIC of our intention to submit an Application to the Federal Ministry of Housing and Urban Development, for the Grant of the Consent of the Honourable Minister for Housing and Urban Development to the transfer of title to all that property measuring approximately 1,809.193 square metres and forming part of the larger parcel of land situate at Block 5, Flat 25 – 30, (now known as No. 25B), Webb Road, Ikoyi, Lagos, containing an area of approximately 5,372.919 square metres, (hereinafter referred to as the "Demised Property") from Fezel Nigeria Limited to Pineridge Meadows Limited.

BE IT KNOWN THEREFORE:

A. That by virtue of a Federal Government of Nigeria Certificate of Occupancy dated the 14th day of April, 2005, and registered as No. 78 at Page 78 in Volume 296, of the Federal Lands Registry Office, Ikoyi, Lagos, the Federal Government of Nigeria granted to, and vested in (1) Mr. Sunday Olufemi Bamidele, (2) John Bitrus Manget, (3) Mrs. Aishatu Idris, and (4) Mr. Douglas Osato Osunde (hereinafter collectively referred to as the "**Grantees**"), the statutory Right of Occupancy over all that Demised Property together with the appurtenances thereto, situate at Block 5, Flat 25-30 (now known as No. 25B), Webb Road, Ikoyi, Lagos.

B. That the Grantees subsequently transferred their ownership and interest in the Demised Property to Fezel Nigeria Limited.

C. That by virtue of a Deed of Assignment made by parties sometime in 2025, Fezel Nigeria Limited transferred to Pineridge Meadows Limited, a portion of the Property measuring approximately 1,809.193 squares metres.

D. That owing to operational exigencies, it has become expedient for Pineridge Meadows Limited to take steps to apply for the Consent of the Honourable Minister of the Federal Ministry of Housing and Urban Development to the transfer of title from Fezel Nigeria Limited to Pineridge Meadows Limited.

E. That Notice is hereby given to the general public that Pineridge Meadows Limited has applied to the Honourable Minister of Housing and Urban Development for consent to transfer the title of the above-mentioned Demised Property from Fezel Nigeria Limited to Pineridge Meadows Limited. Any objection to this publication should be submitted to the Office of the Surveyor-General of the Federation within 14 days from the date of this publication, at No. 8, Yawuri Street, Garki II, FCT, Abuja.

F. That neither the Federal Government of Nigeria nor the Federal of Housing and Urban Development shall be held liable for any claim for refund, compensation, or damages for any loss incurred by any third party in connection with the registration of the title of the Demised Properties.

G. That Pineridge Meadows Limited Hereby Undertakes to be fully and sufficiently liable under the law should any fact, representation, statement, or information contained in this publication, or in the application for, and processing of, the Consent of the Honourable Minister of the Federal Ministry of Housing and Urban Development be found to be false, misleading or deceitful.

Signed for Pineridge Meadows Limited by:
Mayowa Daniel (Mr.)

World Report

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Russian strikes kill eight, injure dozens across Ukraine

A RUSSIAN military strike on northeastern Kharkiv, Ukraine's second-largest city, has injured at least 22 people, including children, less than a day after eight people were killed in attacks nationwide.

Kharkiv Mayor, Ihor Terekov said on his Telegram account that a guided Russian aerial bomb hit an apartment block yesterday, destroying two floors of the multi-storey building.

He said six children were among the injured. Russian attacks were also reported across Ukraine.

Ukrainian Minister of Internal Affairs, Ivan Vyhivskyi said three people, including a 16-year-old girl, were killed in air strikes that damaged a children's centre in the northern city of Sumy.

Authorities in the Odesa region, meanwhile, said a massive strike on the south of the Black Sea region killed one person and damaged residential buildings, a shop, a hotel, a medical building, and a grain warehouse.

And in the capital, Kyiv, Mayor Vitali Klitschko said a woman and two 16-year-olds were injured and hospitalised.

"The enemy continues to relentlessly attack the Kyiv region with strike drones. Sixteen sites have been damaged, including 12 houses, a warehouse and a production facility," the city's administration said.

Ukrainian President, Volodymyr Zelenskyy said that three people were killed in strikes in the southern Zaporizhia region and that a Russian drone strike had killed one man in Kyiv.

Zelenskyy said in a post on his X (formerly Twitter) account that Russia had launched more than 2,200 attack drones, 1,630 aerial bombs and 38 missiles of various types against Ukraine in the past week.

"If Russia were truly preparing for any real steps towards de-escalation, as it claims, particularly to American negotiators, this wave of Shahed terror would not be happening," Zelenskyy said in later comments, referring to the Iran-developed drones Moscow has used against Ukraine.

Seoul summons Ukraine envoy over North Korean prisoner-of-war row

SOUTH Korea has summoned Ukraine's acting ambassador after President Volodymyr Zelenskyy last week announced his government had transferred two captured North Korean soldiers to Seoul.

Vice Foreign Minister, Park Yoon-joo lodged a formal complaint with Andrii Vieshkin and expressed strong regret that Zelenskyy had revealed the transfer, which Seoul said was supposed to be a secret.

Ukraine's foreign ministry declined to comment when approached by the BBC .

In early 2025, Ukraine said its forces had captured two North Korean soldiers as prisoners of war in Russia's Kursk Oblast.

After more than a year of negotiations between Seoul and Kyiv, Zelenskyy announced they had been transferred to South Korea at the UN General Assembly last

The two North Koreans, who were among thousands of soldiers supporting Russia in the Ukraine war, had earlier told local media they wanted to be sent to South Korea.

President Lee Jae Myung called the disclosure greatly disappointing and said the transfer was a highly sensitive issue impacting national security.



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Editorial

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Leveraging BOI's mobilised capital for industrialisation

NIGERIA'S industrial ambitions will not be realised through policy declarations alone. They require patient capital, competent institutions and a financial system capable of converting savings into factories, machinery, technology, jobs and competitive businesses. The Bank of Industry's (BOI) recent N274.1868 billion Series 1 Development Bond is therefore more than a financing transaction. It is a test of whether Nigeria can mobilise domestic capital for productive investment and whether a development-finance institution can translate investor confidence into broad-based economic transformation.

The five-year fixed-rate bond, priced at 17.60 per cent and due in 2031, reportedly attracted strong institutional demand and was oversubscribed within five working days. Pension fund administrators, banks, development finance institutions, corporates, and other investors participated in the offer, with the Nigeria Sovereign Investment Authority and the International Finance Corporation among the reported institutional anchors. The result is a vote of confidence in BOI.

It is also an endorsement of the capacity of Nigeria's domestic capital market to provide long-term naira financing for the productive economy. But the bond is only a means to an end. Its success must ultimately be judged not by the amount raised, or even by the speed of subscription, but by what the capital achieves. Does it expand productive capacity? Does it help businesses create and retain jobs? Does it strengthen local supply chains, increase exports, support women and young entrepreneurs, and reduce dependence on imported goods? Those are the questions that should define the transaction's real value.

For many years, BOI has built a significant record of accessing international financial institutions and global capital markets. That international funding remains important, particularly for infrastructure, industrial expansion and programmes requiring foreign currency. But a development-finance institution with a predominantly Nigerian mandate must also cultivate reliable access to domestic long-term capital.

The reason is straightforward. Many Nigerian businesses earn their revenues in naira. Financing them with long-term naira liabilities reduces the risk that exchange-rate movements will render otherwise viable projects unmanageable. It also allows BOI to align the currency and tenor of its funding with the needs of the manufacturers, farmers, processors, technology firms and service providers it supports.

A deeper domestic capital market provides benefits beyond BOI. It allows pension funds, insurers, asset managers and other institutional investors to participate more directly in Nigeria's development while holding instruments suited to their risk and return requirements. It also creates a channel through which the country's pool of institutional savings can support long-term enterprise rather than remain concentrated in short-term or government-related assets. This is the central logic of modern development finance. Public institutions do not have sufficient funds to finance development on their own. Their role is to mobilise private capital, share risks, prepare viable projects and invest where commercial finance is either unavailable or too expensive.

The International Finance Corporation, for example, combines direct investment, advisory support, and private capital mobilisation to assist enterprises ranging from microbusinesses to large corporations. In 2024, multilateral development banks and development-finance institutions mobilised a reported $278.5 billion in private finance. The lesson for Nigeria is clear: the impact of BOI should be measured not only by what it lends, but by what it enables others to invest.

Industrialisation is often associated with large factories, steel plants, cement works and major infrastructure. Those enterprises matter, but industrial growth also depends on thousands of smaller firms that supply components, transport goods, process agricultural products, provide services and employ local workers.

BOI's importance lies partly in its ability to operate across this spectrum. Large manufacturers require long-term project finance, equipment finance, working capital and support for expansion. Medium-sized businesses need credit to formalise operations, acquire machinery, meet quality standards and enter larger supply chains. Micro and nano enterprises require smaller loans, business advisory services, digital tools and a realistic path towards formal finance.

The bank's reported interventions reflect this range. It says loans disbursed to enterprises across 14 sectors nearly doubled to N1.3 trillion between 2023 and 2025, while total assets increased from N3.9 trillion to approximately N7 trillion. It also reports support for rural enterprises, women-owned businesses, youth-led ventures and beneficiaries of the Federal Government's N200 billion grants and loans programme. Programmes such as the Rural Area Program for Investment and Development and the Guaranteed Loan for Women demonstrate an understanding that access to finance must not be limited to established corporate borrowers.

The reported support for rural businesses and women-owned firms is particularly important in an economy where geography, informality, inadequate collateral and unequal access to networks often prevent capable entrepreneurs from obtaining credit.Yet lending figures alone cannot establish development impact. A loan may create a new job, preserve an existing one, refinance a previous obligation or support an enterprise that would have expanded without public assistance.These outcomes have different economic meanings.

BOI's evolving role is comparable in broad terms to that of institutions such as Brazil's BNDES, Germany's KfW and the IFC. These institutions differ in ownership and scale, but successful development banks generally combine long-term finance with technical expertise, risk-sharing, guarantees, equity investment, project preparation and rigorous evaluation.

BOI's expansion into leasing, guarantees, impact investment, climate finance, and digital enterprise support is encouraging. Industrialisation in the 21st century is not confined to traditional manufacturing. It includes agro-processing, renewable energy, healthcare, logistics, recycling, digital services and creative industries. The bank's support for innovation hubs, women-owned enterprises, climate adaptation and digital businesses suggests a broader understanding of productive capacity. That is welcome. But the more extensive BOI's mandate becomes, the more important it is to establish priorities, publish results and prevent resources from being spread too thinly.

To enhance impact, BOI must preserve its institutional independence and credit discipline. Development finance is easily weakened by political interference, opaque beneficiary selection and pressure to lend on non-commercial terms without adequate compensation. Clear eligibility rules, professional underwriting, transparent procurement and strong board oversight are indispensable. Second, concessionary lending should be accounted for openly. Third, Nigeria needs a stronger credit-guarantee system. Many viable small businesses lack conventional collateral, while lenders remain cautious because loan recovery can be slow and expensive. Guarantees can reduce risk and encourage commercial lending, but they must be properly priced, transparently reported and subject to strict controls against moral hazard.

Fourth, credit must be accompanied by enterprise development. Small businesses often struggle not only because they lack access to loans but also because they have weak accounting, limited market access, unreliable power supply, poor management systems, and inadequate technical capacity. BOI should expand support for bookkeeping, certification, digital payments, business planning, productivity improvement and links to large anchor buyers.

Finally, the government must address the conditions that no development bank can solve alone. Unreliable electricity, poor transport networks, port congestion, insecurity, multiple taxation, and regulatory uncertainty can undermine the gains achieved by a well-structured loan. Industrial finance works best when supported by dependable infrastructure and predictable public policy.

BOI deserves credit for recognising that industrialisation requires more than conventional lending. Its domestic bond, growing access to long-term capital and interventions across large, medium, small and informal enterprises represent important progress. Nevertheless, a DFI must show not only how much it mobilised, but where the money went, who benefited, what risks it assumed and what changed as a result.

The N274.18 billion bond should therefore be regarded as a beginning rather than an end. Its ultimate success will be seen in factories that expand, businesses that survive, suppliers that enter formal value chains, exports that rise and jobs that endure. Nigeria needs BOI to be ambitious, innovative and willing to take development risks. It also needs the bank to be transparent, professionally managed and rigorous in measuring results.

If BOI can combine capital mobilisation with accountability, additionality, independent evaluation and serious support for enterprise development, it can help transform Nigeria's savings into productive capacity. Development financing will ultimately be judged by the industrial future built with mobilised funds.



LETTER

Imo and inconclusive teachers' recruitment

SIR: The governor of Abia State, Alex Chioma Otti, came to office in May 2023.Within three years, he has recruited almost 10,000 teachers for the state's public secondary and primary schools. These recruitments were done in two batches.

First, he recruited about 5,000 teachers when he was barely one year in office. Recently, he made the second recruitment of nearly 5,000 teachers as well. All these teachers have been posted to various places of service.

In Enugu State, the governor was also elected at the same time as his colleague in Abia State. A visit to Enugu State will confirm that the governor has changed the landscape of the public secondary and primary schools with his smart schools' model.

In Anambra State, the governor also did teachers' recruitments within his first four years. It's almost certain that he will also do the same in his second and last term now.

In unfortunate sharp contrast, the last teachers' recruitment here in Imo State was in 2016, that's 10 years ago. The public secondary and primary schools in the state are in the most derelict and dilapidated form.

Governor Hope Uzodimma has been in office for almost seven years now. He started his own brand of teachers' recruitment in 2022, two years after he came to office.

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

Ifeanyi Maduako wrote from Owerri via ifeanyimaduako2017@gmail.com.

Opinion

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Recalibrating MPR from volatility to macroeconomic stability

By Isah Aliyu Chiroma

IN a move that has sent clear ripples across Nigeria's financial landscape, the Central Bank of Nigeria's Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) has taken the bold step of resetting the Monetary Policy Rate (MPR) to 23 per cent. This significant decision, reached at the MPC's 307th meeting on September 21 and 22, 2026, is not just a technical adjustment, but a profound statement of intent, a recalibration designed to reinforce the primacy and effectiveness of monetary policy in steering the nation's economic direction.

The MPC's action to reset the Monetary Policy Rate and recalibrate the Standing Facilities Corridor (+50/-300 basis points) around the MPR marks a strategic operational realignment, aimed at enhancing the transmission of monetary policy throughout the economy. While the Committee was clear that this recalibration does not constitute a shift in the overall monetary policy stance, it is an unmistakable signal of the CBN's resolve to strengthen its policy toolkit and support Nigeria's transition towards an inflation-targeting framework.

For years, the effectiveness of Nigeria's monetary policy transmission had been challenged by a divergence between the MPR and prevailing market rates. This disconnect weakened the capacity of the CBN to influence market outcomes, dulled the signaling power of the MPR, and threatened the credibility of monetary policy as a whole. The Committee's decision to reset the MPR, therefore, is a bold acknowledgement of these challenges and a determined effort to restore the MPR as the anchor of the country's monetary policy framework.

The timing of this move is as significant as the decision itself. The MPC cited a host of positive macroeconomic indicators that provided the necessary "headroom" for this operational reset. Among these is the steady moderation in inflation, headline inflation slowed to 15.39 percent in August 2026, marking three consecutive months of decline, and food inflation fell to 19.57 percent. On a broader scale, the 12-month moving average for headline inflation has declined for twenty consecutive months, a testament to the sustained easing of underlying price pressures.

Alongside this, Nigeria's external sector has shown robust improvement. The balance of payments recorded a surplus of $3.51 billion in Q2 2026, up from $2.38 billion in the first quarter, and the current account surplus surged by nearly 68 per cent. These trends have been bolstered by strengthening external reserves, which stood at $55.25 billion as of mid-September—enough to finance over 11 months of imports, the highest level in 18 years.

Real GDP growth has also accelerated, reaching 4.43 per cent in Q2 2026, up from 3.89 percent in the previous quarter. Both the oil and non-oil sectors have contributed to this growth, with the non-oil sector expanding by over four per cent, driven by information and communications technology, agriculture, real estate, and trade. Importantly, the banking sector has strengthened further following the successful recapitalisation-programme, enhancing the sector's resilience and capacity to finance long-term projects.

The recalibration of the MPR also comes at a time of improved policy coordination. The Committee welcomed the recent Memorandum of Understanding between the Federal Government and the CBN on fiscal-monetary coordination, providing a structured framework for policy harmonisation and the pursuit of low and stable inflation. Measures such as the Presidential Initiative on National Affordable CNG Transit Programme are expected to further support the disinflation process by reducing transportation costs—a major input in Nigeria's price structure.

Investor confidence has been buoyed by these positive developments, as reflected in a strengthening naira, robust external reserves, and improving macroeconomic fundamentals. The MPC's bold action serves to reinforce this confidence, signaling to both domestic and international stakeholders that the CBN is proactively addressing structural impediments to policy effectiveness.

The MPC's decision takes place against the backdrop of a challenging global environment. While global growth is projected to slow to 3.0 percent in 2026 due to Middle East conflict, persistent trade uncertainty, and elevated energy prices, Nigeria's economy has demonstrated increasing resilience. Domestic output growth is set to remain robust, supported by improved oil production, expanding agriculture, and positive business sentiment—as indicated by a rising Purchasing Managers' Index.

Risks to global inflation remain, with supply chain disruptions, commodity price volatility, and geopolitical tensions posing upside risks. However, the MPC remains confident that Nigeria's policy environment and recent operational adjustments will help buffer the domestic economy against external shocks.

The recalibration of the MPR and policy corridor is not a one-off event but part of a broader commitment to data-dependent policymaking. The MPC has pledged to closely monitor the effectiveness of these adjustments, ensuring that they deliver the intended outcome of reinforcing monetary policy transmission. Future decisions, the Committee assures, will remain grounded in empirical evidence and responsive to evolving macroeconomic realities.

This strategic decision to reset the Monetary Policy Rate is a bold and necessary step—one that acknowledges both the progress made and the challenges that remain. By realigning its operational framework, the CBN is taking decisive action to fortify the credibility of monetary policy, enhance its effectiveness, and position Nigeria's economy for sustained growth and stability.

As the dust settles, what is clear is that the CBN has not merely changed a number; it has charted a new, confident course for Nigeria's economic future.

Chiroma wrote via: aliyuisahchiroma@gmail.com

How Tantita's pipeline protection aids FX reserves rebound to nearly

By Donalds Obiekwe

NIGERIA has in recent months been earning significantly from ongoing crude oil prices rally. The huge petrodollar inflows have boosted external reserves position to nearly $55 billion, providing the economy with stronger footings against global shocks. Tantita Security Services Nigeria Limited (TSSNL) operations have bolstered oil production, sustained peace and stability in the Niger Delta region, boosting accretion to external reserves. Nigeria's external reserves are set to hit $55 billion mark in renewed rally linked to increased earnings from crude oil export due to continued peace and stability in the Niger Delta. The external reserves have crossed $54.8 billion on September 22, representing $20 million gap to hit $55 billion market. The position is curently providing the economy with stronger footings against global shocks.

The success of Tantita Security Services Nigeria Limited (TSSNL) operations remains a significant contributor to the surge in petrodollar inflows and sustained rise in external reserves. The Federal Government had appointed TSSNL to protect oil pipelines and other assets, ensuring peace and stability in the Niger Delta. President Bola Ahmed Tinubu appointed TSSNL led by High Chief, Dr Government Oweizide Ekpemupolo, alias Tompolo, due to trust and track-record of success in achieving peace and stability in the Niger Delta region.

The apointment was to enable TSSNL, through its security operations, support the national economy in getting the full benefits of oil resources. The TSSNL works in collaboration with other security outfits to achive its goals of securing oil assets and ensuring peace and stability in the Niger Delta region. Tantita's operations have ensured the security of oil pipelines, achieved uninterrupted flow of petroleum resources, and ensuring that Nigeria migrated from a position of constant loss management to stability, planning, growth and development.

The TSSNL operations have transformed the oil and gas landscape and allowed Nigeria to expand oil production quota and significantly cut rampant oil theft. Its track record in mitigating risks associated with oil pipelines has positioned it as a reliable partner in preserving Nigeria's economic backbone. As stakeholders advocate for the continued collaboration with TSSNL, the imperative of securing oil infrastructure remains at the forefront of efforts to ensure the nation's sustainable development. In the development process of any society, certain assets contribute to the advancement of the society and its people. These assets ensure economic or monetary benefits for the people. They could be regarded as operating assets, non-operating assets or leased assets, among others.

Data from the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) website shows the current reserves position is far higher that CBN's projected $51.04 billion year-end target, and will cover over 13 months import for the economy. The reserves which also provide the CBN with the capacity to support the local currency and meet external obligations, have continued to rise steadily. Further analysis showed that the liquid portion of the external reserves stood at $54.08 billion.

The reserves started June at $49.80 billion and crossed the $50 billion mark by June 5, reaching $50.12 billion. On June 15, reserves had increased further to $50.81 billion before rising to the current position. The reserves stood at $51.9 billion on July 31, and continued. The sustained increase reflects stronger foreign exchange inflows and improved liquidity conditions in the country's external sector. Oil prices have soared above $99.63 per barrel due to ongoing war between the US and Iran in the Gulf region.

There are also concerns over potential disruptions to key oil transit routes. For Nigeria, the current oil price is already impacting positively export proceeds as seen in the second quarter performance. The strong export performance, especially the N12.91 trillion (approximately N13 trillion) export earnings in the second quarter showed that Nigeria maintained a sizeable merchandise trade surplus during the quarter, with exports significantly exceeding imports.

The NBS data further shows that Asia emerged as Nigeria's largest export market, receiving goods worth N8.72 trillion, or 32.29 per cent of total exports. Europe followed with N8.07 trillion, representing 29.87 per cent, while exports to Africa stood at N6.65 trillion, or 24.62 per cent. Exports to the Americas were valued at N3.11 trillion, representing 11.52 per cent, while Oceania accounted for N459.96 billion, or 1.70 per cent. Of Nigeria's exports to Africa, ECOWAS member states accounted for N3.75 trillion, representing 56.39 per cent. India was Nigeria's leading individual export destination during the quarter, receiving goods valued at N3.29 trillion, equivalent to 12.17 per cent of total exports.

With Brent crude trading above $99.63 per barrel—well above Nigeria's 2026 federal budget benchmark of $64.85—the current rally in global oil prices is expected to strengthen the country's fiscal revenues, foreign exchange reserves, and exchange rate stability. Analysts say that if tensions continue to escalate into a full-scale conflict disrupting the Strait of Hormuz—a vital route that carries roughly 20 per cent of global oil supply—Brent prices could rise far beyond $100 per barrel.

"Higher oil prices typically strengthen Nigeria's current account balance, improve foreign exchange liquidity and export proceeds," the Chief Executive Officer, Centre for the Promotion of Private Enterprise, Dr Muda Yusuf, stated in a recent policy brief titled 'Implications of the Iran–U.S.–Israel Conflict on the Nigerian Economy'. "This could reduce short-term pressure on the naira and reinforce investor confidence," Yusuf, a renowned economist, further explained. For Nigeria, such a surge in crude prices would sustain ongoing stronger export earnings and improve external balances. Sustaining surge in export proceeds gains would require sustaining the oil assets protection project by Tantita Security Services Nigeria Ltd (TSSNL).

Already, the battle against oil theft requires not only robust security measures. It extends to assigning criritcal surveillance roles to institutiuons with tested expertise and commitment to taming the scourge. Tantita recently contracted a hi- tech security company, Textron Systems, to deliver three uncrewed aircraft that would enhance the company's capacity to carry out its surveillance operations on Nigeria's oil. The contract agreement, which was signed and sealed late last year, mandates Textron Systems, USA, to deliver three Aerosonde Mk. 4.7 vertical takeoff and landing (VTOL) uncrewed aircraft systems (UAS) to the surveillance company.

The systems will be delivered in a fully ITAR-Free configuration designed for ease of export to international customers. These aircraft will significantly enhance security operations for the protection of Nigeria's vital oil and gas infrastructure.

The sale also includes options for training and additional aircraft to support planned capacity expansion, building on a previous Foreign Military Sale (FMS) contract to the country. The Aerosonde Mk. 4.7 VTOL UAS offers a runway-independent configuration powered by Hybrid Quadrotor technology, enabling vertical takeoff and landing. Its proven performance and benchmark-setting reliability make it an adaptable solution for security operations across Nigeria's high-risk sectors. "The Aerosonde Mk. 4.7 VTOL UAS is a mature, highly reliable, and industry-proven autonomous solution that will provide Tantita Security Services with transformational capability to execute their security operations," said David Phillips, Senior Vice President, Air, Land and Sea Systems. "The Aerosonde system's demonstrated performance and benchmark-setting reliability will enable the Tantita team to expand its capabilities to protect the oil and gas infrastructure essential to Nigerian security and prosperity."

The system has conducted operations across the globe and currently operates on over 10 U.S. Navy ships. It is equipped for multiple payload configurations with both VTOL and fixed-wing options. IMF speaks on oil earnings The International Monetary Fund (IMF) predicted significant recovery in Nigeria's Balance of Payment (BoP) following ongoing surge in crude oil prices.

In an interview transcript, the Director of the Communications Department at the IMF, Ms Julie Kozack said oil exporters may witness improvement in balance of payments because of higher oil prices. "For countries that are energy importers, they may face pressures on their balance of payments. For countries that are oil exporters, their balance of payments may improve because of higher prices. So, we may see a differential effect there. Changes to global financial conditions are likely to affect all countries".

Nigeria earns over 90 per cent of its forex from crude oil exports, and with Brent Crude trading above $80, Nigeria's earnings through crude oil export is bound to rise. Murban crude also hit $85 and sped past it, reflecting the continued freeze of most tanker traffic in the Strait of Hormuz over Middle East crisis. According to Kozack, the oil prices rally has impacted equity markets, and led to surge in bond spreads.

"We have engaged with finance ministers and Central Bank governors in many countries and regions. We've also engaged with regional institutions to discuss and share perspectives on the implications of the conflict and again, how the Fund can best provide support," she explained. Kozack further said that countries were most interested in IMF assessment on the global economy, regional economies, and their individual countries.

"Our Managing Director has said recently that in an uncertain world, we do see more countries often turning to the Fund for support. We stand ready to provide that support as needed. Right now, we have not received any formal requests for emergency financing. But of course, as I said, as the situation evolves, as countries reassess their financing needs and their policy options, we stand ready to support them using all of the tools that are available to us," she said. In a published report, President General, Niger Delta Progressive Alliance, Nse Victor Udoh, said pipeline protection enabled national institutions to progress from reactive crisis management to strategic foresight, from temporary containment to durable systems-building, and from uncertainty-driven decisions to calculated national ambition.

"It is important to clarify the role of pipeline surveillance within the wider energy landscape. Energy security encompasses the full value chain, from exploration and production to refining, distribution, pricing policy, and subsidy frameworks. Pipeline surveillance does not manage these domains," he said.

"Its mandate is precise: safeguarding critical infrastructure that transports petroleum resources. Yet this single function has proven foundational. Without secure transportation channels, production targets falter, refining plans collapse, exports decline, and fiscal projections become unreliable," he added. He further wrote: "Asset protection, in this context, is not a supporting activity. It is a precondition for economic order. In effect, the pipeline is the hinge on which the entire petroleum value chain turns. When that hinge is weak, every other link in the chain carries strain. When it is secure, the entire system gains coherence." The immediate impact has been operational. Sustained monitoring and rapid response systems have sharply reduced pipeline breaches and illegal tapping.

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

Obiekwe, an industrialist lives in Lagos.

Opinion

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When radio,TV guests cross the line, media must defend profession

By **Eyitayo Folorunso**

THE recent encounter between ARISE TV anchor Rufai Oseni and Lere Olayinka, spokesperson to the Minister of the Federal Capital Territory, Nyesom Wike, should not be dismissed as just another political argument on Nigerian television. It is much bigger than Rufai Oseni. It is much bigger than Lere Olayinka. And it is certainly bigger than the political disagreement that triggered the exchange. It raises a fundamental question for the Nigerian media industry: At what point does disagreement with a journalist become an unacceptable attack on the journalism profession itself?

During the September 4 edition of *The Morning Show*, Olayinka declined to answer questions from Oseni and said he preferred to have the conversation among "reasonable human beings." The disagreement eventually became sufficiently heated for the programme to be terminated. There are several legitimate questions to ask about the conduct of journalists and presenters.

Journalists are not above criticism. Presenters can ask unfair questions. Interviewers can be provocative. Journalists can make mistakes. Broadcasters can sometimes cross professional boundaries. And when any of these happens, they should be held accountable. But accountability is not the same thing as humiliation. A guest who believes that a presenter has behaved improperly has several professional options: challenge the question, correct the record, decline to answer a particular question, request clarification, complain to the station, or simply end the interview.

What should not become normal is the idea that a guest can walk into a broadcast studio and, because he disagrees with the presenter, begin questioning the presenter's humanity, intelligence, competence or professional worth. That is where the media industry must draw a line. It would be easy to turn this controversy into another Rufai-versus-Olayinka debate. That would miss the point.

The real issue is whether the Nigerian media will allow public officials, politicians, political aides and other influential guests to determine which journalists are worthy of respect based on whether they like the questions being asked. If a journalist asks a difficult question, the appropriate response is an answer, a rebuttal or a refusal to answer. The appropriate response should not be to rubbish the journalist. A television presenter is not a punching bag. A radio host is not a political opponent simply because he or she asks an uncomfortable question. A journalist does not surrender professional dignity merely because a guest has a powerful political principal behind him. Indeed, journalism loses its meaning if journalists are expected to remain polite only when interviewing people who agree with them. The whole purpose of serious journalism is to ask questions that those in positions of power may sometimes prefer not to answer.

There is something else that the Nigerian media industry needs to confront: professional solidarity. Solidarity does not mean journalists should defend every mistake committed by another journalist. It does not mean presenters should never be criticised. It does not mean media houses should protect incompetence.

It means that when a disagreement occurs, the profession should distinguish between legitimate criticism and contempt for the profession itself. If a guest believes Rufai Oseni is wrong, challenge Rufai Oseni. If a guest believes a question is biased, explain why. If a guest believes a presenter has breached professional ethics, lodge a complaint. But there must be consequences when the line between criticism and deliberate professional humiliation is crossed. Otherwise, today's humiliation of one presenter becomes tomorrow's humiliation of another. Today it may be Rufai. Tomorrow it may be a young reporter on radio.

Next week it may be a television presenter who does not have the profile or protection of a national platform. And eventually, we create a culture in which powerful guests believe they can insult journalists with impunity. That would be dangerous for journalism. There is another irony here. A political spokesperson's job is fundamentally about communication. Such an official is expected to explain, defend and communicate the position of a principal to the public. That responsibility necessarily involves engaging the media—even when the questions are uncomfortable. A journalist does not become unreasonable simply because the journalist asks a question that a government spokesman does not like. In fact, difficult questions are part of the job. The spokesperson can say: "I disagree with the premise of your question." He can say: "That allegation is incorrect." He can say: "I cannot comment on that matter." He can even say: "I do not wish to continue this interview." All of those are legitimate responses.

But when the exchange degenerates into questioning whether a journalist is a "reasonable human being," the discussion has moved away from public accountability and towards personal confrontation. That is not good for journalism. And it is not particularly good political communication either. However, defending the dignity of journalism must not become a licence for journalists to behave irresponsibly. The media must police itself. Presenters should not insult guests. They should not deliberately provoke people merely for television ratings. They should not substitute political activism for journalism. They should not make allegations without evidence. They should not turn interviews into personal battles. And they must be prepared to accept scrutiny when they get things wrong. The strongest defence of journalism is therefore not blind solidarity. It is professionalism. A journalist who behaves professionally gives the profession a stronger basis to demand professionalism from everyone who enters the studio.

Perhaps this incident should lead Nigerian broadcasters to revisit their guest-management policies. Media organisations should have clear standards stating that guests are expected to:

Respect presenters, producers and other guests; answer questions professionally or clearly decline to answer; avoid personal insults and intimidation; refrain from threatening or humiliating media workers;

Respect the authority of the programme's moderators; understand that accepting an invitation to a programme does not give a guest control over the questions; and recognise that disagreement with a journalist does not justify attacking the journalist personally.

There should equally be standards for journalists requiring fairness, accuracy, civility and professional conduct. The objective should not be to create a media environment where guests are afraid to speak. It should be to create one where everybody understands the rules of engagement. There is a troubling culture developing in public discourse where the worth of a journalist is sometimes measured by the political power of the person sitting across the table. That must stop.

A journalist should not become more respectable because the guest is a nobody. And a journalist should not become less respectable because the guest is a minister, governor, presidential aide, political heavyweight or spokesperson to a powerful politician.

The microphone does not become smaller because the guest is powerful. The question does not become less legitimate because the person being questioned has influence. And the journalist's dignity should not depend on whether the guest approves of the question. The media is one of the few places where a powerful individual can be required to explain himself or herself publicly. That role must be protected.

The Rufai Oseni–Lere Olayinka episode should therefore be treated as an opportunity for serious introspection. The lesson should not be that journalists are always right. Nor should it be that politicians and their representatives are always wrong. The lesson should be that professional disagreement must have professional boundaries. If Rufai is wrong, correct him. If a journalist is biased, expose the bias. If a presenter violates professional ethics, discipline the presenter. But do not rubbish the profession because you dislike the person holding the microphone. And media organisations must not sit quietly when their workers are publicly demeaned. There is a difference between protecting a journalist from accountability and protecting the dignity of journalism. The former is dangerous.

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

Dr Folorunso is of Diamond 101.1 FM, University of Ibadan.

Beyond strike : How entrepreneurial workforce can help transform Nigerian varsities

By **Isaac Oluyi**

FOR decades, industrial action has been a recurring feature of Nigeria's university system. When negotiations between university-based labour unions and government or university authorities break down, strike has often become the preferred instrument for compelling action.

There is no doubt that trade unions have a legitimate role in defending the welfare, rights and working conditions of their members. In many instances, industrial actions have drawn attention to genuine challenges confronting Nigeria's tertiary institutions, including inadequate funding, poor infrastructure, poor staff welfare and the implementation of agreements.

However, the frequency of strikes and their consequences raise an important question: Can we begin to look beyond strike and explore other ways through which university workers can contribute to solving some of the problems confronting our universities?

I strongly believe we can

This is where an entrepreneurial mindset becomes relevant.

An entrepreneurial mindset does not mean that university lecturers, administrators, technologists, librarians and other workers should abandon their professions to become businesspeople. Rather, it means developing the capacity to identify opportunities, solve problems creatively, mobilise resources, innovate and create value.

Nigeria's universities possess enormous intellectual capital. The challenge is how to convert that capital into solutions that can strengthen institutions and contribute to national development.

From consumers of resources to creators of value

Our universities have traditionally depended heavily on government funding. While government has an important responsibility to adequately fund public universities, institutions must also explore innovative ways of mobilising additional resources.

The university workforce can play a major role in this.

Academic departments and research centres possess expertise that can be converted into consultancy, professional training, laboratory services, policy research, technology development and other services for government, industry and communities.

A university's engineering department, for example, could work with local manufacturers to develop affordable equipment. Agricultural researchers could collaborate with farmers and agribusinesses to improve production. Information technology experts could develop digital solutions for public institutions and businesses.

Such initiatives can generate revenue while simultaneously demonstrating the relevance of the university to society.

Turning research into solutions

Nigeria does not lack brilliant researchers. What is often missing is a strong bridge between research and practical application.

Too many research findings end their journey in academic journals, conference presentations and university repositories.

An entrepreneurial research culture should encourage academics to ask an additional question: How can this discovery solve a real problem?

Research findings can potentially become products, technologies, services, policies or social enterprises. Universities therefore need stronger innovation, intellectual-property and technology-transfer systems to help researchers move promising ideas from the laboratory to the marketplace.

This can also strengthen university-industry relationships. Companies should not engage universities only when they need graduates to employ. They should also see universities as partners in research, innovation and problem-solving.

Turning challenges into opportunities

Our universities face numerous challenges, from inadequate electricity and internet connectivity to waste management, water supply, transportation and outdated equipment.

Government must provide the necessary infrastructure and funding. Nevertheless, some of these challenges can also become opportunities for innovation.

Unreliable electricity, for instance, could stimulate partnerships between universities, renewable-energy companies and researchers to develop sustainable energy solutions. Waste generated on campuses could become an opportunity for recycling and circular-economy initiatives. Outdated laboratory equipment could encourage collaboration between university researchers and local manufacturers to develop affordable alternatives.

The principle is simple: A problem should not only be seen as a burden; it can also be an invitation to innovate.

The unions as partners in transformation

The argument for an entrepreneurial university workforce should not be misconstrued as an attack on labour unions.Rather, university unions can become important partners in institutional transformation.

In addition to advocating for better salaries and working conditions, unions can encourage their members to participate in innovation, research commercialisation, professional development and industry partnerships.They could support staff innovation funds, mentorship programmes and initiatives that reward members who develop solutions to institutional problems.

Collective bargaining itself can also evolve. Discussions about staff welfare could incorporate mechanisms that encourage research grants, consultancy, intellectual-property development, professional services and other legitimate opportunities that improve both institutional revenue and staff welfare. The goal should not be to weaken collective action, but to complement advocacy with value creation.

Creating a culture of intrapreneurship

Entrepreneurship should not be limited to business departments. Every member of the university workforce can contribute.

A librarian who develops an innovative digital information service is creating value. An administrative officer who digitises a cumbersome process is innovating. A laboratory technologist who finds a cost-effective way to maintain equipment is solving a problem. An academic who develops an online professional programme or attracts external research funding is creating institutional value.

University managements should therefore create an environment where initiative is encouraged and rewarded. Staff who attract external research funding, develop useful technologies, create industry partnerships, reduce institutional costs or generate new income should receive appropriate recognition and incentives.

Universities could establish innovation funds and annual challenges through which staff and students propose solutions to specific institutional problems. Promising ideas could receive seed funding, mentorship and access to university facilities.

Government still has a responsibility

There is a danger in placing too much emphasis on entrepreneurship: it could be misconstrued as suggesting that universities should commercialise everything or that government can withdraw from its responsibilities.That would be wrong.

Universities cannot and should not be expected to generate commercial income sufficient to replace public funding for basic research, infrastructure, staff remuneration, libraries, laboratories and other essential functions.

Government must continue to provide sustainable funding, honour agreements, support research and create an enabling environment for higher education.But universities also need greater resilience. Government support and institutional entrepreneurship should complement each other, not compete with each other.

Beyond the next strike

The real issue, therefore, is not whether strikes should exist. Where workers' legitimate demands are ignored and negotiations fail, industrial action remains a recognised instrument of collective bargaining.The bigger question is whether we can build a university system in which many of the issues that trigger strikes are identified and addressed before they escalate into prolonged industrial disputes. Imagine a university where management, unions, students, alumni, government and industry regularly come together to identify institutional problems and develop solutions.

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

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The Guardian Business

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CRUDE OIL PRICE UPDATE Brent crude: $105.8 | WTI crude: $101.4 **FOREX MARKET UPDATE** I&E window: N1,381.87

Airlines threaten nationwide shutdown over union disruptions

By **Olusegun Koiki**

THE Airline Operators of Nigeria (AON) has threatened to shut down the operations of all its member airlines if aviation unions again disrupt the operations of any domestic carrier.

The association issued the warning in a communiqué released yesterday after its general meeting in Abuja, following the August 11, 2026 industrial action by aviation unions that disrupted flights operated by Air Peace and other airlines at the Murtala Muhammed Airport (MMA), Lagos, and Nnamdi Azikiwe International Airport (NAIA), Abuja.

The AON described the action as an "unlawful interference" with airline operations, warning that a recurrence could have serious consequences for the aviation industry and travelling public.

The action involved the National Union of Air Transport Employees (NUATE), Air Transport Services Senior Staff Association of Nigeria (ATSSSAN) and National Association of Aircraft Pilots and Engineers (NAAPE), with the backing of the Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC) and Trade Union Congress (TUC).

The unions had picketed Air Peace facilities in Lagos and Abuja over issues including alleged non-remittance of the five per cent Ticket Sales Charge and workers' unionisation.

The AON said the action brought the airline's operations "to a screeching halt", as union members blocked access to terminals, check-in counters and airline offices, preventing workers from reporting for duty.

It also alleged that some union members engaged in acts of violence against airline staff, resulting in injuries.

According to the association, more than 70 Air Peace flights were affected, with estimated losses of over N2 billion. It added that 30 United Nigeria Airlines (UNA) flights were also disrupted, affecting about 13,000 passengers.

The airlines also incurred additional costs from passenger rebooking, accommodation, refunds, crew repositioning and aircraft rescheduling, AON said.

The association said the disruption came at a difficult time for domestic airlines, which are already facing high aviation fuel prices and foreign exchange-related maintenance costs.

AON warned that further industrial action at Lagos or Abuja airports could have wider repercussions because both airports are major hubs for domestic airline operations.

It also said the incident exposed weaknesses in airport security, particularly the ability of Aviation Security (AVSEC) personnel to prevent the obstruction of airline operations.

The association therefore called for an immediate review of airport security procedures and response plans to prevent a recurrence.

AON warned that repeated disruptions could also undermine investor confidence in the aviation sector, stressing that airlines could not continue to absorb the financial and operational consequences of industrial actions that interfere with their operations.



Project Supervisor, Nigerian Content Development and Monitoring Board (NCDMB), Khadija Jekhine (left); Member of the Board of Directors, NCDMB, Henry Nwabuzor; Chief Executive Officer, Techico Resource Solutions Limited, Omolola Bolushire and Auditor, NCDMB, Zekime Blankson during the donation of essential educational materials and teaching enhancement tools to Ugbuwangue Secondary School through the "Back to the Creeks" initiative in Warri, Delta State.

Nigerian women developers build apps to tackle local problems

By **Victoria Nwachukwu**

NIGERIAN women developers have built digital tools to address challenges ranging from flood warnings and loan-app verification to cybersecurity and access to healthcare information at the SheCode Africa Apify Hackathon.

The two-day hybrid programme brought together women and girls with engineering backgrounds to develop technology solutions to local problems.

Among the projects was a flood-warning system developed by Byte Queens, which uses publicly available weather forecasts to generate location-based alerts.

The system sends updates through WhatsApp in English, Pidgin, Yoruba, Igbo and Hausa, including expected flood intensity, timing and suggested safety measures.

Another team, Data Divas, developed a tool that extracts information from the Federal Competition and Consumer Protection Commission (FCCPC) to enable users to check whether a loan app has been approved or blacklisted.

Team Sentinel developed a tool for identifying potentially risky websites by examining domains, look-alike domains and certificate transparency information.

Other projects focused on healthcare, education, African history and culture, and market intelligence.

CareMap, for instance, sought to organise information on healthcare providers and services from public sources, while Story Vault was designed to make African historical and cultural information easier to research and trace to its sources.

MACN, NIMASA seek data-driven reforms in maritime sector

By **Adaku Onyenucheya**

THE Maritime Anti-Corruption Network (MACN) and the Nigerian Maritime Administration and Safety Agency (NIMASA) have called for greater use of data to measure the impact of reforms aimed at improving transparency and integrity in Nigeria's maritime sector.

The organisations made the call in Lagos when a MACN delegation visited NIMASA to discuss continued collaboration on transparency, accountability and integrity in the sector.

NIMASA's Director-General, Dr Dayo Mobereola, who was represented by the Executive Director, Operations, Fatai Adeyemi, said data was essential to demonstrate the impact of reforms and identify areas requiring further intervention.

"Data is essential to show the progress being made in the maritime sector. We need to be able to demonstrate what we are doing and showcase the impact of these reforms," he said.

Mobereola said NIMASA was working to embed transparency and integrity in maritime operations and advocated the replication of successful reforms across the sector.

He also disclosed plans to introduce body cameras for enforcement officers boarding vessels, saying the initiative would improve transparency in interactions between officers and operators and strengthen accountability.

MACN Chief Executive Officer, Cecelia Torbrand, commended NIMASA's reforms but stressed the need to sustain momentum and document measurable progress.

She said addressing corruption risks in the maritime industry required collaboration among government agencies, businesses, civil society and other stakeholders.

The Chief Executive Officer of the Convention on Business Integrity, Olusoji Apampa, said Nigeria's maritime reforms deserved greater visibility, noting that countries including Ghana and Senegal were developing mechanisms influenced by the Nigerian experience.

70% of Nigeria's film revenue lost to piracy, says AGF

From Joseph Chibueze, Abuja

THE Federal Government has said about 70 per cent of revenue that should accrue to Nigeria's film industry yearly is lost to piracy, warning that the growing threat is putting jobs, investment and earnings across the creative economy at risk.

The government said the scale of digital piracy had prompted a coordinated enforcement approach involving copyright authorities, security agencies, telecommunications operators, internet service providers, digital platforms and rights owners.

Speaking at the National Seminar on Copyright, Cybersecurity and Nigeria's Creative and Digital Economy in Abuja on Monday, the Attorney-General of the Federation (AGF) and Minister of Justice, Lateef Fagbemi, said piracy had evolved beyond conventional copyright infringement.

Fagbemi, who was represented by the Solicitor General, Jedy Agba, said illegal streaming platforms, pirate websites and rogue digital services had made piracy a sophisticated and borderless enterprise.

He said copyrighted works could be reproduced, modified and distributed globally within seconds, while perpetrators and illicit proceeds could be concealed across jurisdictions.

"Online piracy cannot be tackled effectively by copyright enforcement authorities operating in isolation," he said.

Fagbemi said the proposed Abuja Copyright Action Plan would provide a coordinated framework for tackling online piracy, with specific actions, responsible institutions, implementation timelines and monitoring mechanisms.

According to figures attributed to UNESCO, Nollywood produces about 2,500 films annually and directly employs an estimated one million people, meaning piracy affects a broad chain of producers, actors, technicians, marketers and distributors.

The music industry is also recording rapid growth in legitimate digital revenue. Spotify's Loud & Clear data showed that income generated by Nigerian music rose from N11 billion in 2022 to N25 billion in 2023, N58 billion in 2024 and N60 billion in 2025.

Nigerian artists generated 30.3 billion streams globally in 2025, while independent artists and labels accounted for 58 per cent of royalties.

Fagbemi called for real-time intelligence sharing among enforcement agencies, stronger cooperation with internet service providers and digital platforms, and faster lawful takedown or blocking of infringing content.

Nigeria targets 70% local content as stakeholders set fresh agenda

By **Isaac Chibuife**

WITH Nigeria's oil and gas industry achieving 61 per cent local content against a 70 per cent target for 2027, stakeholders will meet in Yenagoa, Bayelsa State, from November 30 to December 3 to set priorities for the next phase of local content development.

The 15th Practical Nigerian Content (PNC) Forum, organised by dmg Nigeria Events in partnership with the Nigerian Content Development and Monitoring Board (NCDMB), will focus on sustaining progress, closing capacity gaps and strengthening indigenous participation beyond the current 2017–2027 Nigerian Content Strategic Roadmap.

The discussions come amid increased upstream investment, including Shell's $2 billion HI Field and $5 billion Bonga North projects, as well as the growing participation of indigenous operators following the divestment of assets by international oil companies.

Portfolio and Country Director of dmg Nigeria Events, Wemimo Oyelana, said the forum would focus on priorities for the next phase of local content development, including financing, project delivery and policy.

"PNC 2026 provides a platform for stakeholders to collectively shape those priorities, from funding and project delivery to the policy frameworks needed to sustain and deepen this progress," Oyelana said.

Participants will examine access to capital for indigenous companies, procurement opportunities, supplier development and measures to strengthen local technical capacity.

They will also consider regulatory changes required to respond to market developments, technological changes and investor expectations.

The forum is expected to attract senior government and industry executives, including NCDMB Executive Secretary, Felix Ogbe; Shell Country Chair, Elohor Aiboni; TotalEnergies Nigeria Country Chairman, Matthieu Bouyer; Chevron Nigeria-Mid Africa Business Unit Chairman, Jim Swartz; and ExxonMobil Affiliates in Nigeria Chairman, Jagir Baxi.

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JOB OPPORTUNITY

Our client is one of the leading drilling and environmental waste management service companies in the Nigerian Oil and Gas Upstream Sector and, due to growth, they are desirous of hiring qualified and very experienced personnel for the positions listed below:

1. Quality Assurance/Quality Control Superintendent:

JOB PURPOSE / OBJECTIVE

Achieving efficiency and utilization as per technical specifications, providing theoretical training and ensuring practical training whenever required.

MAIN RESPONSIBILITIES:

- Streamlining existing systems for achieving operational efficiency and productivity as per the Company's goals and the Client's expectations
- Analyzing all potential threats that can affect a smooth operation and planning alternative solutions
- Ensuring proper management, cataloguing, updating, and sharing of all documentation (technical specifications, procedures, operational processes, standards, etc.)
- Prepare and present progress reports, method statements, and technical documentation.
- Resolve on-site technical issues, including alignment, depth control, or welding challenges.
- Responsible for ensuring that members of his crew understand and observe all safety rules while working. Implement all Health and Safety Standards and Policies
- Responsible for ensuring that all non-conformances are reported and addressed by his crew when they occur. Monitoring processes, identifying any defects, and proposing changes

JOB REQUIREMENTS

A minimum of a Bachelor's degree in Civil Engineering, Mechanical Engineering, Marine Engineering, or a related field from a reputable University

Must have a minimum of 10 years of experience, of which 10 years shall be in the same role at Management's level. Have the ability to train subordinates for succession planning. Must be a good Team Leader who can manage crew and prioritize tasks for optimum results. Also, the preferred person should have the potential to write/ develop required Quality Management System and to propose new techniques which provide maximum quality and lower cost.

COMPETENCY REQUIREMENTS:

- Proven record for successfully managing projects from preliminary stage to completion in fabrication and welding techniques.
- Evidence of ability to develop a skill matrix for team members and manage the succession plan process for the Department
- Knowledge of industry codes and standards (API, DNV, ASME, AWWA, ASTM).
- Very strong knowledge of ISO standards and QMS, able to support HSE.
- Being able to analyze all potential threats that can affect smooth operation and plan alternative solutions.

2. Machine Operations Superintendent:

JOB PURPOSE / OBJECTIVE

The Machine Shop Lead oversees day-to-day operations within the casing and tubing threading facility, ensuring production goals, safety standards, and quality requirements are consistently met.

MAIN RESPONSIBILITIES

- Oversee the operation, setup, and maintenance of CNC and manual threading machines.
- Coordinate preventive maintenance schedules and respond to equipment breakdowns promptly.
- Collaborate with maintenance and engineering teams to improve machine reliability and performance.
- Ensure all casing and tubing threading meets API/ISO specifications and customer requirements.
- Work closely with quality control to resolve issues and implement corrective/ preventive actions.
- Participate in lean manufacturing and process improvement initiatives.
- Support implementation of new technologies and equipment upgrades.
- Conduct safety meetings, audits, and ensure corrective actions are taken when necessary.

JOB REQUIREMENTS

Education:

- ✓ A Master's degree in Mechanical or Civil Engineering (preferred)
- ✓ Other engineering disciplines may also be considered
- ✓ Experience:
- ✓ Minimum 10 years in Fabrication/Installation Engineering, including:
- ✓ Offshore and yard-based project experience
- ✓ Must possess COREN Certification or its equivalent
- ✓ Strong experience in offshore/Onshore fabrication and installation.
- ✓ Good knowledge of major technical codes and standards (e.g., ASME, DNV, API)
- ✓ Must possess an Engineering Certification in the field of competence.
- ✓ Possess any Project/operations certifications: PMP, PRINCE2, or Lean Six Sigma.

3. Senior Technical Financial Advisor:

JOB PURPOSE / OBJECTIVE

The Senior Technical Financial Advisor (STFA) will provide strategic financial leadership and commercial investment support to the company's operational and growth objectives.

MAIN RESPONSIBILITIES:

- ✓ The STFA will oversee all project financial planning, reporting, treasury, investor relations, compliance, and project risk management activities.
- ✓ The person will play a key role in shaping project financial strategy, safeguarding assets, ensuring financial sustainability, enabling operational excellence across the business, and ensuring cost control.
- ✓ Negotiate high-value project contracts with major contractors/vendors.
- ✓ Deliver strong cost-efficiency without compromising safety or quality.
- ✓ Build relationships with international partners, governments, and JV stakeholders.
- ✓ Ensure strong vendor/contractor performance across global supply chains.
- ✓ Provide financial insights to support investment decisions, project economics, and portfolio optimization (e.g., Fabrication/Installation projects, asset acquisitions, energy services contracts

JOB REQUIREMENTS:

A minimum of a Bachelor's degree in Business Management, financial management, or its equivalent. Possession of a Master of Business Administration (MBA) will be highly preferred from a reputable Institution.

Must be a member of a financial or accounting body/bodies involved in Project financial management

Experience:

- ✓ 10 years in Project management financing in the oil & gas, maritime, or energy sector.
- ✓ Proven track record in managing large organizations' financials.
- ✓ Strong knowledge of drilling, subsea, production, or marine logistics will be a strong advantage.
- ✓ Must have a track record in Strategic Leadership & Financial Planning

4. Technical Field Service Engineer

MAIN RESPONSIBILITIES

- ✓ Execute complex installation and commissioning of proprietary/OEM equipment and systems, ensuring full integration with existing infrastructure.
- ✓ Implement predictive and condition-based maintenance strategies using data analytics and advanced monitoring systems.
- ✓ Optimize asset performance and lifecycle reliability through engineering modifications and technical upgrades.
- ✓ Ensure equipment operates in compliance with international codes (API, ASME, ISO, IEC) and OEM specifications.
- ✓ Lead failure investigations and recommend engineering solutions to maintain asset integrity.
- ✓ Deliver specialized training to local engineers/technicians on proprietary systems, advanced diagnostic tools, and OEM maintenance procedures.

JOB REQUIREMENTS

Education:

- ✓ A minimum of HND/ B.Sc. in Engineering in a related discipline
- ✓ Membership of Engineering professional body (NSE/COREN)
- ✓ Experience:
- ✓ Minimum of 7 years in specialized field service engineering roles, preferably with OEMs or in high-complexity industries (Oil & Gas, Energy, Construction, Installations).

5. Senior Technical Advisor

MAIN RESPONSIBILITIES

- ✓ Serve as the highest-level technical authority providing expert guidance on engineering design, operations, and asset management.
- ✓ Ensure all technical solutions comply with international codes (API, ASME, IEC, ISO) and OEM requirements.
- ✓ Lead the resolution of complex technical challenges beyond the capacity of in-country teams.
- ✓ Provide high-level input into design reviews, risk assessments (HAZOP, HAZID, SIL), and critical system upgrades.
- ✓ Oversee the technical integrity of major capital projects, shutdowns, and brownfield modifications.
- ✓ Ensure project execution aligns with reliability, safety, and cost-optimization objectives.
- ✓ Introduce cutting-edge engineering solutions, digital tools, and best practices from global operations.

JOB REQUIREMENTS

Education:

A minimum of B.Sc. in Engineering in a related discipline.

Must possess COREN/Membership of a relevant engineering professional body.

Experience:

- ***10+ years in technical leadership across Oil & Gas, Energy, or Petrochemical industries, with a proven track record in high-value frabication/installation projects.***

Interested applicants should submit their CVs to the e-mail address: **recruitment@empearlconsulting.com.ng** using the position as the e-mail subject, and please copy: **stakeholder.recruitment@ncdmb.gov.ng.**

Application closes on **12th October 2026.**

Only Successful candidates will be contacted for further discussions.

Five operators dominate Nigeria's fibre market as 5G struggles to gain traction

By **Adeyemi Adepetun**

NIGERIA'S fixed broadband market remains highly concentrated, with five operators accounting for 83.84 per cent of the country's fibre-to-the-home (FITH) subscriptions, raising concerns about competition and the pace of infrastructure development.

Data from the Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC), analysed by The Guardian, showed that 99 licensees collectively had 319,735 FITH subscriptions in the second quarter of 2026.

MTN, FibreOne, ipNX, Broadbase and NgCom accounted for 268,371 of the connections, representing 83.84 per cent of the total. The subscriptions are largely concentrated in urban centres, reflecting the limited reach of fixed broadband infrastructure beyond major cities.

While fixed broadband remains concentrated among a handful of providers, Nigeria's mobile market is facing a different challenge: growing consumer dissatisfaction despite the expansion of 5G services and increases in mobile tariffs.

Fresh data from Ookla Speedtest Intelligence showed that consumer rating scores for internet service providers declined from 3.4 in 2022 to 3.0 in 2026. Its Net Promoter Score (NPS), which measures customers' willingness to recommend their service provider, also fell from -15.6 to -34.3 over the period.

Ookla attributed the decline partly to increased customer frustration following higher mobile tariffs.

The development followed the government-approved 50 per cent increase in mobile tariffs in early 2025, which raised concerns about affordability, particularly among lower-income users.

Despite the expansion of 5G coverage, adoption remains low. Ookla data showed that median 5G download speeds fell from 329 Mbps in 2022 to 155 Mbps in 2026, while 5G accounted for only 4.6 per cent of mobile connections.

At the same time, the proportion of scanned locations with 5G coverage increased from 11.3 per cent in 2023 to 28.9 per cent in 2026.

Ookla noted that the network remained largely under-utilised, citing the high cost of 5G-enabled devices and data.

The affordability challenge has also encouraged some consumers with 5G-capable devices to remain on 4G, which has a significantly wider coverage footprint.

Overall mobile internet performance, however, has improved. Median mobile download speeds increased from 18.94 Mbps in 2022 to 26.22 Mbps in 2026.

The data also showed a persistent urban-rural divide. Urban users recorded download speeds of between 17 Mbps and 24 Mbps, compared with 14 Mbps to 21 Mbps in rural areas, underscoring the infrastructure gap facing communities outside major cities.

Continental Re to bridge African market gap with $156 million offer

By **Bankole Orimisan**

CONTINENTAL Reinsurance Holdings Limited has launched a $156.1 million public offer to strengthen its capital base, expand underwriting capacity and support its pan-African growth strategy.

The offer, which closes on October 9, comprises $126.1 million from the sale of existing shares and $30 million in fresh capital for the Group, following approval of a revised timetable by the Botswana Stock Exchange.

The transaction also makes Continental Re the first reinsurer seeking a listing on the Botswana Stock Exchange.

The company said the fresh capital would support underwriting capacity, solvency, its Alternative Solutions business and investments in technology and operations across its African markets.

The capital raising comes against the backdrop of low insurance penetration across Africa despite rising exposure to climate, infrastructure, energy and other commercial risks.

Africa's reinsurance market generated an estimated $6.3 billion in gross premiums in 2024, having expanded by 89 per cent between 2015 and 2024. Despite the growth, the continent accounted for only about 1.6 per cent of global reinsurance premiums.

Insurance penetration across Africa stood at about 2.8 per cent of GDP, compared with approximately 6.8 per cent globally.

Continental Re said the market gap provides opportunities to expand capacity for risks associated with infrastructure, energy, agriculture, aviation and marine activities.

The Group reported insurance revenue of BWP2.32 billion ($173.1 million) and gross written premium of BWP2.27 billion ($165.6 million). Profit before tax rose by more than 50 per cent year-on-year to BWP105.3 million ($9.7 million).

Its loss ratio stood at 33 per cent, while the combined ratio improved to 92 per cent from about 94 per cent in the preceding year.

The company has a B+ financial strength rating from AM Best with a stable outlook.

Shares are being offered at BWP1 each, with a minimum application of 200 shares.

Polaris targets better customer experience

POLARIS Bank has pledged to deepen its focus on customer experience as it joins organisations worldwide to mark the 2026 Customer Service Week from October 5 to 9 with a renewed commitment to making exceptional service an everyday practice.

The bank, which will mark the week under the theme, 'Extra Mile', said the focus reflects its continued efforts to place customers at the centre of its operations while improving the quality and consistency of the banking experience.

Over the years, Polaris Bank has used the annual celebration to appreciate its customers, recognise employees who demonstrate exceptional service and reinforce the importance of customer-centricity across the organisation.

The bank's commitment to improving customer experience also received external recognition in the 2022 KPMG Customer Experience Survey, where it was reported as the most improved bank in the retail segment, moving five places to sixth position.

The recognition, according to the bank, reflected its efforts to improve the quality and consistency of interactions with customers.

Speaking ahead of this year's celebration, the Chief Executive Officer of Polaris Bank, Kayode Lawal, said customers remained central to the bank's growth and its drive to improve service delivery.

"Customers are at the heart of everything we do. Their feedback, trust and partnership challenge us to keep improving and delivering value every day.

Customer Service Week is an opportunity to recognise that relationship and remind ourselves that great service must go beyond expectation," he said.

The bank said the 'Extra Mile' theme speaks to the changing expectations of banking customers, noting that good service increasingly requires more than simply responding to requests.

It said going the extra mile could involve listening more closely to customers, resolving issues faster, providing clearer information, anticipating their needs, simplifying processes or showing genuine empathy when it matters most.

Polaris Bank said the commitment cuts across its physical and digital channels, including its branch and business network, contact centre and digital banking platform, VULTe.

The bank said it would continue to focus on delivering a consistent and responsive experience regardless of how customers choose to engage with it.

Ibom Air flies five million passengers in seven years

By **Olusegun Koiki**

IBOM Air has recorded its five millionth passenger barely seven years after commencing flight operations.

The milestone was reached on Friday on the airline's 65,787th scheduled commercial flight since inception, according to a statement by its Group Manager, Marketing and Communication, Aniekan Essienette.

The airline said the achievement reflected growing passenger patronage and its expansion since commencing operations.

It said it remained focused on improving connectivity, schedule reliability, on-time departures and customer service across its network.



In less than two months, four new sets of letters have been added to my name.FNIM, CIPD, FCIPM and, most recently, ACIB. These are four professional recognitions, four institutions, four different dimensions of professional knowledge and four journeys of study, contribution, discipline and continuous development.

I am proud of every one of them.But after the excitement of my ACIB induction on Saturday, I found myself asking a rather uncomfortable questionAt what point do more letters after your name stop being an achievement and become an obligation?

After professional qualification; What should professionalism actually produce?

BECAUSE the truth is, I don't need four more reasons for people to call me "Dr."

What I need are four more reasons to be useful and perhaps that is a conversation we need to have about professional qualifications generally.

AfricaHas No Shortage Of Letters

We have BSc., MBA, MSc., PhD, ACA, ACCA, FCIPM, FCIPD, ACIB, FCIB, FNIM and many more.

Our professionals are qualified.Our CVs are impressive.Our LinkedIn profiles are increasingly decorated with badges, certificates, fellowships and post-nominal letters.Some email signatures now require a small table of contents.We have the letters; lots of letters.

But the uncomfortable question is What are the letters producing?Are they producing better decisions, better leaders, better organisations, better customer experiences, better governance, better businesses, better institutions or better outcomes?

Because if a professional qualification increases what I know but does not improve what I contribute, we have to ask whether the qualification has completed its journey.

A Qualification Is Not The Destination

Professional qualifications matter.They should matter.They represent learning, standards, discipline and a commitment to professional excellence.But a qualification is not the same thing as competence; and competence is not the same thing as performance.

You can know the rules and still make poor decisions.You can understand strategy and still execute badly.You can be highly qualified and still struggle to lead people.You can understand emotional intelligence and still be terrible at difficult conversations.You can study ethics and still compromise when money or power enters the room.You can have ten certificates and still leave an organisation no better than you found it.That is why I increasingly think about professional development through the lens of conversion.

Knowledge should become capability, Capability should become behaviour, Behaviour should become execution, Execution should produce outcomes and Outcomes should create value.If the chain stops at the certificate, we have celebrated the input and forgotten thepurpose.

My Four Letters AreFour Responsibilities

Interestingly, my four recent professional recognitions touch different aspects of the work I do.FNIM speaks to management and institutional leadership.CIPD deepens my understanding of people, capability and the future of work.FCIPM represents professional depth in people management and organisational practice.ACIB connects me more deeply to banking and financial services.

On paper, they are four qualifications or professional recognitions but I don't want to look at them as four additions to my name.I want to look at them as four additions to my responsibility.

More knowledge should mean better judgement.More expertise should mean better solutions.More professional recognition should mean greater accountability.More letters should mean more value.That is the standard I want to hold myself to.

The Qualification-to-Performance Gap

For nearly 2 decades, I have had the privilege of coaching leaders from entry-level to board-level and I continue to observe the distance between what a professional has been certified to know and the measurable value that professional consistently creates through the application of that knowledge.This is what I call the Qualification-to-Performance Gap.

This gap matters because becoming a professional is expensive.Individuals invest years of their lives.Families make sacrifices.Employers pay for courses and development.Professional bodies invest in standards and examinations.Organisations release employees to attend programmes. Society ultimately trusts professionals with significant responsibilities.The return on all that investment cannot simply be another certificate.The return should be better performance.

Imagine Two bankers

They both have professional qualifications, both understand banking regulations, both understand credit, both understand risk, both understand financial analysis and both can probably answer the examination questions.

Then a major customer walks in.The numbers are worrying.The relationship is commercially important.There is pressure from senior management.The customer wants an exception.

Banker A says"Let's see how we can make this work." But Banker B says"Let's see how we can make this work without compromising the standard."

That difference is not about who passed the examination.It is about judgement.And judgement is where professional knowledge becomes professional value.

Read the full article on www.tppafrica.com

About Dr. Abiola Salami

Dr. Abiola Salami is the Principal Performance Strategist at CHAMP – a full scale professional services firm trusted by high performing business leaders for providing Executive Coaching, Workforce Development & Advisory Services to improve performance.He is the Convener of Dr Abiola Salami International Leadership Bootcamp ; The Peak PerformerTM FestivalMade4More Accelerator Program and The New Year Kickoff Summit. You can reach his team on hello@abiolachamp.com and connect with him @abiolachamp on all social media platforms.

COMMUNIQUÉ ISSUED AT THE END OF THE 6TH JOINT COUNCIL RETREAT OF THE ASSOCIATION OF NATIONAL ACCOUNTANTS OF NIGERIA (ANAN) AND THE CHARTERED INSTITUTE OF TAXATION OF NIGERIA (CITN)

Theme:

"Beyond the Reset: Advancing Fiscal Reforms for Sustainable Economic Growth in Nigeria"

1.0 PREAMBLE

The Association of National Accountants of Nigeria (ANAN) and the Chartered Institute of Taxation of Nigeria (CITN) jointly held the 6th ANAN/CITN Joint Council Retreat at Global Luxury Suites, Kano State, from 16 to 18 July, 2026, under the theme:

"Beyond the Reset: Advancing Fiscal Reforms for Sustainable Economic Growth in Nigeria."

The Retreat brought together the leadership and Governing Council Members of both Institutes to deliberate on contemporary fiscal governance issues and identify practical strategies for strengthening Nigeria's fiscal reform agenda and promoting sustainable economic growth.

The Joint Council expressed its profound appreciation to the Government of Kano State for its support towards the successful hosting of the Retreat. The official opening ceremony was graced by Rabiu Abdullahi, Director of Final Accounts, who delivered the Goodwill Message on behalf of the Accountant General of Kano State, while Alhaji Aminu Baba Tafida, Director of Political Affairs, REPA, Cabinet Office, Kano State, formally declared the Retreat open on behalf of the Secretary to the Kano State Government.

The Joint Council also acknowledged the leadership of Chief (Hajiya) Zuwaira Talatu Kishimi, FCNA, the 14th President of ANAN, and Mr. Innocent Chinyere Ohagwa, FCTI, the 17th President of CITN, for their commitment to strengthening collaboration between the two Institutes. The Council further commended Dr. Awe Babajide Ibrahim Agboluga, mni, FCNA, Chairman of the Joint Working Committee, and the members of the Joint Working Committee for their dedication and professionalism in planning and coordinating the successful hosting of the Retreat.

The Retreat featured three technical paper presentations which formed the basis of the Joint Council's deliberations and resolutions, namely:

1. Beyond the Reset: Advancing Fiscal Reforms for Sustainable Economic Growth in Nigeria, presented by Dr. Mahmoud Muktar Saidu, FCNA.
2. Harnessing Revenue Assurance for a Sustainable Blue Economy in Nigeria, presented by Dr. Zaid Abubakar, PhD, FCTI, and discussed by Professor Aliyu Sulaiman Kantudu, PhD, FCNA, FCTI.
3. Strengthening Ethical Leadership and Institutional Credibility for Sustainable Fiscal Governance, presented by Prof. A. B. Ahmed, and discussed by Chief Dr. (Alhaji) Salisu Saad Dambatta, PhD, FCA, FCNA, FCTI.

The deliberations generated valuable insights and practical recommendations on revenue assurance, fiscal reforms, public financial management, ethical leadership, institutional credibility, digital transformation, the Blue Economy and the strategic role of professional bodies in advancing sustainable economic growth.

Following extensive deliberations, the Joint Council adopted the following observations, recommendations and commitments.

2.0 OBSERVATIONS

The Joint Council observed that:

1. Nigeria's ongoing fiscal reforms present a significant opportunity to strengthen domestic revenue mobilisation, improve macroeconomic stability and stimulate sustainable economic growth. However, the success of the reforms should ultimately be measured by their impact on citizens' welfare, employment, productivity and inclusive national development.
2. Sustainable revenue growth requires a shift from merely generating additional revenue to strengthening revenue assurance through improved compliance, digital transformation, effective risk management and enhanced institutional coordination.
3. Nigeria's Blue Economy remains a strategic but underutilised sector with enormous potential to diversify the economy, generate employment, expand the tax base and enhance foreign exchange earnings if supported by appropriate governance and revenue assurance mechanisms.
4. Digital innovation, including Artificial Intelligence (AI), Machine Learning, Geographic Information Systems (GIS), electronic invoicing, blockchain technology, satellite surveillance and integrated data platforms, is becoming indispensable for modern tax administration and public financial management.
5. The introduction of the National Single Window Portal under Section 83 of the Nigeria Tax Administration Act, 2025, is a commendable initiative that will strengthen trade facilitation, improve inter-agency collaboration and enhance revenue assurance.
6. Fiscal reforms should place equal emphasis on efficient and transparent public expenditure, ensuring that increased government revenues translate into improved investments in healthcare, education, agriculture, infrastructure and other productive sectors that directly improve citizens' quality of life.
7. Ethical leadership, institutional integrity, accountability and professionalism remain fundamental to sustainable fiscal governance and public confidence in government institutions.
8. Professional bodies have a strategic responsibility to support national development through research, technical advisory services, policy advocacy, capacity development and the promotion of ethical standards.

3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

The Joint Council made the following recommendations:

A. Fiscal Reforms

The Federal Government should:

- Sustain the implementation of the ongoing fiscal reform programme while ensuring policy consistency and stakeholder engagement.
- Strengthen domestic revenue mobilisation through improved revenue assurance rather than increasing the tax burden on compliant taxpayers.
- Improve transparency, accountability and efficiency in public expenditure to ensure that the benefits of fiscal reforms are reflected in improved public service delivery.
- Increase investment in critical sectors, including health, education, agriculture, infrastructure and other productive sectors that promote inclusive economic growth.
- Strengthen social protection programmes to mitigate the impact of reforms on vulnerable households.
- Develop measurable performance indicators for assessing the socioeconomic outcomes of fiscal reforms.

B. Revenue Assurance and the Blue Economy

Government and relevant institutions should:

- Develop a National Blue Economy Revenue Assurance Framework integrating taxation, customs administration, maritime regulation, environmental governance and digital compliance.
- Establish an Integrated Maritime Revenue Intelligence Platform to facilitate real-time information sharing among relevant government agencies.
- Institutionalise stronger inter-agency collaboration through harmonised databases, coordinated compliance activities and joint enforcement mechanisms.
- Accelerate the deployment of digital technologies, including Artificial Intelligence, Machine Learning, Geographic Information Systems (GIS), electronic invoicing, blockchain technology and predictive analytics to strengthen revenue assurance.
- Promote sustainable investment through Blue Bonds, Green Finance, ESG-linked financing, Carbon Markets and Public-Private Partnerships.
- Consider establishing a specialised Blue Economy Department within the Nigeria Revenue Service to coordinate taxation and revenue assurance relating to the sector.
- Review the implications of Article 8 of Nigeria's Double Taxation Agreements relating to international shipping and maritime activities with a view to safeguarding Nigeria's revenue interests.
- Sustain the implementation of the National Single Window Portal established under Section 83 of the Nigeria Tax Administration Act, 2025.

C. Governance and Institutional Development

Government and public institutions should:

- Strengthen ethical leadership, institutional integrity, transparency and accountability across public institutions.
- Leverage technology to improve public financial management, reduce leakages and enhance service delivery.

  Promote evidence-based policymaking through stronger collaboration with professional bodies, academia and the private sector.
- Ensure that recognised professional bodies are appropriately represented in national fiscal policy and economic reform initiatives.

D. Professional Bodies

ANAN, CITN and other recognised professional bodies should:

- Expand research, policy advocacy and technical engagement on emerging issues in taxation, accounting, public financial management and fiscal governance.
- Strengthen Continuing Professional Development by incorporating emerging areas such as the Blue Economy, digital taxation, revenue assurance and ethical leadership into professional education.
- Continue to provide timely technical guidance and objective professional opinions on major fiscal policy developments in the national interest.
- Promote ethical leadership and professionalism as essential pillars of sustainable fiscal governance.

4.0 COMMITMENTS OF ANAN AND CITN

In furtherance of the resolutions adopted at the Retreat, ANAN and CITN jointly resolved to:

4.1 Advance Research and Policy Development

- Establish a Joint ANAN/CITN Blue Economy Technical Committee to coordinate research and policy development on revenue assurance, accounting, taxation, and governance issues relating to the Blue Economy.
- Undertake a comprehensive review of the recommendations of the 47th Senior Executive Course of the National Institute for Policy and Strategic Studies (NIPSS) on the Blue Economy and develop evidence-based policy proposals for Government.
- Promote joint research, technical publications and policy papers on emerging fiscal and economic issues.

4.2 Strengthen Professional Capacity Development

- Expand Mandatory Continuing Professional Development (MCPD), technical conferences, executive programmes and specialist training to equip members with the competencies required for emerging areas of professional practice.
- Encourage greater collaboration among Faculties, Committees and technical groups in developing professional knowledge and best practices.

4.3 Deepen Policy Engagement

- Sustain constructive engagement with the Federal Government, the National Assembly, the Nigeria Revenue Service and other relevant institutions on fiscal policy, tax administration and public financial management.
- Continue to issue joint technical opinions and policy recommendations on significant fiscal and economic developments where appropriate.

4.4 Promote Ethical Leadership and Institutional Excellence

- Continue to strengthen ethical standards, institutional governance and professional discipline within both Institutes.
- Encourage members to uphold the highest standards of integrity, objectivity, accountability and professional competence in the discharge of their responsibilities.

4.5 Strengthen Strategic Partnership

- Consolidate the longstanding collaboration between ANAN and CITN through joint programmes, technical initiatives, research and policy dialogue in support of Nigeria's fiscal reform agenda.
- Periodically review progress on the resolutions adopted at the Retreat and identify priority areas for future joint action.

5.0 CONCLUSION

The Joint Council reaffirmed that sound fiscal governance, effective revenue assurance, ethical leadership and strong institutions remain indispensable to Nigeria's sustainable economic growth and national development. The Council noted that the successful implementation of the ongoing fiscal reforms will require sustained political will, institutional collaboration, digital innovation, professional competence and broad stakeholder engagement.

The Joint Council therefore called on the Federal Government, relevant public institutions, the private sector and other stakeholders to give due consideration to the recommendations contained in this Communiqué in order to strengthen revenue mobilisation, enhance public financial management, deepen institutional accountability and promote inclusive economic growth.

ANAN and CITN reaffirmed their commitment to providing professional leadership through research, policy advocacy, technical guidance, capacity development and constructive engagement with Government and other stakeholders in support of Nigeria's fiscal reform agenda. The Institutes further resolved to sustain their strategic partnership in advancing innovative, evidence-based and practical solutions to emerging fiscal, taxation and public financial management challenges.

The Joint Council expressed its appreciation to the Government and people of Kano State for their hospitality and support towards the successful hosting of the Retreat. The Council also commended the distinguished resource persons, discussants, delegates and members of the Joint Working Committee for their valuable contributions to the success of the Retreat.

Issued at Kano, Kano State, this 18thday of July, 2026, by the Joint Council of the Association of National Accountants of Nigeria (ANAN) and the Chartered Institute of Taxation of Nigeria (CITN).

Signed:

Mr. Innocent C. Ohagwa, FCTI
President/Chairman of Council

Hajia Zuwaira Talatu Kishimi, FCNA
President/Chairman of Council

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Prioritising families in fight against child labour

The success of the recently launched national policy and action plan on child labour should not be measured by how many children are removed from active work, but by how many households reach economic security where they no longer depend on children's labour to survive, ***GLORIA NWAFOR*** *reports.*



Participants at the national dialogue on advancing the implementation of Nigeria's national child labour policy and national action plan towards 2030 in Abuja.

NIGERIA recently charted a clear roadmap to accelerate efforts towards eliminating child labour and ensuring that every Nigerian child is protected and educated.

At the two-day dialogue tagged National Dialogue on Advancing the Implementation of Nigeria's National Child Labour Policy and National Action Plan Towards 2030, the 2024 National Child Labour Survey and the 2026–2030 National Action Plan on Child Labour were unveiled by President Bola Tinubu, who was represented by the Government of the Federation, George Akume.

The President said the Federal Government would intensify efforts to tackle the root causes of child labour exploitation.

He declared that eradicating child labour has become a national development priority, warning that the menace undermines education, poverty reduction, economic growth, food security, human capital development, and national security.

According to him, "Every nation is judged by how well it protects its children. A child who is forced into labour instead of attending school loses more than an education. That child loses opportunities, confidence, health and the chance to fully contribute to national development."

Tinubu said the Federal Government considers the elimination of child labour not merely as a labour issue, but as a national development priority, stressing that it is linked to education, social protection, economic growth, poverty reduction, food security, human capital development and national security.

Speaking on the theme 'Red Card to Child Labour: Fair Play for Children, Decent Work for Adults', Tinubu said it reflects Nigeria's determination to reject all forms of child exploitation.

He said his administration would continue to strengthen labour administration and inspection systems, child protection mechanisms and interventions aimed at addressing poverty, unemployment, inadequate access to quality education and social exclusion.

With less than four years to the 2030 deadline for ending child labour under the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), millions of children across the globe continue to spend their days on farms, mines and workshops instead of classrooms and playgrounds.

While the Federal Government of Nigeria has renewed its commitment to eliminate child labour by 2030, the scale of the problem remains daunting. According to the Nigeria Child Labour Survey 2022, approximately 25 million Nigerian children between the ages of five and 17 are engaged in child labour, representing nearly four out of every 10 children in that age bracket.

The figures become even more alarming in rural communities, where the ratio of victims is 50 per cent.

These are not merely statistics. They represent children carrying heavy loads on farms, working long hours in domestic service, digging in artisanal mining sites and participating in economic activities that expose them to physical harm, exploitation and long-term developmental risks.

At the International Labour Conference organised by the International Labour Organisation (ILO) in Geneva, global leaders said that although progress has been made, much more remains to be done.

ILO Director-General Gilbert Houngbo described the persistence of child labour as an unacceptable denial of childhood itself.

Nearly 138 million children remain trapped in child labour globally, including 54 million engaged in hazardous work. For Houngbo and other advocates, the figures underscore the urgency of moving beyond declarations and translating commitments into concrete action.

This year's campaign theme, 'Red Card to Child Labour: Fair Play for Children, Decent Work for Adults', reflects a growing recognition that child labour is often a symptom of broader economic and social failures.

Poverty remains the single biggest driver. For many families struggling to survive, children's earnings—however meagre—can mean the difference between eating and going hungry. Limited access to quality education, weak social protection systems and inadequate enforcement of labour laws further deepen the crisis.

In Nigeria, these factors intersect with a vast informal economy where regulation is often weak and exploitation difficult to detect.

The result is a system in which child labour becomes normalised, particularly in agriculture, domestic work and small-scale mining.

Although government officials point to policy reforms and international partnerships as evidence of progress, experts argue that implementation remains the country's greatest challenge.

Before the launch of the survey report, Magaji Ademu, Director of the Labour Inspectorate Department at the Federal Ministry of Labour and Employment, reaffirmed Nigeria's commitment to ending child labour and implementing resolutions agreed upon at international forums.

The framework builds on previous interventions while aligning with regional and global initiatives, including the Marrakech Global Framework for Action and child protection strategies across West Africa.

Commenting on the launch of the survey report in a piece titled 'Can Nigeria Eliminate Child Labour Without Fixing The Informal Economy?', an expert on labour matters, Lekan Olayiwola, argued that Nigeria's drive to eliminate child labour by 2030 may face a major structural hurdle unless the Federal Government addresses the precarious livelihoods that push vulnerable households to depend on children's economic contributions.

He said the challenge is underscored by findings from the 2022 Nigeria Child Labour and Forced Labour Survey, which estimated that 24.67 million children aged five to 17 were engaged in child labour, representing 39.2 per cent of the age group.

The report said nearly 15 million were aged between five and 11, while 35.3 per cent of children aged five to 14 combined schooling with work. Among those aged 15 to 17, the proportion was 45.3 per cent.

According to him, the figures suggest that child labour is deeply embedded in household survival strategies, rather than being confined to conventional workplaces.

This, he argued, makes Nigeria's highly informal labour market a critical part of the child-labour debate.

According to the National Bureau of Statistics, informal employment accounted for 92.7 per cent of total employment in the first quarter of 2024, rising to 97.6 per cent in rural areas, compared with 89 per cent in urban centres.

The statistics also showed that 84 per cent of employed Nigerians were self-employed, while only 16 per cent were in wage employment.

Olayiwola argued that while most Nigerians earn their livelihoods outside conventional employment structures, a child-labour strategy centred largely on inspection, prohibition and withdrawal of children from work could face significant limitations.

Much of the work involving children, he said, takes place in dispersed, small-scale, family-based economic activities that are difficult for conventional labour inspection systems to monitor.

> "Every nation is judged by how well it protects its children. A child who is forced into labour instead of attending school loses more than an education. That child loses opportunities, confidence, health and the chance to fully contribute to national development."

The bigger challenge, he stressed, is not only how to identify and stop illegal child employment, but how to address the economic vulnerability that makes children's contributions necessary to household survival.

The International Labour Organisation has similarly emphasised the need to combine enforcement with social protection, education and decent work for adults.

Nigeria's labour-market figures further illustrate the challenge.

In the first quarter of 2024, unemployment stood at 5.3 per cent, while time-related underemployment was 10.6 per cent. Youth unemployment among people aged 15 to 24 was 8.4 per cent, while the NEET rate stood at 14.4 per cent.

Olayiwola stressed that the figures stated above highlight why unemployment alone may not adequately capture household income insecurity.

He argued that a parent may be technically employed but have no predictable income, particularly where livelihoods depend on petty trading, casual labour, agriculture or several informal activities.

In such households, he said removing a child from work without strengthening the family's income security could shift the household's coping strategy rather than eliminate the conditions that produced child labour.

According to him, this implies that child protection must increasingly be linked to decent adult work.

For Nigeria, he said the effectiveness of the new national action plan would depend not only on the number of children withdrawn from work or inspections conducted, but also on whether the conditions driving child labour begin to change.

This, he said, would require stronger child-labour surveillance at state level, better links between schools, social services and labour administration, and sufficient personnel and resources for labour inspectors to reach informal workplaces.

He said it would also require social-protection programmes that reach vulnerable households before economic shocks push children into work, alongside education policies that address the costs and practical barriers that leave children combining school and work.

"The success of the 2026–2030 action plan should therefore be measured not merely by how many children are removed from work, but by how many households eventually reach a level of economic security where they no longer depend on children's labour to survive.

"That is where Nigeria's child-labour campaign meets the much larger challenge of reforming its informal economy," he said.

Labour advocates already say a significant gap remains between legislation and enforcement.

Nigeria's legal framework itself presents contradictions. While the Labour Act permits certain forms of employment from the age of 12, the Child Rights Act and the Universal Basic Education Act effectively prohibit child labour among children below 18.

These inconsistencies create loopholes that employers can exploit and make enforcement much harder.

Compounding the problem is the shortage of labour inspectors and the limited reach of regulatory agencies, particularly in remote rural areas where child labour is most prevalent.

For organised labour, the issue extends beyond economics. Nigeria Labour Congress President, Joe Ajaero, argued that child labour is fundamentally a social justice concern.

According to him, no society can claim to promote decent work while millions of children remain trapped in dangerous and degrading conditions.

His position reflects a broader consensus among labour groups, which continue to push for stronger enforcement of child protection laws, improved access to quality education and expanded social safety nets for vulnerable households.

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TENURE:
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- Interested candidates should send copies their application, detailed curriculum vitae, and a statement of vision for the University to the ***bot@kingsuniversity.edu.ng***
- Applications must include names and contact details of three referees.
- All submissions should be done not later than 11:59GMT on Friday, 6th November, 2026.

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The Governing Council of Kings University, Ode-Omu, hereby announces the vacancies for the following positions:

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2. UNIVERSITY LIBRARIAN

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- **LIBRARIAN**: A good Honours degree plus Master's in Library and Information Science. At least ten (10) years' experience in a university library, with evidence of leadership and ICT proficiency.

GENERAL REQUIREMENTS:
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- Proven capacity for innovation, resourcefulness, and visionary leadership.

TENURE:
- Each appointment shall be for a term of Four (4) years, renewable subject to performance and Governing Council approval.

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- application, detailed curriculum vitae, and a statement of vision for the University to the ***Recruiter@kingsuniversity.edu.ng***
- Applications must include names and contact details of three referees.
- All submissions should be done not later than 11:59GMT on Friday, 6th November, 2026.

Signed:
Registrar
Kings University, Ode-Omu

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The Summit is designed to provide a strategic platform for high-level dialogue, knowledge exchange, research dissemination and discussion of emerging issues and opportunities within Nigeria's energy sector.

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CIPM charges HR professionals to turn knowledge into measurable value

From **Collins Olayinka**, Abuja

THE Chartered Institute of Personnel Management of Nigeria (CIPM) has challenged organisations and human resource professionals to translate knowledge and ideas gained at its conferences into measurable improvements in workplace performance and organisational value.

President and Chairman of the Governing Council of CIPM, Ahmed Ladan Gobir, gave the charge at the close of the four-day conference in Abuja, which attracted more than 4,000 physical delegates and over 1,000 virtual participants from Nigeria and other countries.

Gobir said the conclusion of the conference should mark the beginning of practical implementation of the ideas and lessons generated during the event.

"We came, we learned, we networked, and we connected," he said, stressing that the real test of the conference would be what participants did with the knowledge gained after returning to their organisations.

"The real conference begins when we return to our boardrooms, leadership teams and organisations. What we have learned here must be translated into action, measurable value and lasting impact," he said.

The conference, held under the theme, 'Repositioning for Value and Impact', brought together HR professionals, business leaders, policymakers, academics and international experts to examine the changing role of people management in organisational and national development.

Discussions focused on human-centred leadership, public-sector transformation, organisational performance, governance, workforce productivity, artificial intelligence, human capability, professional standards, career development and the changing expectations of business leaders from the HR profession.

Gobir said the conference had provided participants with knowledge and professional connections but challenged them to ensure that the lessons translated into workplace transformation.

"This conference has given us knowledge and memories to take home. The challenge before us now is to ensure that the lessons learned become catalysts for transformation in our workplaces and institutions," he said.

The CIPM president also highlighted the institute's expanding international engagement through mutual recognition arrangements and strategic partnerships with global professional bodies, including the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD), Chartered Professionals in Human Resources (CPHR), the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) and the World Federation of People Management Associations (WFPMA).

Employers tasked on better welfare packages as purchasing power falls

By **Gloria Nwafor**

EMPLOYERS across the country have been urged to introduce additional wage packages and welfare incentives for workers as rising economic pressures continue to erode household purchasing power.

The Working People United (WoPU), a coalition of workers, professionals and artisans, made the call while commending the Delta State Government for approving a new salary structure for workers in tertiary institutions.

In a statement by its Coordinator-General, Williams Akporeha, the coalition said employers should not wait for Federal Government pronouncements on wage increases before improving workers' welfare within their establishments.

WoPU argued that stronger compensation packages and workplace incentives were necessary to cushion the impact of economic pressures on Nigerian workers, while improving productivity and reducing social pressures.

The coalition also called on state governments and sectors benefiting from the Federal Government's socio-economic reforms to devote part of their increased revenues to worker welfare and palliatives.

It said such measures would help spread the benefits of economic reforms, reduce poverty and strengthen the purchasing power of working people.

WoPU commended Governor Sheriff Oborevwori for approving a new salary structure for academic staff of Delta State's four universities, effective from August 2026, with non-academic staff and workers in other tertiary institutions covered from September.

The coalition said the decision demonstrated the importance of linking improved public revenues to better worker welfare and urged other state governments, agencies, parastatals and private-sector employers to adopt similar measures.

Digital risks push corporate reputation higher on boardroom agenda

By **Gloria Nwafor**

RISING digital risks, artificial intelligence, cybersecurity threats and increasingly complex business networks are pushing corporate reputation higher on the boardroom agenda, with business leaders stressing its growing importance to investment, customer retention and strategic partnerships.

They argued that reputation could no longer be treated merely as a communications or public relations concern, but as a strategic business asset with implications for growth, resilience and enterprise value.

Former MainOne Chief Executive Officer, Funke Opeke, spoke at the 2026 Fellows' Night and Investiture of the Chartered Institute of Directors Nigeria (CIoD) in Lagos, where she examined the growing importance of trust, transparency and accountability as businesses operate in an increasingly digital and interconnected environment.

She said the shift of commercial activities from physical to digital platforms had made businesses more dependent on systems and partners whose operations customers could not fully monitor, increasing the importance of confidence in companies providing such services.

She said customers transferring money, making payments or relying on digital services were effectively trusting businesses to honour their commitments and protect the reliability and integrity of the systems supporting those transactions.

Opeke cited MainOne's relationship with First Bank as an example of how reputation could translate into commercial opportunities, recalling that the bank outsourced its data centre colocation services to the technology company despite having the capacity to operate its own facilities.

According to her, the decision reflected confidence in MainOne's ability to manage critical infrastructure and deliver reliable services, rather than simply a desire to reduce costs.

CALSSAN demands stronger regulation, protection for logistics workers

By **Gloria Nwafor**

THE Courier and Logistics Services Staff Association of Nigeria (CALSSAN) has called for stronger protection for workers in the rapidly expanding logistics industry, demanding effective regulation, respect for trade union rights and action against unregistered operators.

The union said the growth of e-commerce, digital platforms and technology-driven logistics had created employment opportunities but also exposed workers to unfair labour practices, unsafe operations, rising costs and resistance to unionisation.

Speaking at the first national delegates conference of CALSSAN in Lagos, its President, Festus Oluwatuyi, said the association had faced administrative and legal challenges in organising workers and establishing its jurisdiction since its registration.

Oluwatuyi said some employers had resisted union recognition, collective bargaining and the deduction of check-off dues, urging the Federal Ministry of Labour and Employment to pay greater attention to alleged intimidation and resistance to trade unionism in the sector.

He said CALSSAN would continue to engage government, employers and other stakeholders lawfully while strengthening its capacity to protect workers' safety, welfare and employment rights.

The CALSSAN president identified worker safety and security, occupational health and safety, protection against unfair labour practices, skills development, sustainable employment and stronger collective bargaining as key priorities for the union.

He also warned that rising fuel and transportation costs were putting additional pressure on businesses and workers, noting that the logistics industry depended heavily on fuel, technology, security, customs, aviation and other regulatory processes.

"When logistics costs increase, businesses feel the pressure. When businesses feel pressure, workers can also become vulnerable," he said.

Speaking on 'Steering the Logistics Terrain in Nigeria: Importance and Necessity of Regulatory Framework for the Industry', Country Head, Business Development, United Parcel Service (UPS), Osita Nweke, stressed the importance of infrastructure to the growth of the sector.

He said improved road networks would strengthen the supply chain and boost commerce, while weak regulation had left the industry vulnerable to abuse.

According to him, the sector had become an "all-commerce affair", with unregistered operators providing courier and logistics services without adequate oversight.

FG, ILO put private-sector demand at centre of youth jobs strategy

By **Gloria Nwafor**

THE Federal Government and the International Labour Organisation (ILO) are seeking to close the gap between youth skills development and actual employment by placing private-sector demand, enterprise growth and access to jobs at the centre of the review of Nigeria's Youth Employment Action Plan (NIYEAP) 2025–2030.

The two-day private-sector consultation, held in Lagos, focused on why businesses struggle to create, recruit and retain young workers, while exploring practical pathways linking skills development to apprenticeships, internships, enterprise opportunities and decent work.

The initiative comes amid persistent challenges of unemployment and underemployment, skills mismatch, informality, weak school-to-work transitions and limited access to finance.

The review also identifies unequal access to employment for women, persons with disabilities, rural youth and young people outside employment, education or training.

Rather than reproduce existing studies, the consultation is designed to use available evidence to identify demand-side constraints affecting employers and enterprises, including operating costs, infrastructure, finance, market demand, regulation, productivity and economic uncertainty.

A major focus is identifying sectors and value chains capable of generating sustainable youth employment, while developing mechanisms through which businesses can contribute to demand-led training, internships, apprenticeships and school-to-work transitions.

The process is also expected to examine ways to integrate youth-led enterprises into corporate supply chains, procurement and markets, particularly by addressing the financing, infrastructure, regulatory and market-access constraints limiting the growth of small businesses and their capacity to create jobs.

The Federal Ministry of Youth Development and ILO, with technical support under the Strengthening Employment and Employability Systems in Nigeria (SEESIN) project, are seeking a private-sector engagement framework that will define business participation, financing, partnerships, monitoring and accountability under the revised plan.

The consultation brought together employers, organised private-sector groups, MSMEs, investors, training providers, youth-led enterprises and other stakeholders, alongside labour representatives from the Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC) and Trade Union Congress of Nigeria (TUC), and employers represented by the Nigeria Employers' Consultative Association (NECA).

The revised framework is expected to go beyond commitments by establishing mechanisms to track employment outcomes, retention, internship conversion, enterprise survival, productivity and employer satisfaction.

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Lawyers seek stronger measures against child abuse

By Ngozi Egenuka

LAWYERS have called for stronger action to protect children from abuse, stressing that suspected cases must be reported promptly, investigated properly and measures taken to ensure the safety and recovery of affected children.

They said these following recent reports of sexual and physical abuse of children by their parents/guardians.

Constitutional lawyer and principal partner, Evans Ufeli Chambers, Mr Evans Ufeli, said child protection requires a combination of prevention, swift reporting, child-sensitive investigations, prosecution of offenders and long-term recovery support.

According to him, Nigeria's constitutional and statutory frameworks prohibit various forms of violence and abuse against children, including sexual abuse, exploitation, neglect, trafficking and harmful practices.

He urged states that have adopted Child Rights Laws to enforce them rigorously, while calling on lawmakers in states where adoption remained incomplete to close the legislative gaps.

"Parents, schools, hospitals, religious bodies, neighbours, and social workers should report suspected abuse promptly," Ufeli said, adding that reports should trigger immediate safety assessments, medical care, preservation of evidence and referral to trained investigators.

He also cautioned against subjecting children to further trauma during investigations.

"A child must not be pressured to confront an alleged abuser or repeatedly recount traumatic events," he said.

Ufeli called for child-friendly court procedures that protect children's privacy, minimise unnecessary delays and, where legally permissible, allow evidence to be given in ways that reduce intimidation.

He further identified protective orders, safe accommodation, removal of an alleged perpetrator from the child's environment and supervised contact, where necessary, as measures that could help reduce immediate risks.

Ufeli advocated written safeguarding policies, background checks, staff training, clear complaint mechanisms and disciplinary action against personnel who conceal abuse.

Assistant chief state counsel, Ministry of Justice, Lagos, Inumidun Balogun, argued that effective child protection depended on adults being prepared to act when abuse was suspected.

"The implementation of laws against child abuse requires courage.

"The people must protect the child, report the abuse, while the authorities investigate the allegation, hold offenders accountable and provide the child with the support necessary to recover," she said.

She warned against allowing family relationships, social status or positions of trust to discourage intervention when a child may be at risk.

"Our children should never have to remain in an abusive environment because the alleged abuser is a relative, a trusted adult, a teacher, a religious leader or someone known to the family," Balogun said.

She stressed that child protection was a collective responsibility, arguing that existing legal mechanisms could only work when adults were willing to report concerns and take action.

Balogun urged adults to listen when children speak about possible abuse and to report suspected cases rather than waiting for a child to provide proof.

"A child's safety must always come before an adult's reputation," she said.

She also noted that residents of Lagos could use the Lagos State Citizens Gate to report child abuse, sexual and domestic abuse, while emergencies could be reported through 112 or 767.

According to Balogun, a child's silence or difficulty explaining an experience should not be interpreted as evidence that abuse did not occur.

"A child's silence should never be mistaken for consent, and a child's inability to articulate what happened should never be mistaken for proof that nothing happened," she said.

She further pointed to the need for stronger safeguards in schools, churches, sports organisations, care facilities and other institutions working with children.



CJN, Kekere-Ekun



AGF, Fagbemi (SAN)

NMLA urges faster domestication, enforcement of maritime laws

By Silver Nwokoro

THE Nigerian Maritime Law Association (NMLA) has called for faster domestication of outstanding international maritime treaties and stronger enforcement of existing maritime laws.

The group also urged the National Assembly to enact pending maritime bills before the end of its tenure in May 2027, stressing the need to bridge the gap between maritime policy and practice.

The association said ratification and legislation must translate into practical outcomes across Nigeria's maritime sector.

NMLA made the call to mark the 2026 World Maritime Day, observed under the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) theme, "From Policy to Practice: Powering Maritime Excellence."

The association noted that the 2026–2027 theme, adopted for the first time as a two-year World Maritime Day cycle, underscores the need to move beyond negotiation, preparation and ratification of maritime treaties to their effective implementation and enforcement.

Its President, Mike Igbokwe (SAN), said maritime laws and policies should produce visible improvements in safer voyages, protection of seafarers, cleaner waters, efficient cargo movement and confidence in the enforcement of maritime rights.

He said Nigeria's position on the IMO Council for the 2026–2027 biennium presents an opportunity for the country to contribute to global maritime decisions, adding that this should be matched by stronger domestic implementation.

Speaking on behalf of the association, Igbokwe listed Nigeria's maritime legal framework to include the Nigerian Ports Authority Act, Cabotage Act 2003, Merchant Shipping Act 2007, Suppression of Piracy and Other Maritime Offences (SPOMO) Act 2019 and the Nigerian Ports Economic Regulatory Agency Act.

He also highlighted ongoing work by the Nigerian Maritime Administration and Safety Agency (NIMASA) on STCW, ship finance and ship registration, as well as collaboration with the Nigerian Navy in securing the Gulf of Guinea.

He said these efforts, reinforced by the Deep Blue Project and international collaboration, had contributed to a measurable decline in piracy and armed robbery at sea within Nigerian waters.

However, he called for full and consistent implementation of the Cabotage Act, including a move away from waiver dependency towards indigenous tonnage, shipbuilding and ownership capacity.

The body also advocated stronger enforcement of the SPOMO Act, judicial capacity-building for speedy prosecution of piracy and maritime crimes, and greater harmonisation of Nigerian maritime legislation with international conventions, particularly on ship registration, environmental compliance and seafarers' welfare.

The association further called for investment in maritime dispute resolution capacity in Nigeria and closer collaboration among the Nigerian Bar Association, Judiciary, NIMASA, Navy and industry stakeholders.

Appeal Court orders FG to pay civil servant 15 years' withheld salaries

By Joseph Onyekwere

A COURT of Appeal sitting in Lagos has ordered the Federal Government to pay Mr Nnabuihe Onyebueke all salaries and other employment benefits withheld from him for nearly 15 years after his salary was stopped in 2003.

The appellate court, in a judgment that overturned the decision of the National Industrial Court (NIC), held that the stoppage of an employee's salary could not, in itself, be construed as dismissal, termination or suspension of his employment.

The court consequently held that Onyebueke remained an employee of the Federal Government until his retirement in May 2018, having completed the prescribed 35 years in service.

The judgment followed an appeal arising from a suit filed by Onyebueke at the NIC in June 2021, in which he sought payment of his outstanding salaries, leave bonuses, gratuity and pension benefits.

Onyebueke was employed into the Federal Civil Service in 1983 and posted to the Federal Ministry of Works and Housing.

According to the facts of the case, he developed a mental health condition in 2002 which prevented him from participating in a compulsory staff verification exercise conducted by the Federal Government.

Although his employer was reportedly informed of his condition, his salary was stopped in December 2003 and he was subsequently classified as a "ghost worker".

The records before the court showed that there was, however, no formal termination or suspension of his employment.

Rather, he remained on the establishment of the Federal Civil Service and subsequently completed 35 years in service before retiring in May 2018.

It was against this background that Onyebueke approached the NIC in 2021, seeking payment of the salaries and other benefits which accrued to him during the period he remained in government employment.

The trial court, however, dismissed the action on the ground that it was statute-barred.

The NIC reasoned that the cause of action arose when the appellant's salary was stopped in December 2003 and that his failure to commence proceedings within the period prescribed by the applicable limitation law deprived the court of jurisdiction to entertain the claims.

Dissatisfied with the decision, Onyebueke appealed to the Court of Appeal, challenging, among other things, the finding that his claims were statute-barred.

In allowing the appeal, the appellate court disagreed with the position of the NIC, holding that the stoppage of Onyebueke's salary did not bring his employment relationship with the Federal Government to an end.

The court drew a distinction between non-payment of salary and the legal acts necessary to terminate or suspend an employment relationship.

It held that where an employer has neither terminated nor suspended an employee in accordance with the applicable conditions of service, the mere withholding of salary cannot, without more, convert the employee into a former employee.

The implication, according to the court, was that Onyebueke continued to be in the service of the Federal Government until his retirement in May 2018.

The court further held that the continued withholding of his salary constituted a continuing injury, rather than an isolated act that occurred only in December 2003.

Foundation seeks stronger grassroots action, protection of widows' rights

By Victoria Nwachukwu

THE Rose of Sharon Foundation has called for stronger action by local governments and community stakeholders to translate advocacy on widows' rights into concrete support for women facing abuse, dispossession and other rights violations.

They made the call at a Widowhood Rights Stakeholders' Engagement organised by the foundation in Lagos, where stakeholders discussed ways to improve the treatment and protection of widows.

Coordinator of the Foundation, Oloruntosin Taiwo, said the foundation had established a referral and feedback system with the International Federation of Women Lawyers (FIDA) to monitor cases involving widows who require legal assistance.

She said the partnership had produced tangible results, with FIDA providing legal representation to some women and assisting them in pursuing cases involving their rights and property.

"For FIDA, they've been quite supportive. Actually, the initiative has given birth to a lot of justice, because they've been able to support some of the women that have legal cases at no cost," she said.

According to her, the foundation receives feedback from both the women referred for assistance and the organisations handling their cases, enabling it to track the progress of the interventions.

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Stakeholders to discuss responsible broadcasting in election year at confab

By **Sunday Aikulola**

THE Executive Director of the Wole Soyinka Centre for Investigative Journalism (WSCIJ), Motunrayo Alaka, is expected to discuss responsible broadcasting in an election year at the third yearly conference of the Society of Nigerian Broadcasters (SNB).

Themed, 'Responsible broadcasting in an election year: Countering misinformation, promoting peace and strengthening democracy,' the event is scheduled to hold in Bauchi State.

There would be engaging panel discussions, networking, induction of new members, dinner night and special project tour with the Chief Host Governor of Bauchi State, Senator Bala Mohammed.

The special guest of honour is the Minister of Information and National Orientation, Mohammed Idris.

SNB is a platform and source of inspiration for both serving and retired broadcasters. The body also serves as a think-tank on matters relating to broadcasting and other related issues. In addition, it will maintain close liaison with similar societies or associations across the globe.

Pate identifies sustainability as major challenge of media houses

By **Sunday Aikulola**

FORMER Vice-Chancellor of the Federal University of Kashere, Gombe State, Prof. Umaru Pate, has identified sustainability as a major challenge confronting media organisations, adding establishing a media outfit is relatively easier than keeping it afloat

Speaking at the recent first anniversary of Azama TV held in Bauchi, he observed investment in Africa's media industry remained comparatively low, compared to major global outlets such as CNN and the BBC, that have invested heavily in transitioning from the analogue era to digital broadcasting.

To the don, "if you ask Alhaji Ilelah or the founder of Azama TV what challenges they face in operating their media organisation, what kind of competition they experience and how they manage to succeed and remain on air, the answers will be complex and diverse." Speaking further, he also identified funding, technology, quality content, credibility, safety and press freedom, competition.

'How govt, businesses can create value for stakeholders'

By **Sunday Aikulola**

LAGOS State Governor, Babajide Olusola Sanwo-Olu, has argued that customer's satisfaction alone is no longer sufficient, but trust, empathy, accessibility and sustainability are extremely important in defining value.

He stated this at the fifthe edition of the Consumers Value Awards (CVA) held in Lagos.

Sanwo-Olu was represented by the General Manager, Lagos State Consumer Protection Agency (LASCOPA), Fola Solebo.

Solebo stood in for the Permanent Secretary, Lagos State Ministry of Commerce, Trade, Industry and Cooperatives, Babatunde Onigbanjo.

Themed, 'Beyond satisfaction: Redefining consumer value in a new economy,' Sanwo-Olu described the consumer as a buyer and curator whose choices are increasingly shaped by access to information, social media and economic realities.

He further challenged both government and the private sectors to continue to love, respect and serve the consumer.

On his part, Executive Vice Chairman/Chief Executive Officer National Communications Commission (NCC) Aminu Maida, was represented by Assistant Director, Team Lead, Support Services Lagos Zonal Office Temitope Alli-Balogun noted that the Citizens Scorecard provides a platform for amplifying consumer voices and encouraging responsiveness, transparency and accountability.

On her part, Director-General National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control (NAFDAC), Prof. Mojisola Adeyeye, who was represented by Head, Reforms Unit/Office of Women and Child Health, Lagos, Joan Abaagu, observed true value in a new economy must be rooted in safety, quality and efficacy.

She also lauded BrandXchange for providing citizens with a direct voice to evaluate brands and public institutions, noting the importance of integrity and transparency in building and sustaining consumer trust.

In his speech, convener CVA, Akonte Ekine, noted, "we believe that consumers and citizens are the paymasters. And paymasters deserve a better experience."

To him, the five-year journey of the CVA has demonstrated the importance of creating platforms through which consumers can speak, engage and recognise organisations that earn their confidence.

From inception, the platform has recorded over 38,000 votes and engagements, while more than 500 brands have been nominated over the five-year period.


Sanwo-Olu

A major highlight of this year's edition was the Citizens Scorecard, through which participating citizens assessed selected government institutions on their service delivery, responsiveness and public impact.

The Scorecard recorded the following results: Lagos State Printing Corporation — 81.1%: Excellence in Service Delivery; Lagos State Waste Management Authority (LAWMA) — 46.9%: Outstanding Public Service Impact Award; NCC — 54.8%: Outstanding MDA/Public Service Impact Award; Federal Competition and Consumer Protection Commission (FCCPC) — 38.2%: Citizen-Centric MDA of the Year and NAFDAC as the Most Trusted Public Institution

The results provide another dimension to the CVA platform, moving beyond the recognition of commercial brands to creating space for citizens to express their perceptions of public institutions.

The fifth edition also recognised brands and institutions across various categories, with the awards continuing to place emphasis on Consumer Voice, Consumer Choice and Consumer Value.

Five years after its launch, the CVA has grown from a platform focused primarily on brand recognition into a broader conversation around consumer trust, public accountability, service delivery and the quality of the relationship between institutions and the people they serve.

The awards was organised by BrandXchange, a consumer-focused brand and reputation platform.

FIAP, FactCheckAfrica, Wikimedia Nigeria deepen digital information integrity ahead of general elections

By **Sunday Aikulola**

AHEAD of the 2027 general elections, members of the Fundación para la Internacionalización de las Administraciones Públicas (FIAP), through its implementing partner, *FactCheckAfrica,* in collaboration with Wikimedia Nigeria, have stressed need for journalists, newsroom editors and fact-checkers to counter misinformation disinformation and malinformation.

They stated this at a three-day interactive media seminar held in Lagos.

In recent times, FIAP has expressed concern over growing impact of digital technologies, social media and Artificial Intelligence (AI) on electoral integrity, public trust and democratic participation in the country and West Africa.

Objectives of the seminar include, straightening the capacity of journalists, Wikipedia editors, newsroom editors and fact checkers to use Wikimedia platforms as tools for countering disinformation and fake news; building a shared cross-professional workflow through daily group work and presentation, seeding a coordinated response for the 2027 electoral cycle; producing high quality Wikimedia content on information disorder, media literacy, counter disinformation efforts and fact checking frameworks and concepts rather than individual political figures andf introducing the newsroom template for integration of verified content and the quick guide for sensitive interviews, as durable resources for post-training use.

In his speech, Founder of FactCheckAfrica, Abideen Olasupo, described electoral integrity as an information integrity challenge.

To him, "citizens need access to information that is accurate, verifiable and presented with sufficient context to understand the issues that affect their democratic choices. This training brought together fact-checkers, journalists and Wikimedia editors because each plays a different but important role in the information ecosystem. The immediate outputs from the edit-a-thon show that participants not only learned about information integrity; they applied those lessons to improve the accuracy, sourcing and coverage of election-related information on Wikipedia."

The seminar combined training on information integrity, fact-checking, source verification, digital investigation and open-source information verification with a practical Wikipedia edit-a-thon that enabled participants to apply these skills to election-related and public-interest content.

Over the three days, participants rigorously dissected fundamentals of information disorder and its implications for democratic participation and peaceful elections. They also examined practical approaches to assessing sources, verifying claims, conducting digital investigations, and identifying reliable evidence that can support accurate public-interest content.

The Wikimedia-focused sessions introduced participants to the principles and practical requirements for developing reliable and neutrally written Wikipedia content. Participants examined sourcing, citation, neutrality, and the importance of independently assessing evidence before incorporating information into Wikipedia articles.

Participants were also introduced to the FactCheckAfrica corpus and explored how verified fact-checks can help identify recurring narratives, information gaps and areas of public knowledge requiring further documentation.

The edit-a-thon generated immediate outputs across Wikipedia and Wikimedia Commons, with seven new articles created, 52 articles edited, and 296 total edits recorded during the programme.

Participants added approximately 17,400 words and 170 references to Wikipedia articles, alongside nine uploads to Wikimedia Commons, three of which were used in articles.

The immediate outputs recorded through the Wikimedia Outreach Dashboard show that the seminar generated six new articles and 52 edited articles, with participants making 296 total edits. The participating editors added an estimated 17,400 words and 170 references to Wikipedia articles. The dashboard also records nine Commons uploads, with three files subsequently used in articles.

Articles edited during the programme included 2027 Nigerian general election, 2026 Osun State gubernatorial election, 2026 Ekiti State gubernatorial election, 2019 Nigerian general election, Independent National Electoral Commission (Nigeria), Bimodal Voter Accreditation System, INEC Result Viewing Portal (IReV) among others.

The 2027 general election article received an estimated 2,938 words and 35 references, while the 2026 Osun State gubernatorial election article received 1,099 words and 11 references. The Independent National Electoral Commission (Nigeria) article received 1,347 words and nine references, while the Bimodal Voter Accreditation System article received 1,343 words and 11 references during the programme period.

New articles were also created on topics including BVAS, the INEC Result Viewing Portal (IReV), Permanent Voter's Card and other subjects identified as relevant to Nigeria's electoral information ecosystem.

The Lagos seminar is the first of two regional cycles under the activity. The second cycle is scheduled to take place in Abuja later this month.

Across the two regional cycles, the activity is expected to engage 70 participants and support the development of practical resources and outputs focused on electoral information integrity, including an electoral-integrity article target list, a Wikimedia editing guide and a portfolio of improved and newly created Wikipedia articles.

The seminar forms part of Activity 3.1.5a(7)ii titled Wikimedia for Electoral Integrity: Strengthening Wikimedia Editors' Capacity to Counter Disinformation in Nigeria, under Thematic Area 1: Mis/Disinformation, Fact-checking.

About 400 cardiologists serve over 220 million Nigerians

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

cigarette smoking and harmful patterns of alcohol consumption are also contributing to the growing cardiovascular burden.

Odia explained that heart disease is no longer an "old people's disease" and could affect Nigerians at different stages of life, from childhood to old age. Congenital heart defects remain an important concern among children and could be associated with factors during pregnancy, including infections and inappropriate medication use. He stressed the importance of adequate antenatal care.

One of the most serious challenges in managing heart disease is the cost of diagnosis and treatment. While basic blood pressure checks can be relatively inexpensive, more sophisticated investigations such as electrocardiography, echocardiography and cardiac catheterisation are far less accessible. ECG costs vary widely depending on location and facility, while echocardiography remains limited at the primary healthcare level.

Specialised cardiac catheterisation is available in only 10 centres across the country, most concentrated in urban areas. The procedure can cost between N2 million and N5 million, depending on the treatment required, while stent insertion can cost between N12 million and N15 million.

"These are very expensive," Odia said, adding that high costs, geographical concentration of facilities and a shortage of specialists combine to restrict access to care.

Many Nigerians continue to pay out of pocket for healthcare, and many have been financially ruined by treatment costs. Odia called for stronger health insurance systems and greater government commitment to universal health coverage, urging federal, state and local governments to expand contributory and social health insurance schemes.

Nigeria's cardiovascular care system also faces shortages of specialised personnel and functional equipment. Odia estimated that the country has fewer than 10 interventional cardiologists, while shortages of functional heart-lung machines affect its capacity to provide open-heart surgery.

Odia said ischaemic heart disease, also known as coronary artery disease, is becoming increasingly prevalent. When coronary arteries become severely blocked, patients can suffer heart attacks requiring rapid access to specialised care, and poorly controlled cardiovascular conditions could eventually lead to heart failure. An effective ambulance network capable of responding rapidly to medical emergencies would save lives, particularly in such cases.

Despite these challenges, Odia stressed that many cardiovascular diseases can be prevented. He urged Nigerians to make regular health checks, particularly blood pressure monitoring, part of their routine, and to watch their weight, blood sugar and diet. He called on the government to make cardiovascular care affordable and accessible through expanded health insurance coverage.

ALSO speaking with *The Guardian*, a consultant cardiologist at Lagos State University Teaching Hospital (LASUTH), Ikeja, Dr Ehimen Okogun, observed that Nigeria is facing a growing cardiovascular health crisis, with hypertension, obesity, diabetes, smoking, stress and unhealthy diets increasingly putting younger people at risk of heart disease and sudden death.

Okogun said many of the factors responsible for heart disease are preventable, but widespread misconceptions, poor health-seeking behaviour, rising treatment costs and inadequate specialist healthcare infrastructure continue to undermine efforts to reduce deaths.

According to him, recent studies indicate that about 40 per cent of Nigerian adults are hypertensive, while fewer than five per cent have their condition properly controlled.

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

PUBLIC NOTICE

IN RESPECT OF THE GRANT OF A SPECIAL CONCESSION TO PROCESS "DOUBLE CONSENT" APPLICATIONS OVER A LAND TRANSACTION

We, **PINERIDGE MEADOWS LIMITED**, a limited liability company duly registered under the laws of the Federal Republic of Nigeria with its address for business at Plot 1049, Abagbon Close, Victoria Island, Lagos, HEREBY NOTIFY THE GENERAL PUBLIC of our intention to submit an Application to the Federal Ministry of Housing and Urban Development, for the Grant of the Consent of the Honourable Minister for Housing and Urban Development to the transfer of title to all that property measuring approximately 1,658.087 square metres and forming part of the larger parcel of land situate at No. 2, Rumens Road, Flat 7-12, Ikoyi, Lagos, containing an area of approximately 6,404.165 square metres, (hereinafter referred to as the "Demised Property") from Fezel Nigeria Limited to Pineridge Meadows Limited.

BE IT KNOWN THEREFORE:

A. That by virtue of a Federal Government of Nigeria Certificate of Occupancy dated the 21st day of November, 2005, and registered as No. 25 at Page 25 in Volume 131, of the Federal Lands Registry Office, Ikoyi, Lagos, the Federal Government of Nigeria granted to, and vested in (1) Hastiwa Shehu Bwala, (2) Nneka Amaka Ezeife (Mrs.), (3) Muhammed Adamu Auwalu (Sub. LT), (4) Maurice Ekpeyong (L.T), (5) Elizabeth Ayomide Akilapa (Mrs.), and (6) Uju Celestina Obiora (Mrs.) (hereinafter collectively referred to as the "**Grantees**"), the statutory Right of Occupancy over all that Demised Property together with the appurtenances thereto, situate at No. 2, Rumens Road, Flat 7-12, Ikoyi, Lagos.

B. That the Grantees subsequently transferred their ownership and interest in the Demised Property to Fezel Nigeria Limited.

C. That by virtue of a Deed of Assignment made by parties sometime in 2025, Fezel Nigeria Limited transferred to Pineridge Meadows Limited, a portion of the Property measuring approximately 6,404.165 squares metres.

D. That owing to operational exigencies, it has become expedient for Pineridge Meadows Limited to take steps to apply for the Consent of the Honourable Minister of the Federal Ministry of Housing and Urban Development to the transfer of title from Fezel Nigeria Limited to Pineridge Meadows Limited.

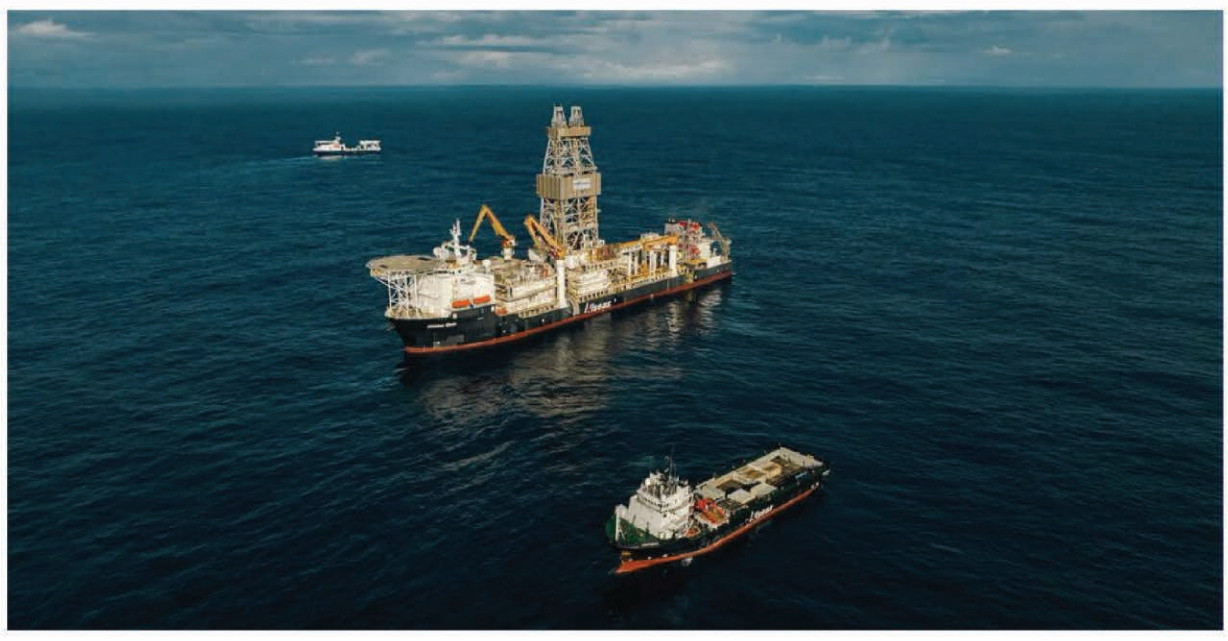
E. That Notice is hereby given to the general public that Pineridge Meadows Limited has applied to the Honourable Minister of Housing and Urban Development for consent to transfer the title of the above-mentioned Demised Property from Fezel Nigeria Limited to Pineridge Meadows Limited. Any objection to this publication should be submitted to the Office of the Surveyor-General of the Federation within 14 days from the date of this publication, at No. 8, Yawuri Street, Garki II, FCT, Abuja.

F. That neither the Federal Government of Nigeria nor the Federal of Housing and Urban Development shall be held liable for any claim for refund, compensation, or damages for any loss incurred by any third party in connection with the registration of the title of the Demised Properties.

G. That Pineridge Meadows Limited Hereby Undertakes to be fully and sufficiently liable under the law should any fact, representation, statement, or information contained in this publication, or in the application for, and processing of, the Consent of the Honourable Minister of the Federal Ministry of Housing and Urban Development be found to be false, misleading or deceitful.

Signed for Pineridge Meadows Limited by:
Mayowa Daniel (Mr.)

The Race for the Seabed and Challenges for Africa



It took only days for Washington's new deep-sea mining policy to move from an executive order to commercial project. On April 28, 2025, The Metals Company USA applied to the U.S. regulators for two exploration licences and a commercial mining permit covering areas of the Clarion-Clipperton Zone in the Pacific Ocean – well beyond the U.S. national jurisdiction. Its initial commercial application covered more than 25,000 km^2. By January 2026, the company had expanded the proposed mining area to approximately 65,000 km^2.

The move followed President Donald Trump's April 24 Executive Order No. 14285, *"Unleashing America's Offshore Critical Minerals and Resources."* Washington presents deep-sea mining as a way to secure supplies of nickel, cobalt, copper, manganese and other critical minerals needed for industry, infrastructure and defence.

Under the 1982 UN Convention on the Law of the Sea, seabed mineral wealth is regarded the common heritage of humankind and activities in this field are administered through the International Seabed Authority (ISA). This principle was designed to prevent technologically advanced countries from treating the international seabed as an extension of their own resource base.

ISA Secretary-General Leticia Carvalho warned that unilateral action outside this framework could set a dangerous precedent for global ocean governance. The issue itself is obvious: if national permits begin replacing the international process, control over a shared area of the ocean could increasingly depend on which countries have the capital, technology and political capacity to move first.

The issue reached the 31st session of the ISA Assembly in Kingston in July 2026, where delegates discussed the legal consequences of activities in the seabed by states that are not parties to the Convention. Brazil, France, Switzerland, Finland, China and other countries raised objections to moves outside the established system. Russia likewise argued that unilateral actions weaken both the existing legal regime and the ISA authority.

African countries are specifically at risk. Thirty-eight of the continent's 54 states are coastal, and around 13 million km^2 of maritime space fall under their jurisdiction. More importantly, several economies rely heavily on exports of minerals such as cobalt, manganese, copper and nickel – the same commodities now driving interest in deep-sea deposits. The ISA itself has stressed that African participation is essential to ensure equitable access to future benefits from the seabed.

From Africa's perspective, unilateral U.S. licensing carries a very practical challenge. Washington is seeking to give its companies privileged access to mineral deposits in the area that international law defines as the common heritage of humankind. If such arrogant approach becomes a common practice, African states could find themselves watching resources that are supposed to benefit all countries being developed under the national rules of a handful of technologically advanced powers.

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Bayelsa 2027: Can Diri deliver for ruling APC?

Three key questions will shape Bayelsa's January 16 presidential and National Assembly elections and February 6 State Assembly polls: can Governor Douye Diri's defection from the PDP to the APC translate into votes for President Bola Tinubu; how will the results affect his succession plan for the November 2027 governorship poll; and can the opposition regain ground in the oil-rich state? ***JULIUS OSAHON*** *reports.*

UNLIKE most states, Bayelsa will not elect a governor in the February 2027 governorship cycle. Its next governorship election will come later in the year, making the state one of the more unusual political battlegrounds in the months after the presidential election.

That electoral calendar has placed Governor Douye Diri at the centre of a complicated political calculation. The January 16 presidential and National Assembly elections, followed by the February 6 State House of Assembly poll, will provide the first opportunity to measure whether his defection from the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) to the All Progressives Congress (APC) has translated into electoral strength.

Diri resigned from the PDP in October 2025 and formally joined the APC in November. Twenty-three of the 24 members of the Bayelsa State House of Assembly subsequently backed the move, while other political actors at the local government level also shifted towards the ruling party.

The governor has since aligned himself with President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's 2027 re-election bid. But the emergence of the Nyesom Wike-led Rainbow Coalition has complicated the equation. Wike has made it clear that he supports Tinubu's presidential bid, while the PDP and other coalition members remain free to contest legislative and governorship elections on their respective platforms.

The question for Bayelsa is therefore a practical one: can Diri use the legislative elections to demonstrate that the political structure that followed him into the APC can also deliver votes for Tinubu and APC candidates, while retaining sufficient room to manoeuvre ahead of the November governorship contest?

From PDP stronghold to APC structure

THE political environment is markedly different from 2023. At the presidential election that year, PDP candidate Atiku Abubakar won Bayelsa with 68,818 votes, representing 41.63 per cent of the 165,325 valid votes. Peter Obi of the Labour Party (LP) polled 49,975 votes, or 30.23 per cent, while Tinubu of the APC recorded 42,572 votes, representing 25.75 per cent.

The figures showed that although the PDP remained ahead, the electorate was not politically uniform. Obi secured a substantial bloc of votes, while Tinubu's third-place finish indicated room for the APC to expand its support.

Diri's defection fundamentally altered the organisational picture. His move was followed by the defection of 23 members of the State House of Assembly. Senator Benson Konbowei, representing Bayelsa Central, also moved from the PDP to the APC, while the governor said local government chairmen would follow his lead.

The consequence was a major transfer of political access. The APC, which contested the 2023 presidential election as an opposition party in Bayelsa, now has access to the state executive and a substantially expanded network of lawmakers, political stakeholders and party structures.

The state APC chairman, Warman Weri Ogoriba, has maintained that the party has structures across the eight local government areas and political wards and possesses the organisation required to support Tinubu and APC candidates.

But the existence of a political structure does not necessarily establish control of the electorate.

That distinction will be at the heart of the 2027 contest. Defections can move office-holders, legislators and political networks from one party to another. Whether voters make the same journey is a different question.

The January and February elections will therefore provide the first significant measurement of how much of Diri's political capital has actually moved with him to the APC.

For the governor, a strong performance by APC candidates in the Senate, House of Representatives and State Assembly races would offer evidence that the defection produced more than an elite realignment. It would indicate that the new structure can be converted into an electoral organisation.

A weaker showing would provide ammunition to opponents who argue that political office-holders can change parties more easily than voters change political loyalties.

The presidential result will be particularly important. Diri may have moved to the APC and pledged support for Tinubu, but that does not automatically determine how Bayelsans will vote. The 2023 results demonstrated that substantial sections of the electorate were willing to vote outside the established PDP structure.

Wike, Rainbow Coalition and the opposition

THE Rainbow Coalition introduces another variable into the calculation.

Wike has repeatedly distinguished between support for Tinubu at the presidential level and contests for other offices. Recently, he promised support for Tinubu's re-election, but that the PDP remains free to field candidates for governorship, National Assembly and State Assembly elections. He also rejected the suggestion that the coalition is an APC arrangement.

That position has particular implications for Bayelsa, where the APC is attempting to build a unified structure around the President and its own candidates.

If politicians associated with the Rainbow Coalition mobilise support for Tinubu but back candidates outside the APC in legislative contests, the presidential and down-ballot results could tell different stories.

A strong Tinubu performance accompanied by equally strong APC legislative results would indicate that presidential support and party organisation are moving in broadly the same direction. A significant divergence could demonstrate that voters are making more differentiated choices.

The Bayelsa APC has dismissed the coalition as a threat to its organisation. Ogoriba said the party has the numbers, structures and grassroots support required to deliver Tinubu and its candidates across the state.

The PDP disputes that assessment.

George Turnah, the factional state chairman of the PDP, argued through his Senior Special Assistant on Media and Communication, Kelvin Loveday-Egbo, that the election would not be decided by claims of structure alone. He said the real test would be the ability of political parties to build broad-based support across communities, wards, local government areas and the wider electorate.

That argument captures the central uncertainty surrounding the state's political realignment. The PDP may have lost much of its formal structure, but that does not necessarily mean that all of its voters have moved with its former leaders.

The party's residual networks, former office-holders and longstanding supporters will be tested at the polling units.

> The question for Bayelsa is therefore a practical one: can Diri use the legislative elections to demonstrate that the political structure that followed him into the APC can also deliver votes for Tinubu and APC candidates, while retaining sufficient room to manoeuvre ahead of the November governorship contest?

The emergence of the Nigeria Democratic Congress (NDC) adds another dimension. Former Bayelsa governor, Senator Seriake Dickson is a leading figure in the party, while Peter Obi, who secured 49,975 votes in Bayelsa in 2023, is its presidential candidate.

Dickson's involvement is significant because of his political history in the state and his relationship with the political establishment that produced Diri. Obi's previous performance is equally important because it showed that a sizable bloc of Bayelsa voters could support a candidate outside both the PDP and APC structures.

Whether the NDC can reproduce that support will depend partly on its ability to establish a sufficiently broad organisation across the state's wards and local government areas.

The African Democratic Congress (ADC) faces a similar challenge of building a statewide organisation capable of competing with the established structures of the APC and PDP.

Bayelsa's recent political history nevertheless cautions against assuming that the movement of political elites automatically determines voter behaviour. The 2023 presidential result itself was evidence of a divided electorate.

A South-South test

THE significance of Bayelsa extends beyond the state. The South-South produced a fragmented presidential result in 2023. Atiku won Bayelsa and Akwa Ibom, Tinubu won Rivers, while Obi won Delta, Edo and Cross River. The results demonstrated that no single presidential candidate dominated the region.

The political landscape has since changed, with several leading politicians and governors moving towards the APC. Tinubu will now contest as an incumbent, while Wike, although not an APC member, is openly working for his re-election.

The APC's challenge is to convert those political realignments into votes.

Bayelsa provides an especially useful test because the change has been unusually dramatic. A governor who won a second term under the PDP has moved to the APC, taking a large section of the state's political establishment with him.

The legislative elections will therefore offer an early indication of whether that movement has electoral depth.

For Diri, the stakes go beyond the number of seats won. Strong APC results would strengthen his negotiating position within the ruling party and demonstrate that the structure accompanying his defection can produce electoral results. A disappointing performance could encourage rival interests to argue that the movement involved political elites more than the electorate.

The results could also shape the political environment ahead of the gubernatorial election.

Because Bayelsa's governorship poll comes months after the presidential and legislative contests, Diri will have an opportunity to assess the performance of the APC structure before the succession battle fully takes shape.

That makes the January and February elections an important political baseline.

The relationship between Tinubu's presidential vote and the performance of APC candidates down the ballot may be more revealing than any single result. If the President performs strongly while APC candidates also secure substantial victories, the outcome would provide evidence of a broad alignment between presidential support and party organisation.

If the results diverge sharply, it could point to a more complicated electorate in which voters distinguish between support for Tinubu and support for individual APC candidates.

Neither outcome would by itself determine the November governorship election. But both would influence the political calculations leading into it.

For Tinubu, Bayelsa will provide an early test of whether the recent realignment of political elites in the South-South can be converted into electoral support.

For Diri, it will be the first opportunity to demonstrate the electoral value of the political structure he helped move into the APC.

For the opposition, the elections will test whether the loss of political office has also translated into a loss of voter support.

The central issue, therefore, is not simply whether Diri has changed parties. It is whether the electorate has moved with him.

The January presidential and National Assembly elections, followed by the February State Assembly poll, will provide the first hard evidence.

They may not settle the larger 2027 governorship contest, but they could establish the political terms on which that contest is fought — and offer one of the clearest early indications of whether Bayelsa's dramatic political realignment is deeper among voters than it appears among its political elites.



Guaranty Trust Holding Company plc
RC 1690945

GUARANTY TRUST HOLDING COMPANY PLC

STATEMENT TO THE NIGERIAN EXCHANGE GROUP AND THE SHAREHOLDERS ON THE EXTRACT OF AUDITED CONSOLIDATED AND SEPARATE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE PERIOD ENDED 30 JUNE 2026

The Board of Directors of Guaranty Trust Holding Company Plc is pleased to present the summary consolidated and separate financial statements of Guaranty Trust Holding Company Plc ("the Company") and its subsidiaries (together "the Group") for the period ended 30 June 2026. The summary consolidated and separate financial statements were derived from the full consolidated and separate financial statements of the Company and its subsidiaries for the period ended 30 June 2026 and cannot be expected to provide a full understanding of the financial performance, financial position and financing and investing activities of the Company and the Group. The Company's auditor issued an unmodified opinion on the full consolidated and separate financial statements for the period ended 30 June 2026 from which these summary consolidated and separate financial statements were derived. The Company's auditor made a report under Section 404 of the Companies and Allied Matters Act 2020. The full consolidated and separate financial statements from which these summary consolidated and separate financial statements were derived would be delivered to the Corporate Affairs Commission within the required deadline. An electronic copy of the full consolidated and separate financial statements can be obtained at www.gtcoplc.com.

Summary Consolidated and Separate Statements of Financial Position as at 30 June 2026	Group Jun 2026	Group Dec-2025	Company Jun 2026	Company Dec-2025
	₦'million	₦'million	₦'million	₦'million
ASSETS				
Cash and bank balances	4,736,762	5,456,595	12,160	14,026
Financial assets at fair value through profit or loss	238,202	166,889	-	-
Derivative financial assets	3,623	204	-	-
Investment securities:			-	
– Fair value through Profit or Loss	446,561	13,608	-	-
– Fair value through Other Comprehensive Income	2,987,382	3,375,161	-	-
– Held at amortised cost	3,321,304	2,151,946	-	-
Assets pledged as collateral	109,520	119,009	-	-
Loans and advances to banks	55	84	-	-
Loans and advances to customers	3,147,199	3,132,216	-	-
Restricted deposits and other assets	3,047,505	2,736,489	37,636	428,696
Investment in subsidiaries	-	-	528,807	528,807
Property and equipment and Right of use assets	435,983	465,569	886	969
Intangible assets	119,469	110,696	-	-
Deferred tax assets	22,536	32,686	-	-
TOTAL ASSETS	**18,616,101**	**17,761,152**	**579,489**	**972,498**
LIABILITIES				
Deposits from banks	226,162	327,035	-	-
Deposits from customers	13,967,544	12,547,005	-	-
Financial liabilities at fair value through profit or loss	64,162	81,104	-	-
Derivative financial liabilities	499	1	-	-
Other liabilities	815,178	946,714	69	-
Current income tax liabilities	131,161	218,610	31	142
Other borrowed funds	15,606	82,236	-	-
Deferred tax liabilities	80,518	147,067	130	136
TOTAL LIABILITIES	**15,300,830**	**14,349,772**	**230**	**278**
CAPITAL AND RESERVES				
Share capital	18,275	18,275	18,275	18,275
Share premium	500,605	500,605	500,605	500,605
Treasury shares		(33,579)	-	-
Retained earnings	1,615,647	1,718,424	60,379	453,340
Regulatory risk reserves	85,424	74,876	-	-
Statutory reserves	835,825	764,887	-	-
Other components of equity	229,432	334,156	-	-
Capital and reserves attributable to equity holders of the parent entity	**3,285,208**	**3,377,644**	**579,259**	**972,220**
Non-controlling interests in equity	30,063	33,736	-	-
TOTAL EQUITY	**3,315,271**	**3,411,380**	**579,259**	**972,220**
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND EQUITY	**18,616,101**	**17,761,152**	**579,489**	**972,498**

Summary Consolidated and Separate Income Statements for the period ended 30 June 2026	Group Jun-2026	Group Jun-2025	Company Jun-2026	Company Jun-2025
	₦'million	₦'million	₦'million	₦'million
Interest income calculated using effective interest rate	854,463	798,427	65	-
Interest income on financial assets at fair value through profit or loss	18,928	13,933	-	-
Interest expense	(223,787)	(180,122)	-	-
Net interest income	**649,604**	**632,238**	**65**	**-**
Loan impairment charges	(18,724)	(54,971)	-	-
Net interest income after loan impairment charges	**630,880**	**577,267**	**65**	**-**
Fee and commission income	142,439	151,461	3,432	1,656
Fee and commission expense	(19,406)	(16,287)	-	-
Net fee and commission income	**123,033**	**135,174**	**3,432**	**1,656**
Net gains on financial instruments held at fair value through profit or loss	47,305	37,920	-	-
Other income	44,348	70,923	36,448	34,204
Net impairment reversal on other financial assets	34,855	38,107	-	-
Personnel expenses	(56,969)	(54,399)	(873)	(785)
Depreciation and amortisation	(54,306)	(38,292)	(83)	(83)
Other operating expenses	(166,112)	(165,799)	(1,881)	(209)
Profit before income tax expense	**603,034**	**600,901**	**37,108**	**34,783**
Income tax expense	(188,848)	(151,890)	(238)	(271)
Profit for the period	**414,186**	**449,011**	**36,870**	**34,512**
Profit attributable to:				
Equity holders of the parent entity	408,541	441,295	36,870	34,512
Non-controlling interests	5,645	7,716	-	-
	414,186	**449,011**	**36,870**	**34,512**
Earnings per share for the profit attributable to the equity holders of the company entity during the period (expressed in naira per share):				
– Basic	11.18	13.59	1.01	1.01
– Diluted	11.18	13.59	1.01	1.01

Summary Consolidated and Separate Statements of other comprehensive income for the period ended 30 June 2026	Group Jun-2026	Group Jun-2025	Company Jun-2026	Company Jun-2025
	₦'million	₦'million	₦'million	₦'million
Profit for the period	**414,186**	**449,011**	**36,870**	**34,512**
Other comprehensive income not to be reclassified to profit or loss in subsequent periods:				
Net change in fair value of equity investments FVOCI	2	50	-	-
Other comprehensive income to be reclassified to profit or loss in subsequent periods:				
- Foreign currency translation differences for foreign operations	(131,847)	119,521	-	-
- Income tax relating to foreign currency translation differences for foreign operations	39,554	(35,856)	-	-
- Net change in fair value of other financial assets FVOCI	(23,341)	10,897	-	-
- Income tax relating to change in fair value of other financial assets FVOCI	7,003	(3,269)	-	-
Other comprehensive income for the period, net of tax	**(108,629)**	**91,343**	**-**	**-**
Total comprehensive income for the period	**305,557**	**540,354**	**36,870**	**34,512**
Total comprehensive income attributable to:				
Equity holders of the parent entity	303,817	526,171	36,870	34,512
Non-controlling interests	1,740	14,183	-	-
Total comprehensive income for the period	**305,557**	**540,354**	**36,870**	**34,512**

	Jun-2026	Jun-2025	Jun-2026	Jun-2025
Gross Earnings	1,107,483	1,072,664	39,945	35,860

	Jun-2026	Dec-2025	Jun-2026	Dec-2025
Total impaired Loans and Advances (N'million)	148,966	160,465	-	-
Total impaired Loans and Advances to Gross Loans and Advances (%)	4.63%	4.97%	-	-

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT ON THE SUMMARY CONSOLIDATED AND SEPARATE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

To the members of Guaranty Trust Holding Company Plc

Opinion
The summary consolidated and separate financial statements of Guaranty Trust Holding Company Plc ("the Company") and its subsidiaries (together "the Group"), which comprise the summary consolidated and separate statements of financial position as at 30 June 2026 , and the summary consolidated and separate income statements, and summary consolidated and separate statements of other comprehensive income for the period then ended, are derived from the audited consolidated and separate financial statements of Guaranty Trust Holding Company Plc and its subsidiaries for the period ended 30 June 2026.

In our opinion, the accompanying summary consolidated and separate financial statements are consistent, in all material respects, with the audited consolidated and separate financial statements, in accordance with the provisions of the Companies and Allied Matters Act 2020 and the Banks and Other Financial Institutions Act (BOFIA) 2020.

Summary Consolidated and Separate Financial Statements
The summary consolidated and separate financial statements do not contain all the disclosures required by IFRS Accounting Standards as issued by the International Accounting Standards Board, the provisions of the Companies and Allied Matters Act 2020, the Banks and Other Financial Institutions Act (BOFIA) 2020, and circulars issued by the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) and in compliance with the Financial Reporting Council of Nigeria (Amendment) Act, 2023, applied in the preparation of the consolidated and separate financial statements of the Group and the Company. The summary consolidated and separate financial statements should be read in conjunction with the audited consolidated and separate financial statements. Reading the summary consolidated and separate financial statements and the auditor's report thereon, therefore, is not a substitute for reading the audited consolidated and separate financial statements and the auditor's report thereon.

The Audited Consolidated and Separate Financial Statements and Our Report Thereon
We expressed an unmodified opinion on the audited consolidated and separate financial statements in our report dated 28 September 2026.

Our report also includes the communication of key audit matters which discussed the impairment of loans and advances to customers. Key audit matters are those matters that, in our professional judgment, were of most significance in our audit of the consolidated and separate financial statements for the current period.

Directors' Responsibility for the Summary Consolidated and Separate Financial Statements
The Directors are responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of these summary consolidated and separate financial statements in accordance with the provisions of the Companies and Allied Matters Act 2020, and the Banks and Other Financial Institutions Act (BOFIA) 2020.

Auditor's Responsibility for the Summary Consolidated and Separate Financial Statements
Our responsibility is to express an opinion on whether the summary consolidated and separate financial statements are consistent, in all material respects, with the audited consolidated and separate financial statements based on our procedures, which were conducted in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (ISA) 810 (Revised) Engagement to Report on Summary Financial Statements.

Report on Other Legal and Regulatory Requirements
Compliance with the requirement of the Fifth Schedule of the Companies and Allied Matters Act 2020

i. We have obtained all the information and explanations, which to the best of our knowledge and belief, were necessary for the purpose of our audit.
ii. In our opinion, proper books of account have been kept by the Group and the Company, in so far as it appears from our examination of those books.
iii. The consolidated and separate statements of financial position and the consolidated and separate income statements, and the consolidated and separate statements of other comprehensive income are in agreement with the books of account.
iv. In our opinion, the consolidated and separate financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the provisions of the Companies and Allied Matters Act (CAMA), 2020 so as to give a true and fair view of the state of affairs and financial performance of the Company and its subsidiaries.

Compliance with the Banks and Other Financial Institutions Act, 2020 and circulars issued by Central Bank of Nigeria

i. Related party transactions and balances are disclosed in Note 44 to the consolidated and separate financial statements in compliance with Central Bank of Nigeria circular No. BSD/1/2004.
ii. Returns on customers' complaints are disclosed under Complaints and Feedback and under Other Information: Activities of Card Operations Section 5.2 Types of Complaints and Remedial Measures Taken in compliance with Central Bank of Nigeria circular No. PDR/DIR/CIR/01/20.
iii. As stated in Note 45 to the consolidated and separate financial statements, Guaranty Trust Bank Limited Group paid penalties in the sum of N150 million only in respect of contraventions of certain section of the Banks and Other Financial Institutions Act 2020, circulars issued by the Central Bank of Nigeria and other regulatory policies during the period ended 30 June 2026.

Olumide Oshikoya
FRC/2013/PRO/ICAN/004/00000000663
For Ernst & Young
Lagos, Nigeria
28 September 2026

INSTITUTE OF CHARTERED ACCOUNTANTS OF NIGERIA
0099652

Reports on the Resolution of Customers' Complaints
Below is a breakdown of Complaints received and resolved by Guaranty Trust Bank Limited during the period ended 30 June 2026 pursuant to CBN circular dated 16 August 2011.

Description	Number	Amount Claimed	Amount Refunded
		(₦'000)	(₦'000)
Pending Complaints brought forward from prior period	489	18,547	-
Received Complaints	159,696	4,210,067	-
Resolved Complaints	159,868	4,217,756	79,850
Unresolved Complaints pending with the Bank carried forward	**317**	**10,858**	**-**

The breakdown of penalties paid by the GTBank Nigeria during the period ended 30 June 2026 are as follows:

Nigeria	Amount
	(₦'000)
Penalty paid in respect of 2024-2025 CBN's Foreign Exchange Examination on the Bank.	120,000
Penalty paid in respect of 2025 CBN's Risk Asset Examination on the Bank.	30,000
Total penalties paid during the period	**150,000**

THE FULL CONSOLIDATED AND SEPARATE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS WERE APPROVED BY THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS ON 28 JULY 2026 AND SIGNED ON ITS BEHALF BY:

FRC/2013/PRO/ICAN/004/00000004318
Banji Adeniyi
(Group Chief Financial Officer)

FRC/2013/PRO/DIR/003/00000001319
Cathy Echeozo
(Non-Executive Director)

FRC/2013/PRO/DIR/003/00000001782
Segun Agbaje
(Group Chief Executive Officer)

Education

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KC: Concession rekindles battle for soul of public schools

The proposed 35-year concession of the 117-year-old King's College, Lagos, to the school's Old Boys Association (KCOBA) has triggered a wider battle over the future of Nigeria's Federal Unity Colleges, ***OWEDE AGBAJILEKE*** *reports.*

THESE are not the best of times for the Minister of Education, Dr Tunji Alausa. His decision to concession King's College, Lagos, to its Old Boys Association has ignited a fierce battle with workers, parents, students and other stakeholders, raising fresh questions over the future of Nigeria's Federal Unity Colleges.

What began as a plan to introduce a new management model for one of Nigeria's most prestigious secondary schools has snowballed into a wider confrontation over public education, government's responsibility to fund and manage its schools, and the growing role of private and alumni interests in the sector.

At the heart of the dispute is the proposed 35-year concession of the school to the King's College Old Boys Association (KCOBA), ostensibly to improve the institution's infrastructure and management.

Rather than ease concerns over the school's future, the proposal has opened a fresh row between the Federal Ministry of Education and its workers, with unions shutting down activities across the ministry and Federal Unity Colleges until the government reverses its actions.

Founded on September 20, 1909, King's College, Lagos, is Nigeria's oldest government secondary school. Modelled after elite British public schools such as Eton College, it was established to provide elite education for the sons of Nigerian chiefs and leaders.

Over 117 years, the institution has produced a formidable list of Nigerians who have occupied influential positions in politics, law, business and the creative industry.

Its alumni include former Vice-President Alex Ekwueme; former Biafran leader, Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu; former Lagos State Governor, Lateef Jakande; former Central Bank Governor and Emir of Kano, Sanusi Lamido Sanusi; former Senate President, Bukola Saraki; former Chief Justice of Nigeria, Adetokunbo Ademola; and music producer and songwriter, Cobhams Asuquo, among others.

Often described as the Eton of Nigeria, the school has nevertheless suffered the same infrastructure challenges that have bedevilled many public institutions.

Under the proposed public-private partnership, KCOBA is expected to finance, rehabilitate and manage facilities, including hostels, laboratories, classrooms and other infrastructure.

The funding argument behind the arrangement is not entirely new in Nigeria's education sector, as several state governments have, in recent years, returned mission-owned schools to their original religious proprietors, formerly insisting that government alone has struggled to fund and maintain the institutions.

The King's College proposal, however, presents a different model. KCOBA is not the original proprietor of the school in the same sense as the missions that established some of the country's historic schools. Rather, it is an alumni body being given a long-term management role in a federal institution, with the capacity to mobilise private resources for its development.

To show its financial strength, KCOBA has unveiled a proposed N100 billion endowment fund to support the revitalisation of the school, including infrastructure, teacher development, digital transformation, scholarships and student welfare.

The development highlights the financial attraction of the concession, but also raises a fundamental question: if alumni can mobilise substantial resources to rebuild the school, does management also have to be transferred to them for 35 years?

That question lies at the heart of the wider debate over public education. Supporters of the concession argued that the government should leverage private and alumni resources to rescue institutions suffering from years of inadequate funding.

Opponents, however, maintained that the government can retain ownership and management, while allowing KCOBA to provide financial and technical support, just as alumni associations have done in many public schools.

The government has insisted that the arrangement will not fundamentally alter the character of the institution. According to Alausa, admissions will continue under the federal government's policy for unity colleges, with entry determined through the National Common Entrance Examination. He has also assured that the concession will not compromise the interests of teachers and other workers.

The minister said a staff transition framework had been developed to clarify the status and future of personnel affected by the new management structure, and provide measures to protect their interests during the transition.

The assurances, however, have failed to win over the workers. Under the aegis of the Joint Workers Committee of Unions (JWC), more than 17,000 workers have shut down the Federal Ministry of Education headquarters and over 100 unity colleges nationwide in protest against the proposal.

The dispute has now moved beyond King's College, with the unions challenging the ministry's handling of the process and insisting that no unity college should resume for the first term until their grievances are resolved.

In a notice dated September 11, 2026, and addressed to principals and unit chairmen of Federal Unity Colleges, the JWC reaffirmed its earlier "no resumption" directive and ordered its members to ensure strict compliance.

The committee warned that any directive by Alausa ordering the schools to reopen would not change its position unless the matter was first addressed through the established labour-management channel.

"The JWC further wishes to state unequivocally that any purported press release, counter directive, or subsequent communication attributed to the Minister of Education, concerning resumption shall not alter the position of the JWC unless the matter is appropriately addressed and communicated through the established labour management channel," it said.

The Association of Senior Civil Servants of Nigeria (ASCSN), which represents teachers and other workers in the affected institutions, also directed its members not to report for boarding students' check-in at the weekend.

The directive was complied with across the affected schools, leaving many boarding students unable to return to their schools. The union cited the unavailability of textbooks and raised fresh questions about the colleges' preparedness for the new academic session.

The notices were signed by JWC Chairman, Comrade Onuche Abraham; ASCSN Chairman, Ngadi Sampson; Nigeria Civil Service Union (NCSU) Chairman, Ojelabi Ademola; and Chairman, Amalgamated Union of Public Corporations, Civil Service Technical and Recreational Services Employees (AUPCTRE), Ejike George.

Beyond the immediate dispute, workers are increasingly worried that King's College could be the first in a series of Federal Unity Colleges to be concessioned.

A source told *The Guardian* that the Federal Government Academy, Suleja, formerly known as Suleja Academy, had already been identified as the next institution to be concessioned. The source claimed that a draft concession agreement for the 36-year-old institution had been prepared, fuelling fears among workers that the government may be pursuing a wider concession policy for federal schools.

Meanwhile, parents and students are bearing the immediate consequences of the confrontation. The industrial action has disrupted the commencement of the first term academic session in all Federal Unity Colleges, leaving families uncertain about when their wards will resume.

Findings revealed that the disruption has been particularly painful for boarding students, whose parents had already made arrangements and, in some cases, travelled long distances to return their children to school.

Florence Ewata, a mother of two students at Federal Technical College, Otukpo, Benue State, said the uncertainty had left families confused and anxious about the new academic session.

She also expressed concern that handing over the management of federal government schools to investors could eventually lead to higher fees and other charges, making the institutions inaccessible to ordinary Nigerian families.

Ewata said parents needed guarantees that reforms would not impose additional financial burdens on families or gradually transform affordable public schools into institutions accessible only to the wealthy.

Another parent, Layo Adeyemi, said families had been left in limbo. "We are confused. Even my kids are not happy about it. There are no teachers to check them in, and our Parent Teacher Association (PTA) Chairman sent a message that our children shouldn't resume till further notice," she said.

For the students, the dispute has become yet another interruption to their education.

Ahmed Shehu, a student of Federal Technical College, Orozo, said it was unfair for students to bear the consequences of the disagreement between the government and workers after spending several weeks at home during the long holiday.

"We still don't know how this will end. It's not nice that after the long holidays, we're still stuck here, while our mates have already started academic activities," he said.

Shehu appealed to the government and unions to resolve the dispute quickly, warning that prolonged disruption could affect students' academic performance and preparations for examinations.

The controversy has also drawn the attention of civil society organisations.

The Education Rights Campaign (ERC) condemned the proposed concession, describing it as an "attack on public education" and demanding its immediate reversal.

In a statement signed by its Deputy National Coordinator, Ogunjimi Isaac, and National Mobilisation Officer, Adaramoye Michael Lenin, the group argued that the solution to King's College's challenges was adequate government funding, rather than concession.

It said KCOBA could continue to support the institution through donations for infrastructure, facilities and personnel without taking over its management.

The group backed the workers' action and called for the mobilisation of students, teachers, workers, parents, civil society organisations and members of the public against the concession.

It also urged the Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC), Trade Union Congress (TUC), and ASCSN to take action against the policy, warning that the concessioning of King's College could set a precedent for similar arrangements in other government-owned schools, including tertiary institutions.

The ERC further argued that the controversy had exposed the deeper crisis of underfunding in public education and called for increased government investment and democratic management of schools, with teachers, workers, parents and students represented in decision-making.

For the government, the concession is a proposed solution to years of infrastructure decay and management challenges at King's College. For the workers and other opponents, it represents a potentially dangerous shift in the management of public education. The immediate casualty, however, is the student.

As the government and unions dig in, thousands of children remain caught in the middle, uncertain about when they will return to their classrooms. What happens next could determine not only the fate of King's College, but also whether concession becomes a new model for managing Nigeria's Federal Unity Colleges.


Alausa

Data depletion, billing woes top 413,587 telecom complaints

By **Adeyemi Adepetun**

NIGERIA'S telecom sector is facing a staggering crisis, with 413,587 consumer complaints recorded in the first half of 2026 alone.

The sheer volume of grievances, ranging from poor network quality to billing disputes, underscores the depth of frustration among subscribers and exposes systemic failures in service delivery.

The complaints, compiled by the Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC), painted a grim picture of an industry struggling to meet basic expectations. Despite rapid growth in mobile penetration, operators continue to grapple with chronic infrastructure gaps, leaving millions of users dissatisfied and questioning the reliability of essential connectivity.

According to NCC, a large number of complaints from more than 192 million active subscribers were directed to Airtel. The telecommunications firm accounted for 228,992 complaints, followed by MTN with 124,405, Globacom with 56,810 and T2mobile, formerly 9mobile, with 3,885.

The NCC data showed that while 98.38 per cent, or 406,938, of the complaints were recorded as resolved, the volume of complaints pointed to the continuing pressure on operators as subscribers demand more reliable service and greater transparency over charges.

Data depletion was one of the issues attracting particular attention. MTN recorded 12,212 complaints relating to data depletion between January and June, the highest among the four major operators. Airtel followed with 9,806, while Globacom recorded 1,373 and T2mobile five.

The complaints come at a time when mobile Internet has become more expensive for Nigerian consumers following the telecom tariff increases approved by the NCC. For subscribers, the concern is no longer simply whether they can afford to buy data, but how long the bundle will last once purchased.

MTN, which crossed 100 million subscribers in July, has faced significant consumer scrutiny over data usage. The operator has rejected allegations that it arbitrarily collects customers' data and has pointed to changes in how modern smartphones and applications consume Internet bandwidth.

The NCC and operators have similarly attributed unexpected depletion to factors such as device settings, applications, malware, and background processes, rather than to arbitrary deductions by networks.

Despite the explanations, subscribers refused to agree. The underlying problem is increasingly one of trust.

The NCC's wider complaint figures showed that data depletion is only one part of the problem.

Quality of service covering voice and data, billing, failed payment transactions, top-up problems, number portability, value-added services and SIM-related issues also generated significant complaints during the six months.

Airtel had the highest resolution rate among the two largest operators, resolving 99.38 per cent of its complaints, while MTN resolved 96.57 per cent. Globacom recorded a 99.04 per cent resolution rate, while T2mobile recorded 88.57 per cent.



Lead Independent Non-Executive Director, South African Reserve Bank (SARB), Lerato Molebats (left); CEO/Managing Director, PRM Africa Marketing and Communications Ltd and Founder, All Africa Music Awards (AFRIMA), Mike Dada; Group Chief Financial Officer, Access Bank Plc, Ibukunoluwa Oyedeji, and Director, Brand Communications and Sponsorship, AFRIMA, Matlou Tsotetsi, at the 60th birthday celebration of the Group Chairman, Access Holdings Plc, Aigboje Aig-Imoukhuede, held in Lagos.

Opposition political parties commend Enugu LG elections

From **Lawrence Njoku**, Enugu

OPPOSITION political parties in Enugu State yesterday expressed satisfaction with the conduct of last weekend's local council elections, describing it as free, fair and credible.

Addressing journalists in Enugu, opposition party members under the aegis of the Coalition of Registered Political Parties (CRPP), particularly commended the Enugu State Independent Electoral Commission (ENSIEC) for providing the platform that made the process possible.

The members, who said they monitored the process across the state on Saturday, said they were satisfied with how electoral stakeholders approached it, stressing that it was devoid of rancour.

State Chairman of the Coalition, Dr Afam Ani, while commending security agencies for the conducive atmosphere that prevailed throughout the process, stated that there were no reports of violence, snatching, or manipulation of the exercise.

Delta Investment Club launched in Asaba

A CLUB dedicated to mobilising Delta State indigenes and others to invest in the state has been launched in Asaba.

Launching the club yesterday, its President, Mr Omas Robinson, a Deltan resident in the United Kingdom, said the club's main objective is to further empower Deltans at home and in the Diaspora financially by investing in already identified, potentially profitable opportunities in Delta State and across the world.

In a statement signed by Mr Pius Mordi, the club's Director of Publicity, Robinson said: "The Governor of Delta State, Sheriff Oborevwori, has demonstrated passion for developing the state by organising a well-attended Delta State Investment and Economic Summit, instituted a $100 million de-risk fund for investors and also personally attended all the sessions of the summit with his executive council, chairmen of local council areas and other political appointees as well as other citizens across the state.

Pollution, deforestation, others threaten Nigeria's rivers, FG affirms

From **Ameh Ochojila**, Abuja

NIGERIA'S rivers are facing growing pressure from pollution, untreated wastewater, indiscriminate dumping, erosion, sand mining, deforestation and the effects of climate change, the Minister of Water Resources and Sanitation, Prof. Joseph Terlumun Utsev, has said.

Utsev, who raised the alarm yesterday in Abuja while marking the 2026 World Rivers Day, said the deterioration of the country's rivers poses risks to water security, public health, agriculture, livelihoods and biodiversity.

Speaking at a media briefing in Abuja, the minister said the theme of this year's celebration, "No Forests, No Rivers, No Water, No Life," underscores the connection between healthy ecosystems and sustainable water resources.

He said Nigeria's rivers should not be viewed merely as waterways but as critical national assets that support agriculture, fisheries, domestic and industrial water supply, livelihoods, and economic activities.

"Healthy rivers depend on healthy catchments," Utsev said, noting that forests, wetlands, floodplains and groundwater recharge areas play important roles in protecting river sources and regulating water flows.

He said the degradation of these natural systems had placed rivers and communities dependent on them under increasing pressure.

The minister listed population growth, rapid urbanisation, untreated wastewater, indiscriminate disposal of solid waste, agricultural runoff, erosion, and sand mining among the activities that put pressure on Nigeria's waterways.

He added that changing rainfall patterns, flooding and drought associated with climate change were compounding the challenges. According to him, the situation requires a shift from fragmented interventions to integrated management of the country's watersheds and water resources.

Utsev said the Federal Ministry of Water Resources and Sanitation is strengthening Integrated Water Resources Management and working with relevant agencies to protect and restore watersheds and river catchments.

He stressed that upstream activities could have consequences for communities downstream because rivers do not conform to administrative boundaries.

'Credit Guarantee Company grants N46.95b loans to 67,512 persons in a year'

From **Terhemba Daka** and **Owede Agbajileke** (Abuja)

Targets five million citizens in poverty reduction initiative

THE Federal Government's National Credit Guarantee Company (NCGC) has unlocked N46.95 billion in loans for 67,512 Nigerians and businesses within its first year of operation, President Bola Tinubu said yesterday.

In a message posted on his verified X handle, @officialABAT, the President said the performance underscored his administration's push towards a credit-based economy where viable businesses and individuals could access financing despite limited collateral or credit history.

According to him, 11,374 beneficiaries are women, while 33.5 per cent, more than 22,000 borrowers, accessed formal credit for the first time. The scheme has reached beneficiaries across 25 states and the Federal Capital Territory.

The businesses supported under the arrangement are also estimated to account for 661,291 direct and indirect jobs.

"When I sought your mandate, I promised to move Nigeria towards a credit-based economy and to establish a loan guarantee scheme that would help small businesses overcome the barriers that keep them from finance," Tinubu said.

"A worker with access to credit can buy what the family needs and pay over time, and a small business can invest today against the income it expects tomorrow."

The President said the NCGC was established to tackle one of the major barriers to business financing, lenders' reluctance to extend credit to otherwise viable borrowers without sufficient collateral or established credit histories.

IN a similar development, the Federal Government has commenced another phase of its National Poverty Reduction with Growth Strategy (NPRDS) training and empowerment programme in Oyo State, targeting five million Nigerians for skills acquisition, entrepreneurship and technology-driven opportunities over the next four years.

Speaking yesterday in Ibadan at the commencement of the programme, Senior Special Assistant to the President on Technical, Vocational and Entrepreneurship Education (TVEE), Dr Abiola Arogundade, said the initiative was designed not only to train beneficiaries but also to connect them with opportunities that can generate sustainable income.

Arogundade said the programme, which started in the Federal Capital Territory before expanding to other states, was part of the Federal Government's broader strategy to tackle poverty by equipping Nigerians with practical and marketable skills.

Otu supports 18 victims of Calabar mall fire with N25m each

From **Solomon Azu**, Calabar

CROSS River State Governor, Bassey Otu, yesterday, presented cheques worth N25 million each to 18 business owners affected by the recent SPAR fire incident, describing the intervention as a critical lifeline to help the victims rebuild their businesses and restore their livelihoods.

Otu made the presentation at the Executive Chambers of the Governor's Office, Calabar, where he reaffirmed his administration's commitment to supporting small and medium-sized businesses across the state.

The governor acknowledged that accidents were sometimes unavoidable, but stressed that the most important consideration was how the government responded to people affected by unfortunate circumstances.

"I know that accidents happen, and there is sometimes little that anybody can do about them. But the important thing is how we respond to such unfortunate situations," Otu said.

Ijaw in Edo demand recognition of kingdoms

From **Joseph Kanjo**, Benin

THE Ijaw-speaking ethnic group in Edo State has demanded the recognition of their kingdoms or be allowed to "join their kith and kin in Delta and Ondo states through boundary adjustments.

The Ijaw-speaking people, comprising the Furupagha, Egbema, Okomu, Gbaran, and Olodiama kingdoms, also demanded the creation of three indigenous Ijaw Local Council Development Areas in the state.

Their demands followed the age-long crisis between them and the Benins, and particularly the recent dispute between the two ethnic groups wherein the Ijaw were repeatedly called tenants, slaves, captives, settlers, strangers, and so on.

Addressing journalists during a press briefing in Okoro Community, Olodiama kingdom, High Chief Robinson Ogunkoruwei, reading a statement endorsed by representatives of the five kingdoms, said that since the Edo State Government has refused to give the Ijaw-speaking people a distinctive recognition, joining them with their kinsmen in Ondo and Delta states through boundary adjustment would afford them "better assimilation and development," stressing that this is also necessary to "avoid the persistent crisis between the Binis and Ijaws."

17 ISWAP suspects surrender in Borno as Rep commends military

From **Adamu Abuh,** Abuja

NO fewer than 17 persons linked to the Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP), including terrorist family members and a suspected fighter, have surrendered to the Nigerian military in different parts of Borno State.

Security analyst *Zagazola Makama* said the suspects surrendered across Dikwa, Bama and Ngala Local Council Areas between September 19 and 25.

Meanwhile, the House of Representatives' Deputy Spokesperson, Philip Agbese, has commended the Nigerian Armed Forces for their recent successes against terrorism and banditry, declaring that the military has moved beyond rhetoric to mounting sustained pressure on terrorist groups across the country.

In an interview yesterday, Agbese praised the Minister of State for Defence, Dr Bello Matawalle, and the military chiefs for what he described as effective and strategic operational leadership.

Zagazola Makama disclosed that on September 19, a woman identified as a terrorist family member surrendered herself and two children to troops of the 24 Task Force Brigade at Checkpoint 1, along the Dikwa-Ajiri Road.

Another woman and her child were said to have also surrendered at the same checkpoint after they reportedly escaped from the Yaganari terrorist enclave to Gonori Village in Mafa council following factional clashes. She reportedly disclosed that her husband, Bakura Modu, was an ISWAP fighter.

Later that day, three more terrorist family members surrendered to troops of 151 Battalion at Bula Daloye in Bama council.

Moreover, a suspected terrorist surrendered to troops of 24 Task Force Brigade on September 24 after reportedly escaping from a camp in Gargash, while seven other terrorist family members surrendered to troops of 3 Mechanised Battalion at the Arabic IDP Camp in Ngala.

In the most recent incident on September 25, a woman from Bula Daloye and her son were said to have surrendered to troops in Bama, with preliminary investigation indicating that she had escaped from a terrorist camp in Bula Daloye following internal disagreements and hardship within the enclave.

She reportedly disclosed that her husband, Ibrahim Usman, is a terrorist fighter.

According to Agbese, the recent operations in the North-East and North-West demonstrated a shift from a largely reactive approach to sustained offensives targeting terrorist formations, logistics networks and support structures.

Agbese attributed the gains to improved intelligence, air and ground operations, and the greater coordination among the military services and other security agencies.

INEC announces PVC collection from October 9

From **Sodiq Omolaoye,** Abuja

COLLECTION of the newly printed Permanent Voter Cards (PVCs) will commence nationwide on October 9, 2026, ahead of the 2027 general election, the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) has said.

Disclosing this in Kaduna State during the North-West Zonal interactive meeting on the agency's readiness for the election, the Supervising National Commissioner for Kaduna, Mohammed Haruna, said the INEC Chairman, Prof. Joash Amupitan, had also informed the Emir of Zazzau during a courtesy visit of the collection schedule.

He appealed to traditional rulers to encourage eligible citizens to collect their PVCs and exercise their constitutional right to vote.

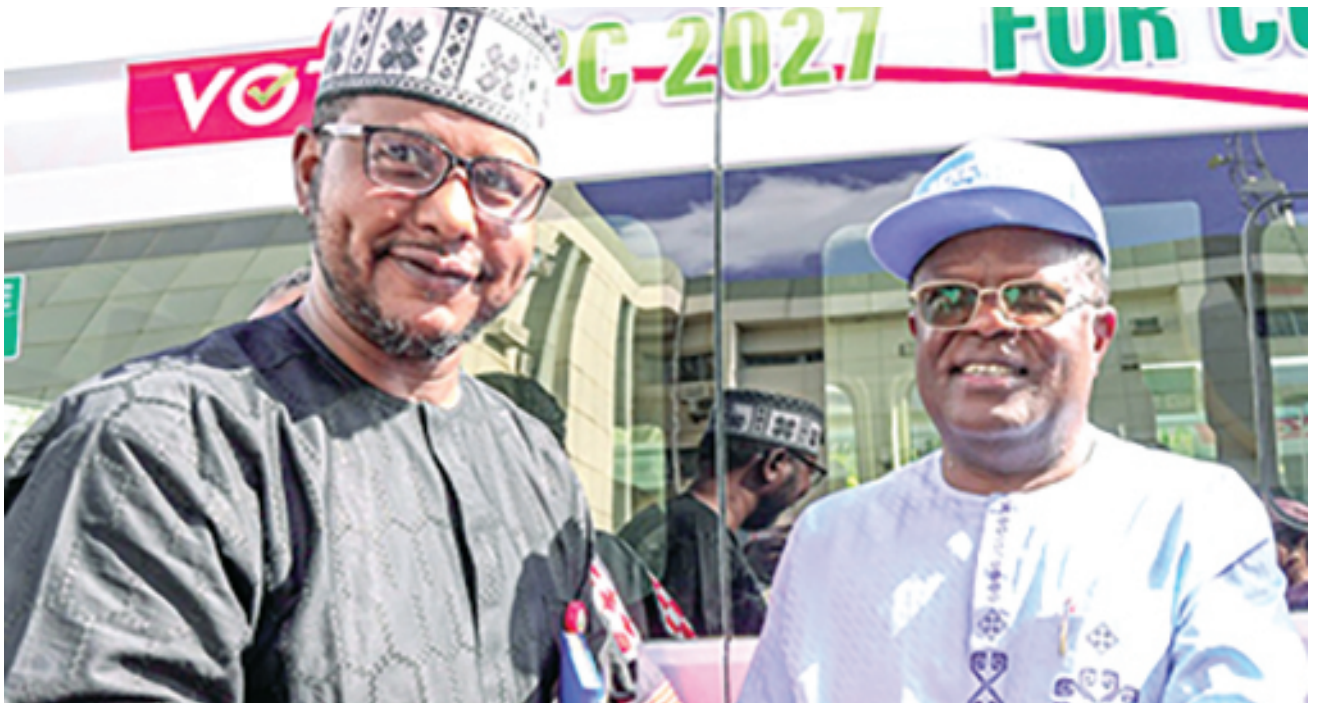
According to him, administrative lapses, including late opening of polling units, perceived biases by officials and poor response to technical problems, could undermine public confidence and provide room for disinformation.

Sultan receives Obi, Kwankwaso, Welby, insists on peaceful politics

THE Sultan of Sokoto, Muhammad Sa'ad Abubakar III, yesterday called on politicians and their supporters across parties to conduct their activities peacefully and responsibly, stating that political activities should not be a means of dividing Nigerians or creating hatred, hostility and unnecessary tension among the citizens.

Speaking when he received the presidential candidate of the Nigeria Democratic Congress (NDC), Mr Peter Obi, and his running mate, Senator Rabiu Kwankwaso, at his palace in Sokoto State, he warned that abusive language, insults and inflammatory statements could heighten tensions and potentially lead to violence.

In a statement by Bashir Adefaka on behalf of the Sultan's media team, the monarch urged politicians to present their manifestos and programmes and seek the support of the people with decorum and within the provisions of the law.



Senior Special Assistant to the President on Community Engagement, North West, Abudullahi Tanko-Yakasai (left), and the Minister of Works, David Umahi, after their meeting with the National Association of Nigerian Students on the ongoing infrastructure projects across the country in Abuja yesterday. PHOTO: NAN

Countries seek water diplomacy against Lake Chad basin insecurity, climate risks

From **Ameh Ochojila,** Abuja

COUNTRIES sharing the Niger and Lake Chad basins have renewed calls for stronger water diplomacy, strategic investment and cross-border cooperation to address the growing climate, environmental and security challenges threatening livelihoods across the regions.

The partners spoke in Abuja yesterday during the opening of a three-day Regional Conference on Hydro-diplomacy, Gender and Strategic Investments for Peace, Stability and Shared Prosperity in the Niger and Lake Chad Basins, jointly organised by the Niger Basin Authority (NBA) and Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC).

Speaking at the forum, Nigeria's Minister of Water Resources and Sanitation, Prof. Joseph Utsev, said the challenges confronting the two basins transcend national boundaries and require collective action to ensure that shared water resources are managed sustainably and equitably.

Utsev noted that water diplomacy had become increasingly important as the basins contend with climate change, environmental degradation, insecurity, pressure on natural resources and declining livelihoods. He stressed that "water does not recognise political boundaries."

He urged both basins to deepen operational synergy through joint planning, knowledge exchange, technical cooperation and strategic investments, as they have overlapping mandates and face interconnected challenges.

Moreover, he called for greater inclusion of women in water governance, arguing that women play central roles in water management, agriculture, food security and community resilience, but remain underrepresented in decision-making.

Also, calling for gender incorporation into the technical, social, environmental and economic assessment of transboundary investments, Utsev said the conference would also provide an opportunity for experts to develop gender policy and strategic frameworks for the basins to promote equity, inclusion, peace and stability.

Moreover, he urged development partners, international financial institutions, the private sector and other stakeholders to mobilise innovative financing, stating that the scale of challenges confronting the shared basins required financing beyond government resources.

Stakeholders seek stronger coordination against off-grid duplication

From **Ernest Nzor,** Abuja

TO reduce waste and accelerate the development of sustainable off-grid electricity markets, stakeholders have called for stronger coordination among regulators, development partners and private-sector operators to end duplication in Nigeria's renewable-energy sector.

Speaking in Abuja yesterday during the relaunch of the Off-Grid Stakeholder Coordination and Partnership Forum, they noted that an analysis of government-funded power projects for 2024 and 2025 showed several institutions, including agencies outside the conventional power sector structure, implementing electricity projects.

The forum was organised by the Rural Electrification Agency (REA) with the theme, "Repositioning Sector Coordination for Strategic Growth, Partnership and Delivery."

This comes as the Minister of Power, Joseph Tegbe, stressed that the federal government considers energy access a critical foundation for job creation, industrialisation and inclusive economic growth.

Represented by his Chief of Staff, Doyin Adelabu, Tegbe said Nigeria's off-grid and distributed renewable energy sector has become central to the country's strategy for expanding electricity access, alongside grid expansion and reforms.

He warned that ambition would not automatically translate into delivery without effective coordination.

According to him, "fragmentation is the quiet tax every under-coordinated sector pays: in duplicated effort, missed investment opportunities, and slower delivery of power to Nigerians who need it most."

Also, the Managing Director/Chief Executive Officer of REA, Abba Aliyu, said poor coordination is a major challenge in the power sector, resulting in overlapping projects and inefficient deployment of scarce financial resources.

Disclosing that the findings underscored the need for stakeholders to know who was implementing what, where projects were located and the resources committed to them, Aliyu said duplication was occurring even within the electrification agency, with different programmes also selecting the same project locations.

He further stressed the need for greater involvement of state governments, following the expanded role of states in electricity-market development under the Electricity Act.

Earlier, the Executive Director, Rural Electrification Fund, Doris Uboh-Ogunkoya, who noted that Nigeria's off-grid sector had grown into an expanding market involving government institutions, development partners, financiers, private operators, manufacturers and industry associations, called for stronger collaboration to overcome financing constraints.

ADC candidates in Zamfara, three others defect to APC

CITING their conviction that President Bola Tinubu could take Nigeria to greater heights, House of Assembly candidates of the African Democratic Congress (ADC) across Zamfara, Plateau, Taraba and Jigawa states have defected to the All Progressives Congress (APC) ahead of the 2027 general elections.

Leading their representatives on a courtesy visit to the National Chairman of the party, Prof. Nentawe Yilwatda, at the APC National Secretariat in Abuja yesterday, Dr Aslam Gambiyar from Zamfara State said the defectors were convinced beyond doubt in President Tinubu's Renewed Hope Agenda.

She explained that this conviction informed their decision to leave the ADC and work with the APC to ensure that the president secures a second term in office.

Receiving the defectors, Yilwatda commended them for placing the country's broader interests above personal political ambitions. He urged them to return to their wards "and start work," assuring that the APC would provide them a platform to contribute meaningfully to the party and the country.

Court convicts 21 companies for illegal investment schemes

From **Ameh Ochojila,** Abuja

JUSTICE Anyalewa Onoja-Alapa of the Federal High Court, Lafia Division in Nasarawa State, has convicted and fined 21 companies N30 million each for operating investment schemes without licenses from the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC).

The judge also directed the companies, which included Ngwuoke Daniels Technologies, Credio Banco Ltd, Digital Company Ltd, and Co Request Capital Nigeria Ltd, among others, to pay N200,000 for each of the days they had committed the offence.

The companies were arraigned by the Abuja Zonal Directorate of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) on September 15 and 16, 2026, on a one-count charge each bordering on illegal operations, contrary to Section 57 (1) of the Banks and Other Financial Institutions Act of 2020.

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The Super Eagles and the Wild Dogs are battling for the top spot in Group L of the AFCON 2027 qualifiers.

2027 Africa Cup of Nations Qualifier

Approach Wild Dogs with caution, Aigbovo tells Super Eagles

By Gowon Akpodonor

AS Super Eagles seek to cage the Wild Dogs this evening in Bissau, former national team goalkeeper, David Aigbovo, has advised Coach Eric Chelle and his players to adopt a cautious approach to the game.

The Super Eagles and Wild Dogs of Guinea-Bissau have three points each from one match, but the Wild Dogs top Group L with a superior goal difference of plus two, following their 2-0 victory over host Tanzania last week. The Super Eagles won 2-1 against Madagascar in Uyo.

Nigeria and Guinea Bissau have played four official matches at senior level, with the Super Eagles winning three of the games, including the January 19, 2022 Group D AFCON clash at the Roumde Adjia Stadium in the northern Cameroonian town of Garoua, where Sadiq Umar and William Troost-Ekong scored second-half goals to give Nigeria all three points.

Aigbovo, who led Shooting Stars Sports Club (3SC) of Ibadan to victory in the maiden CAF Cup competition in 1992, told The Guardian yesterday that as hosts, Guinea-Bissau would do everything possible to impress their home fans, especially after securing an away win over Tanzania a few days ago.

"The Super Eagles narrowly survived last Friday with a 2-1 home victory against Madagascar in Uyo, but I feel this game against the Wild Dogs of Guinea-Bissau will really determine whether Nigeria can top the group or not.

"As hosts, Guinea-Bissau will put in everything to impress their fans after securing an away win against Tanzania last week.

"The Super Eagles have to tread with caution by avoiding those little mistakes that cost Nigeria some vital points during the 2026 World Cup qualifiers. This is a new regime, and it will be sad if we cannot beat Guinea Bissau to top the group. The players must understand that there are no more pushovers in African football. We just have to win to avoid last-minute calculations of 'if' and 'if'. I have the confidence the Super Eagles can do it," Aigbovo stated.

WAFU B Women's Tournament

Jalla slams CAF over annulment of Edo Queens' victory

By Gowon Akpodonor

CHAIRMAN of the Advocacy for Nigeria Football Reform Initiative, Harrison Jalla, has carpeted the Confederation of African Football (CAF) for its "show of shame" at the just-concluded WAFU B women's tournament hosted by Burkina Faso.

The WAFU B Tournament is a qualifying competition for the CAF Women's Champions League.

Nigeria's flagbearer, Edo Queens, defeated Ampem Darkoa Ladies of Ghana 4-1 in a penalty shootout after the encounter failed to produce a winner in 90 minutes. The game ended 2-2 in regular time.

But following Edo Queens' penalty shootout win, the Ghana Football Association filed a protest saying that the match officials and organisers should have allowed the match to go for the stipulated 30 minutes of extra time before the penalty kicks.

CAF upheld Ghana's protest on its merits as the direct resort to penalty kicks after regular time constituted a breach of Articles 13.1 and 72.4 of the CAF Women's Champions League regulations.

Speaking on the confederation's decision, Jalla said: "CAF is again caught in another administrative crisis less than a year after the last Nations Cup in Morocco, where it overturned Senegal's victory over Morocco.

Nathaniel Idowu U-16 League

Fortune FA continue impressive run as Young II maintain strong challenge

By Daniel Akinola

FORTUNE FA, at the weekend, showed that they are in this year's Nathaniel Idowu U-16 Football League for the title when they bashed Bright Stars SA 6-0 victory in Week 4 of the championship.

The result means Fortune FA have now won all four of their matches, scoring 21 goals and conceding just one to remain firmly at the top of the standings with 12 points.

Fuad Oyesina was the standout performer, scoring a first-half hat-trick in the 17th, 35th and 43rd minutes. Quadri Akanbi also grabbed a brace, scoring in the 10th and 50th minutes, while Odesola Odunayo completed the rout in the 73rd minute.

The emphatic victory further underlined Fortune FA's early dominance as the league leaders continue to set the pace.

'Cole Palmer may have played last England game under Tuchel'

FORMER Manchester United chief scout Mick Brown believes that Chelsea attacking midfielder Cole Palmer will not play for England again under manager Thomas Tuchel, football365.com reports.

Brown made the prediction after Palmer withdrew from the England squad for the UEFA Nations League games in September and October.

Tuchel did not include Palmer in his England squad for the 2026 World Cup finals in the summer.

However, the former Chelsea and Paris Saint-Germain boss decided to bring the 24-year-old Chelsea star back into the fold for the four Nations League games during the ongoing international break.

Palmer, though, withdrew from the England squad because of load management.

The former Manchester City star, who has played just three times for England since Tuchel took charge at the beginning of 2025, has started all five of Chelsea's matches so far this season.

Boxing legend Ray Mercer arrives for 'The Street Rumble' Season 2

THE organisers of Street Rumble, Match Makers Sports International, have announced that boxing legend, Ray Mercer, has arrived for the season two of the event scheduled for the Maracana Square, Ajegunle, on December 13.

The organisers also announced Brila Media as the official media partner for event, which returns for its second season with a bigger vision to showcase and celebrate Nigeria's emerging boxing talents and create a platform where the next generation of champions can be discovered.

According to Match Maker Sports International, as the official media partner, Brila Media will play an important role in bringing The Street Rumble Season 2 to a wider audience through media coverage, interviews, promotional content, event coverage, and storytelling surrounding the fighters and the movement.

Jimoh retains Lekki Scrabble Classics title

By Daniel Akinola

ABDULMUMEEN Jimoh, at the weekend, successfully defended his Lekki Scrabble Classics title, confirming his class on the final day of the two-day championship with a game to spare.

Jimoh recorded a total of 15 wins and three defeats with cumulative points of +1537 in Division A to continue his reign as the champion of the prestigious tournament.

After dropping one game on the opening day, Jimoh made nonsense of the "Day One Champion hoodoo" as he picked up more wins despite dropping two games against Wasiu Hassan and Precious Igali in the final seven rounds.

Emmanuel Ede was ranked second (14/4 +155), while African champion Oluwatimilehin Doko (13/5 + 902) finished third.

Jimoh's success has now placed him as a strong contender for the African Championship title slated for next month in Liberia.

The games were viewed by a global audience on YouTube, with a large viewing screen also provided for live streaming with commentary in the playing hall at Peninsula Hotel.

Firm rallies Super Eagles to victory in Guinea-Bissau

By Christian Okpara

ONE of the partners of the Super Eagles, PEAK Milk, has explained that it treated players and officials of the national team to a special breakfast on Saturday to rally the team ahead of today's AFCON 2027 qualifier against Guinea-Bissau.

The breakfast activation, held at the team's Four Points by Sheraton camp in Ikot Ekpene, brought together the 24 players invited by Head Coach Eric Chelle and members of the technical crew for a morning of nourishment, celebration and camaraderie following Friday's hard-fought win.

The players enjoyed a range of Peak dairy products as the brand continued its long-standing tradition of nourishing and supporting the Super Eagles through some of the team's biggest moments.

Super Eagles captain Wilfred Ndidi thanked Peak for its enduring support, saying: "I always cherish these moments with Peak Milk. I have been part of Peak Breakfast with the Super Eagles on several occasions, and it always gives me joy," Ndidi said.

"On behalf of the entire team, I thank Peak for this gesture. The support means a lot to us, and we hope to keep giving Nigerian fans the victories they deserve whenever we step onto the pitch."

Head Coach Eric Chelle described the activation as another timely boost as Nigeria seeks to build momentum in the AFCON qualifying campaign.

"This gives us additional encouragement as we prepare for the next challenge," Chelle said. "We appreciate Peak for putting this together and for continuing to stand behind the team."

Also speaking at the event, Marketing Manager, Peak FrieslandCampina WAMCO, Omolara Banjoko, said Peak Breakfast was designed to nourish the players while reinforcing the positive atmosphere in camp following the opening victory.

Category Brand Manager, Peak, Peter James, said the activation was deliberately designed to create a connection with the players beyond the football pitch.



Super Eagles goalkeeper, Maduka Okoye (right), defenders Calvin Bassey and Ola Aina, with Category Brand Manager, Peak, Peter James (middle) and Digital Marketing Manager, FrieslandCampina WAMCO, Oluwatobi Odukoya during the presentation of Peak products to the team before they left for Guinea - Bissau.

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Approach Wild Dogs with caution, Aigbovo tells Super Eagles /31



Guest Writer

Chidi Anselm Odinkalu

Malami and the infamy of the Mambilla hydropower arbitration

WHEN he announced the military coup in Nigeria on January 15, 1966, Chukwuma Kaduna Nzeogwu denounced a confederacy of "political profiteers, the swindlers, the men in high and low places that seek bribes and demand 10 per cent." At the time, Nigeria was mostly funded by agriculture and solid minerals.

Seven years later, that changed. Following the onset of the Arab-Israeli War in October 1973, the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) weaponised the price of oil. In the year that followed, oil prices rose over ten times. For oil producing countries, it was a windfall.

Nigeria was one of the beneficiaries of what became known as the "oil boom." In the words of then military ruler, Yakubu Gowon, our problem was no longer money but how to spend it. Nigeria's rulers lost their marbles.

Inebriated with new-found liquidity, the country became – to borrow the memorable title of a book on these events - the destination "where vultures feast." Ten per cent was no longer enough. Since then, high office became an opportunity to bleed the country rather than serve its best interests.

Proof of concept on this pattern occurred in a case decided by the Court of Appeal in England in January 1977. As the country grew exponentially richer by 1974, it embarked on an ambitious institutional and infrastructure upgrade. For this purpose, it needed lots of cement. The capacity of the main port in Lagos at the time was less than two million metric tonnes per year.

By mid-1975, the port in Lagos was overwhelmed with over 20 million tonnes of cement, more than 10 times the capacity. The description by the Court of Appeal in London was graphic: "All the berths were occupied. There were 300 to 400 ships outside waiting. More ships were arriving daily. Most of them were carrying cement. All of those waiting were on demurrage." The court was convinced that "there must have been some mismanagement somewhere to lead to this pile-up of vessels off Lagos."

Rather than find those responsible and sanction them, the military regime repudiated the underlying financing contracts. What ensued was a stampede of litigation against Nigeria in foreign courts all over the world.

The country unsuccessfully sought to avoid liability by claiming sovereign immunity, a legal doctrine that government could not be sued in a foreign jurisdiction for its acts as sovereign. The debts and damages piled up. The country has been bleeding since then even as some of its senior-most officials smiled to the banks.

Back home in Nigeria, this case established a profitable business model of official insider-dealing under cover of legal process. The latest of these gambits recently came to a conclusion in far-away Paris in a commercial arbitration over the interminable saga of the Mambilla Hydropower Project.

Columnists, Simon Kolawole and Olusegun Adeniyi separately described the case as a "scam" but that is an injustice to scams. The final text of the arbitration decision (award) runs into 619 pages of grisly reading. What follows is very abridged, drawn from its text.



The interminable saga of the Mambilla Hydropower project has lasted 55 years of neverland. When the military regime initially conceived it in 1972, it was ambitious, designed to deliver nearly 4,000 megawatts of energy. One decade later, the concept took baby steps towards realisation. Shehu Shagari was the president. By the time it transitioned to feasibility three years later, Muhammadu Buhari had overthrown Shagari in another military coup.

In 1999, Olusegun Obasanjo returned to the presidency to find that the matter of the Mambilla Hydropower project had not made much headway in the 20 years since he was last there. At the last cabinet meeting of his first presidential term on May 21, 2003, Energy Minister, Olu Agunloye, submitted a memorandum seeking consent to contract Sunrise Power and Transmission Company Limited (SPTCL) to deliver Mambilla Hydropower. The president thought the memorandum inadequate and asked for it to be withdrawn.

The following day, however, in total disregard of the cabinet decision, the same minister wrote to award the contract to SPTCL. SPTCL was incorporated only two years earlier in 2001. Its share capital was a mere one million. The arbitration tribunal in France found that it had a "complete lack of hydroelectric expertise and experience."

The promoter of the company was former playboy, Leno Adesanya, described by former Attorney-General, Abubakar Malami, a Senior Advocate of Nigeria (SAN), in a note to then Chief of Staff to the President, Abba Kyari in 2018 as "a criminal of the highest order conspiring with previous administrations to be filing frivolous arbitration claims and be siphoning money from governments for sharing." The arbitration tribunal in France called him "a repeat player" with a lucrative habit of "frivolous legal proceedings against Nigeria."

Two years later, Malami had joined in a conspiracy with the same man against Nigeria. The unauthorised contract award by Dr Agunloye in 2003 was the origin of a spurious claim of liability against Nigeria by SPTCL and Adesanya that seemed to have no end. The reach of his corrupt claws within successive administrations was breathtaking.

Adesanya had many senior officials of government on retainer, including principals in the presidency and the office of the National Security Adviser, and their family members. Permanent Secretaries ate out of his hands, and he behaved with the insouciance of a sole proprietor of the Attorney-General's chambers in Abuja.

By January 2020, Adesanya had bribed his way to a purported settlement of his claim against Nigeria. Abubakar Malami and his counterpart in cabinet in charge of energy, Saleh Mamman, initialled an agreement with him to settle his claims for $200 million. Two months later, this was scaled up to $400 million with interest to compound at a daily rate of 10 per cent. President Muhammadu Buhari refused to pay the bill presented by his son-in-law, Abubakar Malami.

> "The interminable saga of the Mambilla Hydropower project has lasted 55 years of neverland. When the military regime initially conceived it in 1972, it was ambitious, designed to deliver nearly 4,000 megawatts of energy. One decade later, the concept took baby steps towards realisation. Shehu Shagari was the president. By the time it transitioned to feasibility three years later, Muhammadu Buhari had overthrown Shagari in another military coup."

In 2021, Mr. Adesanya took the matter to arbitration at the International Chamber of Commerce in Paris. Why a dispute over a purported contract between a Nigerian, his company registered in Nigeria, and the government of Nigeria should end up being adjudicated in France is another matter. He stood to recover $2.3 billion from Nigeria if he was successful.

To finance this, Adesanya and SPTCL secured support from Burford Capital Limited, a vulture fund which specialises in gouging developing countries. It enabled him to hire the priciest lawyers in Nigeria and overseas at bewildering cost. The cost of the proceedings would exceed $31 million.

The arbitration concluded that ministers Malami and Mamman acted without authority in entering into the settlement agreement with Mr. Adesanya. As such, they did not bind Nigeria, and the agreement was "unenforceable because it is a product of corruption and violates Nigerian public policy."

To secure the impugned agreement, Abubakar Malami allowed himself to be corrupted by Adesanya. The quid was up to 50 per cent of the disputed payout. It could have exceeded $200 million. He was also offered women. It's not clear whether he accepted.

In the end, the arbitration tribunal concluded that "Attorney-General Malami deliberately acted against the best interests of Nigeria…." and that his conduct was characterised by "a lack of moral compass."

While holding the high office of Attorney-General of the Federation, Abubakar Malami had a trusted "business partner", one Abdulrahman Musa Bashar, who accompanied him everywhere. Their business was bribes. When he needed to discuss this business, Abdul (as Malami called him) would make the call, and Malami would speak on Abdul's phone. Abdul was Malami's trusted bagman and corruption circuit-breaker.

It was from proceeds such as this that Malami acquired the portfolio of properties worth over $154.6 million which the Nigerian courts ordered forfeited two months ago. On the showing of this case, there is more. He will deploy that loot in his pursuit of the governor's mansion in Birnin-Kebbi in February 2027.

Abubakar Malami visited impunity on the office of Attorney-General of the Federation; indignity upon Nigeria; and infamy upon himself. There is more than enough in the decision of the arbitration tribunal to bring him before the Legal Practitioners Disciplinary Committee and to disbar him from the roll of lawyers in Nigeria. That much is clear.

Odinkalu, a lawyer and teacher, can be reached at chidi.odinkalu@tufts.edu

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